

“Of Good Works” part 9 WCF 16.2.6, Good Works Silence Adversaries

2021.11.21 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

¹Peter 2:11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹²having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

¹³Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. ¹⁵For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—¹⁶as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

¹⁸Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. ¹⁹For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. ²⁰For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. ²¹For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

²² *“Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;*

²³who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. ²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

(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)

So we are in the second paragraph of Westminster Confession, 16 and the paragraph. As a whole reads thusly, These good works done in obedience to God's commandments are the fruits, and evidences of a true and lively faith, and buy them. Believers manifest, their thankfulness. Strengthen their assurance edify their brethren adorn.

The profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries and glorified God, whose workmanship. They are created in Christ Jesus. They're unto that having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end eternal life. Marvelous thing that the good works are that believers are created newly in Christ Jesus to walk in and that he has prepared beforehand for us.

Absolutely not at all something for us to trust in or hope in. We don't even trust in our own faith as Chaplin Brown. So ably opened from the scripture last Lord's day morning, the faith itself is a gift and at rests in Christ alone and what who he is and what he has done.

But the good works have many, many good purposes. As we have been studying from the scripture to see the scriptural background of what we confess. And that is why we must not overreact in our flesh. Just because we have a tendency to hope in what we do. Perhaps, you have had a similar

experience to mine and have been in even reformed church circumstances where the necessity and the goodness of good works are sometimes spoken against, but they do have many good purposes.

And one that we come to this week, I think is starting to cut a little closer. To we come a little closer to home then it has in the past and that is that good works. Stop the mouths of adversaries. The proof text before us is first Peter 2:15.

But as the pastors, who produced this document expected that we would have a rich enough understanding of scripture to understand it and context, we're gonna look at the whole context or at least a larger portion of the context the whole context and it's not first Peter like it says on your sheet.

I'm sorry, it's second Peter. I thought? No, it is first Peter, sorry. Sorry. I just looked at the wrong chapter First, Peter 2 verse 11, through 25 first and second Peter, our written in the context of a persecuted church. And one of the marvelous things about First Peter and we saw this a couple of weeks ago or at least results with second Peter a couple weeks ago.

Second Peter, chapter 1 is the emphasis and first and second Peter on holiness. This is maybe a little counterintuitive for us because we when you think of the persecuted church, you you are flesh. Would not tend to think about or focus on holiness but there's a strong focus on holiness in 1st Peter and second Peter.

And one of the reasons for that is that the fact that you are persecuted by the world, as Lord explains in the Lord, Jesus himself in the Gospel of John, and John to some extent in first, John as well, is because you are not of the world and the more it appears that you are aliens and strangers the more the world will diss diss like you.

And so we jump into first Peter chapter 2, The Lord has commanded us and first, Peter chapter 1 to be holy because he is holy and he has set us apart to himself. And for himself, in the first half of 1st, Peter 2. He has been describing how he builds the church as a spiritual temple and for spiritual sacrifices that that which the Old Testament church, especially following David had in structures.

And in externals, that looked forward to Christ. We have the substance of in Christ Himself and it looked forward in part to what we do in the spiritual worship, the spirit and truth worship to use the language John, 4 of New Testament worship. So that's kind of the first half of chapter two that we are holy and set apart and chosen and built up into the spiritual house for God and the spiritual people for God.

And that this is one of the primary reasons that he has shown us mercy is that? We may honor him and glorify him in that way. And that's what brings us up to verse 11. To the end of the chapter, First, Peter chapter 2 verse 11 to the end of the chapter.

Beloved. I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works which they observe glorify. God in the day of visitation. Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake whether to the king as supreme or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good for this is the will of God that by doing good.

You may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men as free yet. Not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God, honor. All people love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king servants, Be submissive to your masters with all fear. Not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh for this as commendable.

If because of conscience toward God, one endures grief suffering, wrongfully. For what credit is it? If when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently. But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this, you were called because Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example that you should follow his steps.

Who committed? No sin nor was deceit. Found in his mouth who when he was reviled did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but committed himself to him. Who judges righteously who himself bore our sins in his own body? On the tree that we having died to sins, might live for righteousness by whose stripes, you were healed for, you were like, sheep going astray, but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls So far.

The word of God. So he starts out. He says, beloved I beg you a sojourners and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Very important to your under fire from the world. And many of you are feeling more and more under fire from the world right now.

And yet, that is not the primary danger. Okay? So he's writing to a persecuted church and in most places throughout most of its history. The church has been a persecuted church. We're not surprised when he says in this world, you will have trouble or the apostle strengthens the churches at the end of his first missionary journey, by telling them through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God or when he's training pastor, who is then supposed to train?

Other pastors in Ephesus and as he tells Timothy to expect to come under fire, just as Paul has come under fire and then he says, in fact, you should probably tell your congregations that everyone who desires to live a godly life in Christ. Jesus will be persecuted. And so we're not surprised the prosperity preachers have hidden this from those to whom they, they address.

But our Lord has not hidden it from us. And one of the first things he says, is that the, the greater danger is your own sin. Don't be afraid of them, who can harm the body, be afraid of him. Who after killing, you can cast you into hell and now we are not afraid of him in that way.

Fearing hell if we have confidence in Christ and through Christ in him as a shepherd and overseer of our souls. But we see that remaining sin that those fleshly lusts, as the primary enemy in the ongoing war. The culture around. You is not the primary enemy in the ongoing war, They are in enemy, but as we fight the main war, we will make headway in that secondary war.

So verse 12, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles whenever you see Gentiles remember you could just read the word nations there, that's what the word is that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may buy your good works, which they observe glorify, God in the day of visitation.

Now, we corrected this wrong. I idea that about address a few weeks ago, in Matthew chapter 5. When we noted, the the way it talks about doing our good deeds and letting our light shine before men, so that they may see our good deeds and glorify our Father who is in heaven, but how many of you have, heard people say things like, if we would just obey God, well, and love our neighbor.

Well, then the world around us would see how wonderful that is. And they would think and speak. Well of Christians and the church. I grew up hearing that all the time. That was one of the primary ways. We were told that that we could get people to like our church.

Now there are those whom the Lord is saving and he often uses the beauty of the fruit of Christ in their lives as something by which they are attracted and want to know the source of this and how they may have it too. It is useful in evangelism. The scripture encourages us in that way.

But on the whole, if you're talking about Christians as a whole or the church, as a whole, as they are doing their good, works in verse 12, what are the nations doing? How are the nations speaking about them? Or they say saying, oh man, that hopeful church they have all those community outreach programs.

We're so impressed to speak against the church. They speak against you as evildoers It is presumed in verse 12 that even as you do good the general response of the world will be to speak against you as evildoers and if they don't get converted then they come to the day of visitation visitation.

And what result do your good works have on that day. Now what with particular individuals and if God is pleased to pour out, His Spirit in a great work of revival, as he has done at times in the history of his church, that could come to a culture or a nation.

And we pray and desire for that. What we particular individuals, we hope that we may get an opportunity to give an answer for the hope that we have, which is also in the context of first and second Peter. And that as we tell about Christ, they will be brought to faith in him, but even if they don't, what do what function do, our good works have.

According to verse 12, we're not even down to verse 15 yet, which is our primary proof text. Okay, you are good works. Glorify God. When and the day of visitation. So they glorify God in the day of visitation. Now this is not by commending and and praising. God, we find out how they end up glorifying.

God by our good works. In verse 15. So continuing therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man. For the Lord's sake, This is a very hard scripture because the ordinances of man are often very foolish and wearism and yet there's a limitation built right into the command, What is the limitation that's built in there?

I think I heard it. Someone say for the Lord's sake, all right, there are things that they that men tells you to do that cannot be obeyed for the Lord's sake. It crosses love of God, It crosses love of neighbor. It crosses specific commandments by which he flushes out for us.

The love of God and love of neighbor. For instance, first table of the law, the worship of the only God commandment one. How the only God has given himself to us and given to us to worship Him, commandment to the, the way we use our mouths. Generally with a view, especially to the primary purpose of the use of our mouths, the lifting up of the name of God.

And the way we bear his name, which He has put on us commandment 3, the when of worship, the the holy day, one day in seven in a holy Convocation commandment for. So who how, or who, through what actions with in, what manner and the when of worship a long comes the civil magistrate and he says you may not gather for the public worship of God.

Is that one of the every ordinance of man that we are to submit ourselves to? Of course not because he says forsake not the assembling of yourselves together all the more as you see the day approaching The strong connection isn't there between Hebrews 10 and even this section here So this does take some discernment but the for the Lord's sake, helps you restrain.

That rebellion that that our remaining sin tends towards, We must not use that for the Lord's sake as a kind of trick that we can use to disobey every command. We don't like It must be aiming at love of God, and obedience for his commandments. And when we read verse 13, the for the Lord's sake does imply, doesn't it that there are going to be commandments of men or ordinances of man.

That the fact that we are honoring the Lord who has established. The authority is the only reason we would obey that, okay? There's more to untangle there but we're going to we're going to have to leave it there Whether to the king as supreme or to governors as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good for this is the will of God that by doing good.

You may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Okay. So they are ignorant. They are foolish and yet your love of God and obedience to His commandments, you can zero in. He's zeroes in here on the fifth commandment and he says the way that you keep the fifth commandment in honoring and submitting to and obeying authority so far as you are able to do so.

For the Lord's sake, that will humiliate the ignorant and foolish magistrate in the day of visitation. So as free yet, not using liberty as a cloak for vice. But as bondservants of God honor, all people love the brotherhood. Fear God, honor the king, obviously. We didn't end up having as much time as we needed to go through.

Sorry that some of us were we're not here when we were in Luke and seeing the example of the Lord about month and a half ago in his trial and remembering this passage in in particular, but the Lord Jesus didn't just atone for us in his redemption. If you look at verse 18 through 25 and we can't go phrased by phrase now but he didn't just atone for us.

He also left us an example, verse 21 because one of the things he purchased is that we wouldn't be like sheep without a shepherd. We wouldn't be left to each of us go our own way, But we would return to the shepherd and overseer of our souls verse 25.

One of the things he died for verse 24 is that you would live for righteousness. Now, there are going to be those whose mouths are are stopped as the Lord converts them, but every single adversary will ultimately have his mouth stopped by the good works of the church. It's not the only thing that stops his mouth, But either it will be stopped as the Lord brings him to faith as one of the wonderful things that often happens in someone's conversion.

He who despised the church greatly suddenly views, the church as His people and loves them dearly and gives his life to serve, His brothers, and sisters, and to serve the Lord in his church. Who's the great Bible? Example of that. The Apostle Paul, exactly. Right and many give that that testimony of one of the first indicators of the greatness of their conversion was how they went from hating the church to loving the church.

So that's one way the mouth can be stopped but if the mouth is not stopped in this life still it'll be stopped in the day of visitation. They will have spoken of you as an evildoer throughout your life. Here, There are many who just for gathering and worshiping for affirming biblical, doctrine of of man just male and female biblical doctrine of marriage.

They don't, you know, they don't just want acceptance, right? That was the lie of the 80s and 90s. We just won't acceptance. You know, they demand your approval and if you don't approve, they speak of you as what evildoers. But what will it be like of the last day?

There's no jury. There's no expert witnesses. There's only the living and true and holy God. And everyone's mouths will be stopped, and as you are commended by God for what Christ produced in you, His likeness in you, His retrieving, you from wandering, and bringing you back to the Shepherd and

overseer of your souls that you lived for righteousness, how humiliated they will be who spoke against you as evildoers.

And so, your God will be glorified whether by conversion in this life, or by His holiness and just nests in the last day You can obey God, you can do these good works for which you have been created. Now and know that the mouths of the adversaries will be stopped.

Either now or in that day right now? Our flesh says well, sure. Pie in the sky by and by no don't let yourself think about think like that that great day is called the great day or the day of visitation. For a reason, It is not a small thing that their mouths will be stopped in that day by the good works of the Lord produces in you dear church.

So, here's one more of the purposes of good works in the Christian's life, to stop the mouths of adversaries. Let's pray.

The Lord. We thank you that you have Indeed atoned for us by Christ. We praise you. Lord Jesus, who had never been under authority being yourself, the living and true God, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Spirit from everlasting to everlasting, who are the head of all authority.

And yet you came and you humbled yourself and the fullness of time, The father sent you, the Son to be born under the law to be born of a woman and you submitted yourself even unto death. Even under the oppression of the wicked, and trusting yourself to Him who judges, justly?

We bless your name. We thank you. That it is your perfect obedience that has counted for us. And now we ask by your spirit that you would make us to be like yourself that you would give us from yourself to live for righteousness that we might glorify you who have humbled yourself in order to redeem us by adding humanity to yourself.

Now be glorified in the next in the next part of our day, we ask is we come over and gather through you to God in the holy assembly. Be glorified by the fruit of your atonement, Be glorified by that worship, which has been consecrated unto God through your blood be glorified by that access that we have through your flesh and make us to rejoice in you before God.

And to adore you our God and Savior Jesus Christ for its in your name. We ask Him, Amen.