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Salvation Comes To The Gentiles, Pt 5

Acts 10:24-35

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PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: In this examination of the story of Cornelius and Peter we see how God uses the salvation of Cornelius and his household to show both the impartiality of God in salvation and the relationship between faith and works. This sermon focuses upon the idea of true faith produces works consistent with a changed heart.

I. Introduction.

A. Read vs 35.

B. Last week and today we are focused on that this verse for in it we see what it is that makes a person acceptable to God.

C. The relationship between faith and works.

1. The idea of fearing God is an Old Testament way of saying believing, trusting, loving, coming, and following the Lord in the New Testament.
2. These are not different things, they are the same thing said in slightly different ways to emphasize a separate aspect of faith.
3. Let me remind you of the three key aspects of saving faith: facts, assent, and trust or love.

D. The gospel call to trust and to obey.

1. Salvation and forgiveness of sin comes only by grace through faith.
2. But there is no salvation if having claimed to believe, there is no obedience or doing what is right.
3. And this balance is key and easy to confuse so today we will do a bit more of a detailed examination of the biblical teaching on faith and works.

II. Believe the gospel and do what is right.

A. James 2:14-26.

1. The question is can a faith that does not act function as a saving faith (14)? And the presumed answer is a negative.

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2. Faith is something you claim to have but it is impossible to see. It is sort of like claiming to understand something.
 3. So James then concludes it with vs 26.
 4. So is faith alone what brings us to salvation? That is the first question that must be asked and answered.
- B. Faith alone.
1. Justification is key benefit of salvation.
 - a. No other blessing such as redemption from slavery to sin, forgiveness of sin, eternal life or adoption into the family of God will occur without justification.
 - b. Justification is the doctrine that means that God declares a sinner to be righteous in His sight through the righteousness of Jesus Christ and only Jesus Christ.
 2. Justification is gained through faith and only through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Romans 4:1-5.
 - b. Philippians 3:7-9.
 3. So we are able to see clearly that faith is the instrument of salvation and justification. But here is where great error can creep in.

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- a. Now understand that faith and only faith in God's promise in the gospel is what makes you fully justified by God.
 - b. The Roman Catholic Church teaches something else. Faith is necessary but it is not sufficient. An ongoing obedience through the sacraments will bring that justification to its fulness over one's lifetime and time in purgatory. This is a false gospel that damns.
 - c. In other traditions such as many forms of Pentecostalism, you must exercise faith but also the act of water baptism. And only then are you saved. Again this is a grave error that makes justification the result of both faith and works.
4. Romans 5:1 as a bridge to connect faith and works.
- a. In chapter 4 we saw justification by faith, not works and not faith + works.
 - b. Note it starts with justification which results in a true peace with God through Jesus Christ (1).
 - c. This is in the indicative, we have peace. Doesn't matter how you feel, it is simply true.
 - d. The rest of chapter 5 through 6:10 are all indicatives about what we have and what is true. The only question is whether they are yours **because** you have trusted in Christ alone for your justification.
 - e. Finally, in 6:11 he begins with commands to do something. First, it is to think on what is true. Then in vs 12 it is to stop doing certain things.
5. So if you can get this firmly in your mind then true, lasting change that actually honors and glorifies God will be much more consistent in your life.
6. Ephesians 2:8-10.
- a. Vss 8-9 make the entire work of salvation be of God.

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- (1) We contribute nothing to this but faith. And that faith is a gift of God, not something we produce.
 - (2) This is why the final aspect of saving faith is so important to understand. We can know facts and agree to them, and yet nothing changes.
- b. But how do we see it? Just like James said, through works and that is what vs 10 says.
- (1) Note the "for" again. This is finishing the thought of vs 9 about not boasting.
 - (2) We are not an image of our own workmanship. That is left for the one who rejects Jesus to their own ruin. We are an image of the work of God upon us as He conforms us into the image of His beloved Son.
 - (3) This new creation that comes through faith by grace is because God has made us for something. What? Good works.
 - (4) And who decides what is good? And from where do these good works arise? God.
 - (5) Are these being made up as we go along through life? Do these change with the times? No. They were already created beforehand. These are ancient works defined by our Creator.
 - (6) So what is our responsibility? To walk, conduct our lives, comport ourselves in a way that reflects and acts on them.
- C. So how should we understand good works?
1. John 14:15.
 2. Galatians 5:16-26.
 - a. He is speaking to those who claim Christ. But he is also very concerned that many of them simply were professing Christ without truly trusting in Him.

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- b. There is a battle going on there about how a Christian should act and live. A lot of it centered around keeping the Jewish laws, especially circumcision (1-9).
- c. Vs 16 is the key one to grasp. To walk by the Spirit results in not giving in to the flesh.
 - (1) To walk is a term that speaks of ones habit and conduct. It is not mystical where you “feel” the Spirit or you get “impressions” and call that the leading of the Spirit. So much harm has occurred by thinking this.
 - (2) To walk by the Spirit is to conduct yourself in accordance to His truth and His will. And there is only **one** way this is done, through the Word of God. And as you submit yourself daily to what the bible teaches you find that the Holy Spirit strengthens you to press on.
 - (3) This leads to what is the “flesh.” This is simply the remaining presence of sin in the person. For a non-Christian this is their master. For the Christian, it is still present but the power to enslave is broken.
 - (4) But how do you know if you are conducting yourself in the power of sin vs the Spirit? Your works. Vss 19-21 give broad examples and a very serious warning.
 - (5) So, then we must ask how we know if we are conducting our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit? Again, our works. Vss 22-23.
 - (6) Notice also how in 6:1 he addresses dealing with those caught in sin.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Do not fail to understand the order given by the bible. Faith first then works.
 - 1. Keep these distinct but never separate them.
 - 2. True faith will produce good works. Good works over time will prove faith.
- B. So let me finish this whole thing by looking at 2 Peter 1:5-11.

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Benediction

May our God cause you to rejoice in the Lord, to be made complete in all aspects, and to be comforted by the Spirit. May He move in and among us to be like-minded in the Word and to live in peace with one another. Amen