

Good Works Edify the Brethren by Displaying Fruit of God's Effectual Grace “Of Good Works” part 7 WCF 16.2.4



2021.10.31 Sabbath School Lesson
Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

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WCF 16.2 (TPH p928)

II. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith;^a and by them believers manifest their thankfulness,^b strengthen their assurance,^c edify their brethren,^d adorn the profession of the gospel,^e stop the mouths of the adversaries,^f and glorify God,^g whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto,^h that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.ⁱ

^a James 2:18, 22

^b Psa 116:12-13; 1 Pet 2:9

^c 2 Pet 1:5-10; 1 John 2:3, 5

^d Mat 5:16; 2 Cor 9:2

^e 1 Tim 6:1; Titus 2:5, 9-12

^f 1 Pet 2:15

^g John 15:8; Phil 1:11; 1 Pet 2:12

^h Eph 2:10

ⁱ Rom 6:22

Matthew 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

2Corinthians 9:1 Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; ² for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority. ³ Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready; ⁴ lest if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting. ⁵ Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Our Father in heaven. We thank you that you have not left us as we were in our first father. Adam having sinned in him and fallen with him. Having died having no life in us at all. But you have had mercy and shone generosity to those who deserve, no mercy to those who have nothing of their own.

We thank you that you bring us to faith in Christ. Not only that we would be counted righteous in him but also that your spirit would conform us to his image as he deserves for us to be conformed and to make us to be like Him. We pray that the way you have designed to glorify your son in the lives of believers, that he would be glorified in the lives of each believer here.

Help us. So God to see how Christ has loved us. That we might love him who first loved us that we might desire his glory. And that, as we read about how you do that, that we might desire. That those things be true of us and of our life.

Lord, we don't even have the willing, let alone, the working in us. And so we come to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, but we look to you to be the one who works in us but will and to work according to your good pleasure, grant that it would be.

So we ask in Jesus name. Amen.

So we come to the next couple of things that good works do. And as you can see by the grayed out versus black text up there in the paragraph. This morning, we are covering hopefully by God's help. We hope to cover the good works. By good works, believers edify their brethren and adorn the profession of the gospel.

So the paragraph as a whole is these good works done in obedience to God's commandment or the fruits, and evidences of a true and lively faith. And by them believers manifest, their thankfulness strengthen. Their assurance edify their brethren adorn. The profession of the gospel stop the mouths of adversity of the adversaries and glorify God who's workmanship.

They are created in Christ Jesus. Their unto that Having their fruit unto holiness, They may have the end eternal life. So good works or by good works. Believers, edify their brethren. So what does the word edify mean before we get going? Or maybe you learned what the word edify means in your Bible?

The way I did, when I got to that part of my English, vocabulary in school in which I learned the word edifice. Does anybody know what the word edifice means? Really building. This is a fairly recent useful. Edifice. Next door is emit much more historic. Also useful in its own way Edifice.

So if building, if edifice means building, what does it mean to edify? Someone to build them up So hopefully you have learned at least one or maybe even two words now. So by good works, we build up the brethren and they give the Matthew 5:16, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven and then second Corinthians 9:2 for I know you're willingness about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Akaya was ready a year ago and your zeal has stirred up the majority.

So that first one Matthew 5:16, I've, I've given versus 13 through 16 and that's just because, if we started giving the entire context of Matthew 5:16, we'd end up with at least the first third of the Sermon on the Mount. But Matthew 5 verses 13 through 16 reads, you are the salt of the earth, but if salt loses, its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?

It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled. Underfoot by men, You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a lampstand and it gives light to all who are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Now, one of the things that in the context of the Sermon on the Mount were coming out of when we come into verse 13, as who are the Blessed ones and the Jews at the time would have answered that. The Pharisees were probably, the most blessed ones They were the ones that that people looked at all of their zeal for good works or what they called good, which was often not so much according to the Word of God.

But according to their traditions and really focused on what man could see on the outside and they say, oh well those are the Blessed ones. The ones who have earned, blessedness, the ones who have great strength and goodness of their own And Jesus starts exactly opposite Blessed are the poor in spirit.

And the blessed ones are the ones who are spiritually. Poor grieving lowly hungry persecuted. And yet, there were a couple of things that these who are poor and grieving and lowly and hungry have that God gives to them. And the context of all of those things, it becomes obvious that it does not come from them.

And he does mention merciful and pure and heart. And these are aspects of a new character that God, gives to those who have no goodness in them. So the blessed ones are not the ones who are good enough to get blessing. The one, the blessed ones are the ones who knew they had no goodness with which to get the blessing.

And yet a couple of the first things that God gives to those who have no goodness of their own and he makes them righteous in Christ and then he starts to make them. Like Christ is mercy and purity in heart. And if you, if you think about what comes after the passage that we have before us, you see the importance of that purity and heart because the Lord sets genuine righteousness of the kind that God works in those who are children of the heavenly Father through Jesus over against the kind of righteousness that everyone thought the Pharisees had.

And whether it has to do with murder or adultery and so forth. The the one of the big differences between those two ideas of righteousness is real righteousness. Goes to the heart. Now, one of the things that God does in those whom he brings to himself by grace, only not by how good we are.

But because of our neediness for Jesus to be our righteousness and Jesus to be all of our spiritual life. As He does, make believers godly, He makes them to be like Jesus. It's rather shocking. If you are aware of Jesus saying that He is the light of the world to then turn around and read.

Matthew 5, verse 14, you are the light of the world, right? If Matthew 5:14 wasn't in our Bibles and you saw someone, you know, posts on social media, or a box quote, in the side of the newspaper. Those are old things that we used to have to start fires children.

You know, if you saw just this isolated quote, you are the light of the world, you would expect that that came from one of the false teachers that have the TV shows and the books. And, you know, by the rent, I'm not sure, which he does the former basketball stadium of the Houston Rockets for, for his worship services.

But it's not a false teacher, It's Jesus, who says this. So, how can believers? Be the light of the world if Jesus is the light of the world who also because they started out, poor in spirit grieved, grieving lowly? They don't have any light of their own. Jesus is their light in the righteousness that Jesus produces in believers is a righteousness that goes to the heart.

Now, we don't have examples of that in the world. The only people, you know, The only people there are whose righteousness comes out of love for God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and love for the neighbor. As themselves are those who have been joined to Jesus Christ through faith.

There is no one who does good, not even one, but there is Christ and there are those who are joined to Christ and there are those in whom God is working both to will, and to work. According to his good, pleasure work out your own salvation with fear and trembling is utterly impossible, except that God is applying Christ to us.

That's the you think of Philipians 2 and let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus. And we often think of that in terms of pattern but you have to also think of that in terms of power because there's no where else to actually get that mind except Christ Jesus and he gives it, and that's why we in our good works edify, the brethren you are the salt of the earth.

If the salt loses, its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled. Underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill. Cannot be hidden nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a lampstand and it gives light to all who are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Now that applies to a small extent to the unbeliever. Now we, for instance, you remember, the Centurion who saw the way that Jesus died, and it said he glorified God saying this was a righteous man.

We don't know if that centurion was converted, But God does often honor his name. When he, when he gives believers righteousness, and godliness that even the ungodly notice and they don't always praise you for it. Remember what the Holy Spirit said through Peter be godly. So that when they execute you for it, or when they mistreat you for it, at least you're being mistreated for for your godliness and not suffering as a wicked one.

But verse 16, especially applies with us to one another. One of the reasons you want your godliness to come from the heart. One of the reasons why you want day by day and family, worship my family worship and whenever you you know your conscience is pricked by the Holy Spirit, One of the reasons you want to have a heart that belongs to God so that your obedience isn't so that other people can see how good you are or so that you can feel better about yourself.

But a response of love to the God who has saved you is because he tells you that when you obey Him and love him that way, he lets your brothers and sisters see that. And he uses that to turn their hearts. Not to you. If you, if you're obedience is coming as a response to God and they dependence upon God and you're seeking to love him from the heart.

They don't see your good works and glorify you. I mean think about what the people are doing in verse 16. This is not what the world does. The world sees your good works and does a two and a half minute. Feel good story about how wonderful you are at the end of the new newscast.

I don't even know if they still do that. It's been years since I watched the news. But in that short window of time that I watched news kids, they would blast you with all the bad news in the world. And then the end of the newscast, there'd be this two minutes story about someone who did you know charity work or something.

And and they would praise that person, you know, they would never if it was a believer, say behold, how great is the triune God, who has credited this person with the righteousness of Jesus and because Jesus deserves it, the character of Jesus is being worked out in them as well.

No, the ones who see your good works and glorify your father in heaven. The primary ones about who Matthew 5:16 or is talking are your brothers and sisters in Christ. Those who know where you're good. Works came from. Those are the ones to say look at what the Lord is doing in them and they began to be began from poverty of spirit.

I'm poor in spirit too. I don't have any good in me. The same, Lord, the same father who's working in them, will work in me and we edify one another, we build. We build one another up. Now that is a very different view, very different understanding of versus 13 through 16.

Then I grew up I'll say receiving because maybe I was just a bad student you know want to blame all your teachers but I grew up thinking we are going to do so good that the wicked world will see will see our righteousness and they will be converted by responding to how good we are.

No. God can use the difference that he makes in his people. One of the things you want to pray for your deacon candidates as as they study and are recognized and trained and hopefully we would get more deacons ordained. And installed is that God would use them in part in the way he used that first slate of deacons in Acts chapter 6, in the seven men were ordained and the care of the of the widows was attended to there's this little line at the end of the passage, a great many of the priests.

We're converted to the faith became believers. Why? Because under the Old Testament organization and economy, the Levites were in charge of receiving and distributing the charitable donations. And they saw the way that the church was taken care of its widows under the administration of the deacons and it was part of what God used to convert them.

So it's not that that reality isn't a reality for believers, that's just not the primary thing that Matthew 5:13 through 16 is talking about the primary thing that Matthew 5:13 through 16 is talking about, is, he's about to talk about the righteousness, fear quotes on it of the Pharisees that everyone thinks is the standard of righteousness.

And he's about to make a long argument. That's not real righteousness. It doesn't come from the heart doesn't come from love of God. It doesn't come from a love of neighbor that that flows from the love of God. Real righteousness, is something that you will see not in the Pharisees, but in your brothers and sisters who were poor in spirit with you and who are grieving with you and who are lowly with you and whom God gave mercifulness and whom God gave purity of heart.

One of the things that we want to do in our fellowship is see the good works that God has producing in us. Be a means by which our brothers and sisters are encouraged that God will do the same in them, and that they will desire and pursue that from him, This is something that happened in with Corinthians.

And the Macedonians Second Corinthians 9 as our next proof text. And you see how the principle in Matthew 5:13 through 16 came out in a very particular incident. Is there anyone who could tell us what was going on in Judea at the time and the second Corinthians 9 was written.

That makes these verses necessary, man famine. Well, let me read the verses and then Then we can answer that question a little Charlie. Already answered it for us. Now, concerning the ministering to the saints. It is superfluous for me to write to you. For, I know you're willingness about which I boast of you to the Macedonians that ako was ready a year ago, and your zeal has stirred up the majority.

Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of, you should be in vain, in this respect that. As I said, you may be ready. Left of some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared. We not to mention, you should be ashamed of this confident boasting. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, to go to you ahead of time and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not a grudging obligation.

So Paul is. Okay, so there was a famine and what did Paul want the Corinthian churches in the Macedonia, or the okay, in churches of which Corinth was one? And the churches from the region of Macedonia as well? What did for instance Philippi what did what was the apostle trying to get the believers in those churches to do?

Yes, Be prepared. Yes. Because if they weren't prepared and he came and he said do this, then it would be because the apostle had showed up and said do this, but he wanted to bring some Macedonians with him to Corinth and the Corinth the Corinthians to be prepared already to say, oh good.

You're here. Apostle. Paul. Look what we've already prepared. Collected given. Yeah, is collecting money. They're prepared. They're preparing money as a gift for the Judean Christians. So that they will be able to get food even in this time of famine. And so the there's this collection of money and he wants them to have maybe not so much a competition.

Although you know, scripture does say outdo one another and doing good if you want to have a competition. Well seek from God that which he gives you and you know, don't boast in yourself. If the Lord gives you generosity gives you to do good works But he wants the Macedonians and the occasions to encourage one another.

In this, in this particular ministry of collecting and giving money for the Judean, Christians,

Think we'll I think we'll keep going. Well, let's stop and make a little bit of application. I think we actually made this application already last week, but, you know, One of the primary places in which you children are really learning to glorify God is in the way that you honor your mom and dad in your obedience, not just obeying, not just the outward performance, but the love and honoring of the parents that God chose for you and assigned to you.

So that the obedience will be Now in our house we tried to summarize it in three things right away all the way cheerfully we over the years added other things but those are the three main ones it's kind of like David's mighty men. There's the three and then there's the other ones that don't attain to the three right away.

All the way, cheerfully every time. And even when mom is not looking just different things that you can think about, for the obedience to come from the heart. And that when you are having a hard time with that, you look to God for it. Lord help me want to obey mommy right now.

And then you can turn to your brother. You could turn to your sister and you can say, Let's help each other want to obey mommy, right? So it's very different, if the two of you are saying, here's what Jesus wants us to do, but we don't even want to do it but one of the things that he's given us to help us want to do it as each other.

So let's work together on it Now. That's almost directly opposite of what the flesh tends toward and I know what the flesh tends toward because I am full of it. And as a result, my children who

are federally represented in me and all of all of my sin, just like we're federally represented in Adam.

And yeah, would reminds me of recent anyway. They are fleshly too and the tendency is to say you aren't doing your part and I might not have done mine the way I should have but at least I'm doing it better than you. And we're no longer. Edifying one another.

But if we know from the Bible that one of the purposes for good works, that come from the heart as an application of Jesus to us is so that my brother and sister can be helped. So I want to do it in order to help them, and I need them to do it, because one of God's purposes for them doing, it is to help me.

Then you can in a spirit of teamwork and mutual edification seek from God that obedience that comes from the heart. Now, that is a very high and we would say impossible and we would be right except for one thing goal. It is impossible with man but Christian obedience and godliness is something that does not come from man.

And if what we are aiming at is something that men can do then. We're not aiming at what Jesus is aiming at because he aims in our lives at what only he can do. So that when we do it, those who know how it happened, See our good works.

And glorify our Father who is in heaven and not us well that brings us almost to the end of our time and The next week's will be fairly similar. Adorning. The pressure profession of the gospel has a lot of overlap with edifying the brethren. But that's, that's all right.

We need multiple hearings before we. I'm not sure there's a before as we grow. Any any questions or comments? Or thoughts about these passages? Yes. Karen. I was just thinking is you're talking about Matthew match?

That, that is exactly the opposite of. Or when it says not taking the name of the Lord in vain, This is how we we right, you bear the name of the Lord, in a way that seeks his honor as a horrible thing. It isn't it to know that the Lord has put his name on you and wants to work in you in a way.

That brings him glory and then to just not care whether or not you're living in a way, that brings him glory. Thank you for that Karen. I do hope ordinarily when the sermon on the Mount gets studied you don't really get the 30,000 foot view because each section is so rich in and of itself.

So hopefully if that's something you hadn't seen before the way the Beatitudes connect to the, let your light shine connect to the Jesus's teaching on the law that comes after. Hopefully, that was as helpful to you as it was to me. Let's close in prayer, Our Father. When we think about, what are your sister just brought up that you have been pleased to invest the honor of your name?

In what comes out of our lives. We tremble at the utter inadequacy on our part. And what dishonor, we would bring upon your name if we live out of our desires out of our strength for our purposes. And so, we thank you for your word. We thank you that your words tells us the gospel of your Son that in it.

There is not just a righteousness, that is from faith, but also a righteousness that is for faith, and that it is, your power that gives us all of this salvation. Your power that provided Christ's obedience to be counted for us your power that through faith. In him applies, the character of Christ to us.

Help us to love your glory. Help us to love your righteousness. Help us to love you who have first loved us. And we do pray that you would give us this. Holy fellowship that we have heard about from your word in this half hour or so that we would stir one another up to love and good works.

And that that would be something that we know that you use our brothers and sisters to produce in us and that we would seek you to use us in our brothers and sisters. Glorify yourself. We pray in the way you work in this church. We ask in Jesus name, amen.