

“Of Good Works” part 13 WCF 16.5–6

Good Works Not Meritorious, but Still Rewarded

2021.12.19 Sabbath School Lesson

Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

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WCF 16.5–6 (TPH p928)

16.5. We cannot, by our best works, merit pardon of sin, or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins;^a but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants;^b and because, as they are good, they proceed from his Spirit;^c and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment.^d

a. Job 22:2-3; 35:7-8; Psa 16:2; Rom 3:20; 4:2, 4, 6; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7. • b. Luke 17:10. • c. Gal 5:22-23. • d. Psa 130:3; 143:2; Isa 64:6; Rom 7:15, 18; Gal 5:17.

16.6. Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him,^a not as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unreprovable in God's sight;^b but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.^c

a. Gen 4:4 with Heb 11:4; Exod 28:38; Eph 1:6; 1 Pet 2:5. • b. Job 9:20; Psa 143:2. • c. Mat 25:21, 23; 2 Cor 8:12; Heb 6:10; 13:20-21.

Job 22:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: ² “Can a man be profitable to God, though he who is wise may be profitable to himself? ³ Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous? Or is it gain to Him that you make your ways blameless?

Job 35:6 If you sin, what do you accomplish against Him? Or, if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him? ⁷ If you are righteous, what do you give Him? Or what does He receive from your hand? ⁸ Your wickedness affects a man such as you, and your righteousness a son of man.

Psalms 16:1 Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust. ² O my soul, you have said to the LORD, “You are my Lord, my goodness is nothing apart from You.”

Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*” ⁴ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. ⁵ But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, ⁶ just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ⁷ “*Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;*” ⁸ *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.*”

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Titus 3:3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Luke 17:7 And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat?’ ⁸ But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink?’ ⁹ Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. ¹⁰ So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’”

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those *who are Christ's* have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Psalm 130:3 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? ⁴ But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.

Psalm 143:1 Hear my prayer, O LORD, Give ear to my supplications! In Your faithfulness answer me, and in Your righteousness. ² Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no one living is righteous.

Isaiah 64:5 You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, Who remembers You in Your ways. You are indeed angry, for we have sinned—In these ways we continue; and we need to be saved. ⁶ But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. ⁷ And there is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us, and have consumed us because of our iniquities.

Romans 7:13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. ¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. ¹⁶ If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. ¹⁷ But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. ¹⁹ For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. ²⁰ Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ²¹ I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²² For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Genesis 4:4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering... Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

Exodus 28:36 "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, *like* the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD ³⁷ And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. ³⁸ So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

1Peter 2:4 Coming to Him as *to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Job 9:19 If it is a matter of strength, indeed He is strong; and if of justice, who will appoint my day in court? ²⁰ Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me; though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse.

¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

Matthew 25:20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' ²¹ His lord said to him, 'Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' ²² He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' ²³ His lord said to him, 'Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

2Corinthians 8:10 And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; ¹¹ but now you also must complete the doing *of it*; that as *there was* a readiness to desire *it*, so *there also may be* a completion out of what *you* have. ¹² For if there is first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to what one has, *and* not according to what he does not have.

Hebrews 6:9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. ¹⁰ For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. ¹¹ And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹² that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Hebrews 13:20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹ make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen."

(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. How he thank you. And praise you the ever blessed? God who have no need of

anything. Who are sufficient in yourself who are joyful in yourself from everlasting to everlasting?

You are God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You dwell in perfect, blessedness and love. And adoration fellowship within yourself. Try and God and you have made us out of pure generosity, we can add nothing to you. We can do nothing for you but you give us the privilege and the joy and the glory of being made to know you and enjoy you.

And love you and have fellowship with you. Indeed. Oh God. You ordained that we by our own, free choice. Would sin and die so that you might redeem us through Christ. And in union with him, bring us even into your own fellowship and we are amazed at this. We have hardly scratched the surface of understanding it.

Our whole lifelong walking with you. Even those of us who have studied and known the most how little we know. But how glorious as the little that we do know. We thank you for how that informs how we think about good works. We pray for the help of your spirit.

Now, as we think a little bit about our good works that you have created for us, created us for and prepared beforehand. To walk in them. We pray that you would help us to understand the portions of your word that we consider that you would be glorified. Not only by helping us have good explanations but opening our understanding even as we look forward to hearing preached and the public worship this morning.

So give us these things. We pray for, we ask it in the name and upon the worthiness of Christ. Amen. So we get to paragraph five and I think I'm just going to read the paragraphs and try to explain to them. There are a lot of scripture passages to deal with and if we dive into them ahead of time, I'm afraid that we won't get to at least give the outline of the teaching on the whole of the passages paragraph five.

We cannot We cannot by our best works. Merit pardon of sin or eternal life at the hand of God. We cannot earn pardon of sin or eternal life. We can't earn anything at all. From God, let alone something so great. As the pardon of sin, that is against the very glory of God or something, that is so great.

As the enjoyment of God himself for all eternity. So we cannot buy our best works merit, pardon of sin or eternal life at the hand of God. By reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come. So, there's one reason, our best works. Now are worse that, you know, greatly worse than our works.

Will be in the glory to come When we are sinless. When we have been conformed to the image of Christ, when you will never have to worry again about that mixture of motives in your heart, or the or the tendency towards pride or the sneaking desire, that others would notice how good you are.

Rather than having a whole-hearted unmixed desire, that everyone would know how good your god is, and all these things that we have mixed in with our best works. Now they'll be gone you know we do genuinely good works now but they're not compared to be compared with what we will be like in glory.

So that's what that's saying. That's one reason by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come. And the infinite distance that is between us and God whom that is God by them. By our good works. We can neither profit nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins.

Now, If you want to well, you shouldn't necessarily want to. But one of the impressive theological words that people discover when they get into studying and enjoying the theology, especially with connection to the character of God, what he is like is the ossayity of God, the Ossayity of God A-S-E-I-T-Y, that means that God is completely independent of the creature that he is sufficient to himself.

That he is autonomous. That we cannot actually affect him in any way. You can't harm God. You can't benefit God. You cannot do anything to him. He does not gain by you or lose by you. It's connected to the unchangeableness of God But when we realize that he is completely independent and we are completely dependent, we we begin to understand how ridiculous it is.

To think that God would owe any creature anything ever for even the best most perfect work You can see even from the beginning of creation when God creates and the spirit of God hovers over the hovers, over the waters that there is nothing that can happen in all of creation, except an entire dependence, upon God, the Holy Spirit.

We are accustomed to talking about our spiritual lives as being dependent upon God, the Holy Spirit. God, the Holy Spirit must sustain all things at all times and the Lord upholds. All things

at all times by the word of his power. We are utterly dependent Even if we had never fallen into sin, all of the good that we could ever do would still be credited, only to God.

Yes, Dave can't do any works in super irrigation. Oh no, you can't even do works of neutral. Irrigation irrigation works works that are worthy these referring back to and you probably covered this. When you did the fourth paragraph, right? The papist idea that you could not only do good enough to earn stuff from God, but you could get extra credit with God and you could bank it and then other people could pay the Pope money did withdraw, your good works from the bank is how profane and disgusting is the papist doctrine of good works.

How demeaning of God? It's It's not if you hear theology like that and you are disgusted, you are on the right track. It's it's not enough to to be in disagreement or even just offended to to think of God as dependent upon or owing to the creature. For a good work is unworthy of him as offensive.

It's an abomination. So yeah, no works of super irrigation. There's yeah, the difference between biblical Christianity and papist doctrine is not in some few minutia of details. They are opposite religions. Yes. Jeremiah, I might be wrong but my understanding is that the Catholic position is that, I'm sure there's some differences between together itself.

What is that? They don't actually believe God. Ultimately my own thing provided by the Covenant. God has. Contain like humans condescended to make a covenant whereby the company works whereby someone. So yes, the papists will try to soften the offensiveness of their doctrine by talking about synergism, or talking synergistically about grace being involved in the works.

And yet, they do still think that the works are meritorious. And that there are works, that are even more meritorious than necessary, it really is just offensive. I mean, I don't mean that, you know, every papist you see is gonna have giant green eyes, and horns and you drool slime their doctrine, does, they may just be roly-poly nice, guys, who you would enjoy having as a neighbor, and then God's common grace.

He restrains sin and keeps the extent of our errors from expressing themselves in our lives. And praise God because every one of us in this room have errors that if the Lord didn't restrain the expression thereof we would we would make Earth into hell all by ourselves and we wouldn't need any papers to help us.

But yeah, the The doctrine of super irrigation is is very offensive, especially too. This truth of the, of the Asset of God of the fact that we cannot profit him at all, or, you know, let alone satisfy for the debt of our former sins. You know, one of the things that Job takes a hit from his friends on is the idea that by claiming this blamelessness before God that comes as a function of God's grace that that Job has set himself equal to God.

But read, you know, if we had time

To, to get in, you know, further into the book of Job here.

Right. So, if you flip over to Job, you know, where Job 9:19 is? Yeah, if it doesn't matter of strength, he is indeed strong. If of justice, who will appoint my day in court, though? I were righteous. My own mouth would condemn me Though. I were blameless it would it would prove me perverse In other words.

Job knows that he doesn't have any plea before God That he would prosecute himself. If if he had a legal audience illegal audience before God We cannot do God. Any good whatsoever. When we have done all that, we can we're right after the footnote A there in paragraph. Five When we have done all that we can we've done, but our duty and are unprofitable servants.

This of course, follows from the fact that that which is good, is what God has commanded. And if you've done all that, God has commanded. All you've done is what's required of you Now, what are you gonna add to that? There can't be anything else good to do because God hadn't commanded it.

The, yeah, the fact that we get to in the next paragraph that God actually rewards. Good works. That's not so much. I testimony to his justice. Although it is to the extent that those good works are done in Christ and Christ is actually worthy and what the what the Father sees of his Son in the good works that you do by faith in Jesus Christ.

Your good works have in them. The worthiness not of your performance but the worthiness of the Christ in whom your good works were performed and the justice of God does reward good works on the basis of who it is in whom you have done those good works. The fact that you have done those good works by trusting in Jesus by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

Working out the life of Jesus in you and God responds to the perfection of His Son in your imperfect. Good works. So there is justice there. But I hope you can see that the way that there

gets to be justice there magnifies God's grace, because your good works. Now are to a great extent, not that you are passive in them, You're passive in your forgiveness, right?

Jesus has earned all of that forgiveness. You cannot do anything. You are active. In your good works that you do independence upon Christ, but all the goodness comes from him. It's it's, it's a, it's a combined work with Jesus but he's putting in everything good. It's a gift that you do.

The good works and it's a gift that you do. Good works that God is both just and generous to reward at the same time. That's what paragraphs. Five and six are getting it taken together. So when we have done all, we can we have done, but our duty and our unprofitable servants and because as they are good, they proceed from his Spirit and that's just recognizing that, only only the Holy Spirit can produce anything good.

We do not produce anything good from ourselves And as they are wrought by us. Okay, so the spirit is producing. Good works in us and sustaining us in doing good works. But what do we bring to the table? Because we are actually doing the good works. And the fact that it's you who does the good works?

The fact that, as I, who am doing my good works, even independence of all the spirit means, there's a whole lot of stuff in there. That is not good because it comes from me, right? So as they as the good works are wrought are done or worked by us.

They are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they cannot endure. The severity of God's judgment That is if if the good works that you and I did because of all of the the mixture of mixed motives and desires and goals and in, you know, and enjoying not just, that which is good, but even that which is, which is wicked.

And even the performance, what? We speak falling short, what we do falling short, all the all that we put into it if God were to judge your good works on the basis of how well they were done, you would go to hell for your best work. And, you know, so the goodness comes from the spirit because nothing because that's the only place goodness can come from, but because we are the ones who are doing them.

There's never any room for pride before men, let alone before God, you know, that, that impulse that you have when you have been walking with the Lord by his grace in faithfulness. Doing well, there's a temptation because there is a qualitative difference. There's a real difference between the way you live and speak and act and the the unbeliever and the wicked live and speak and act.

And then something comes in God's providence and that impulse that you, and I have to cry out to God. And say Lord? Why isn't it made a difference? You know, that's that's the, that's the mindset. That's the wicked mindset from the beginning of Isaiah 58 where the Israelites think of their good works as a fist by which they can beat out of God.

Good things that they feel like they deserve. And yeah, maybe you're ahead of me in grace and you never have that reflex of the heart or mind anymore, but the fact that I still experience that shows me, how much fleshliness is left. I'm so grateful to God for what he's what he's done in me, but I hope that you and I both can feel palpably the reality of this truth.

That even are good works as they are brought by us, our defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they cannot endure. This severity of God's judgment so that we can sing with all our heart. You know Psalm 130, which I think is in the, in the proof text down here.

Lord, if you were to mark iniquities who could stand, but with you, there is forgiveness that you may be feared that you may be worshiped and your heart just opens up with praise because you know that about your works and yet you know that God rewards the good works of believers.

Now our good works are not worthy except for Christ being there. Worthiness, but they are rewarded Earlier in the chapter when we were when we were first getting into the reality of good works. We talked about good works being not meritorious but necessary that your works. Do not earn anything from God, But that there is no one who is ever saved without also doing good works.

Because part of God's salvation is not just that he forgives your sins in Jesus, part of his salvation is delivering you from bondage, to sin, and making you to be like, Jesus and producing in. You the love of Jesus for God, and for man, And the desire to keep His commandments.

And So your good works. Don't earn anything but they are necessary. We need to understand that meritorious does not mean necessary. So when we say our good works are not meritorious, they're not worthy, they do not earn anything. It doesn't mean they're unimportant or unnecessary or that anyone will ever be saved without them.

They don't do any of the saving of you, but they are part of what God does in you when he saves

you. So just like good works, are not meritorious, but they are still necessary. So also good works are not meritorious but they are rewarded and the reward is of grace.

That's what we get into in the sixth paragraph here. Yet notwithstanding the persons of believers being accepted through Christ. Their good works. Also are accepted in him Not as though they were in this life. Holy unblamable and unreprouvable in God's sight. In other words not because the way they were done God has no problem with or would not judge or condemn but that he that is God looking upon them.

That is our good works. In His Son, He is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere Although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections. Now if we were to start, you know we've got 15 minutes left and enough passages to probably go for three hours. So what I'd like to do at this point is if there's something in paragraphs, five or six that you're having difficulty with or is a new idea for you?

Oh, or just a heart? Yeah, difficulty understanding, or maybe difficulty accepting that you would let us, you know, let me know and we'll go to the scriptures from which those doctrines come and start there.

Yes, Justin is a bit more nebulous, but I can't think the official name, but the graceways because we touch on their kind of twist on this and maybe set up a fence there. You're thinking of like Julian and color and

There's a large complex of errors there to correct. I need you to be more specific. The, you know, the grace boys, talk about the good works of believers is if they don't exist, so that when believers fall into spectacular sin, They just kind of shrug and say, well, that's okay, we're no different from pagan's except that we're forgiven.

And that Christianity does not have in it a walking with God and holiness. But that Christianity is learning to be as accepting of our sin as God is because of Jesus, which that might be worse than the papist stuff. We were talking about earlier because now you have a god who doesn't care about holiness and doesn't care to make those.

Whom he redeems, holy and who doesn't care if his church, is defiled by wicked sin, which you can't really, how can you read cover to cover, you know, not just the Old Testament, the the Lord in among his lampstands, in the opening chapters of Revelation. And of the you know the Corinthian correspondence and that this this God who doesn't make us to walk in.

Good works, doesn't care. If we do, doesn't doesn't want a repenting and growing and pursuing of obedience with all that. We are independence upon grace, the the god of that little grace, I hate to use that word, right. Ghetto of reformed. Presbyterianism is not the God of the Bible and that so-called gospel is not the gospel of the Bible, the Lord has done more for us and he is more and he's better.

If you haven't run into it just yeah it's not a bad thing that Christian bookstores. Don't exist anymore. You can't go in and pick up, pick the popular ones, and have your theology messed up. Just don't use Google to do theology. Okay. You have you have a pastor who would gladly work himself literally into the grave rather than have you read theological spiritual garbage.

That would harm your soul. Yeah, Jeff. You were it's not mentioned here. But wouldn't Do you think a good is not the best summation of the believers relationship to work and faith is in James chapter 2? Well, I mean and I know that there's certain denominations that take that out of context within you are holding as It's written in context.

He says, you know, he says, even so faith it hath not works as dead being alone. Yemem may say that has faith and I have worked. Show me thy faith throughout thy works and I will show you my faith by my works and keep reading You see what he's saying.

Yeah, you are a believer and you have true faith. You will have works. Yeah. I So when you said the best place, I thought, Ephesians 2:8 through 10. It's a little more succinct and a little less misunderstood. But, you know, when you talk about best place I you know that's dangerous right?

To talk about the best place to look for something James too. Is definitely the yeah classical locust. The place in the Bible that you go for necessary but not meritorious that there's no such thing as somebody who's saved without God producing works in them. You know, the, the passage that used to be thrown in my face when I would reason that way or the thing in the Bible that would be throwing my face would be, was usually the thief on the cross, right?

Saved by the skin of his teeth at the last minute. But I think when we were hearing preached through Luke and we came to the thief, on the cross, we saw a lot of evidence and fruit of regeneration and love for Christ and His glory. And yeah. So sometimes I wonder if, you know,

there's not more good works in those few minutes than some believers have in decades of walking with the Lord.

Yeah. So James 2 I think is very helpful. Pretty sure. We We opened up from James to several times earlier, in chapter 16. The this is actually an accurate. I think it's we're on our 13th lesson in chapter 16 and my memory isn't that great. But Yeah, James 2.

And there's lots of places in Paul where he talks about they're having believed and you could put belief in quote, you know, fear quotes there in vain, or him having labored in vain that. If the, the fruit of a gospel work was not, was not produced in the lives of the Corinthians.

For instance they would find that what they had called faith was just a way of talking in a self-deception and it will not hold up in the last day Only God genuinely saving you can hold up in the last day There's no yeah formula of words or or signing on to ideas that stance at the judgment.

There's just Jesus, and it doesn't do us any good to if we haven't. Had God actually save us by his power through faith in Jesus Christ and, and transform us into new people. It doesn't do us any good to play around with words and say, well, my fruitless life is okay because of all this doctrine, you can't say that at the judgment.

If you have, if you're worried about a fruitless life, there's a God who saves and who forgives and who joins to Christ by faith and who transforms by His power. And if you're worried about a fruitless life, ask the God who saves to give you fruit, Ask him to assure you.

Now, you don't want to cling to being sure, of yourself Christ is sure you cling to him, even in the absence of any fruit that you think you can see. But as you cling to him know, that he also is the one who gives fruit and ask him to have mercy on you.

And to spare you from your distress over how small your fruit is because the the one who is sure that you cannot be lost. Clinging to Jesus Christ is the same one who can give you that fruit. Or at least give you eyes to see that he is working that fruit.

There's probably fruit that you cannot see, But what you can see in Scripture is Christ and you cling to him while you ask him for it. One of the problems with these theological debates is they happen in the abstract and often at someone trying to excuse fruitlessness? Because it is Well fruitlessness is uncomfortable because that's not the way it's supposed to be and it should send you flying to Christ to cling to him for it.

All right. Well, don't know, I guess at this point we would jump into Job 22 and go straight through. One of the things, one of the hallmarks of the book of Job is ostensibly good. Doctrine being misapplied by Job's friends. So you know elephants yeah, ask the rhetorical question.

Can a man be profitable to God? Or is it any pleasure to the Almighty? Or is it gained to him all this that you have done Job? He doesn't understand what job is pleading. What job is pleading is what God had said about Job from the beginning of the book, right?

God was the one, the first one in the book of Job who comes up with the idea that Job is a godly blameless, man. Right. Job didn't come up with that idea Now Job isn't. Yeah, yeah. Neither God nor Job or are saying that with respect to the perfection of Job's works.

But Elliphaz is using a true doctrine to answer statements that he is hopefully not intentionally misinterpreting their but it is a true doctrine. We cannot profit God. It is not gain to him. Same thing in Job. 35. Yeah. Satan can't hurt. God, our sin does not hurt. God, We don't do anything to him.

We can't take anything from him, you know, when that runs into this, you know, people talk about messing up God's will for your life. Well, If you're a believer, God's will for your life is that you would be perfectly happy and perfectly holy forever. And your sin is offensive to his to his righteousness and holiness.

And it robs you of the privilege of showing the glory of your Redeemer, a lot of things that does to you, But the fact that you cannot undo the good and perfect work, that God has determined to do for you, from before the foundation of the world, which is the only way you ever came to believe in Jesus, to begin with.

Should be a great comfort to. You Shouldn't encourage you in sinning, but the believer can can never say, oh God had this plan for me. But I screwed it up That is. That's also yeah. Offensive to think that we could undo the work of God. Yes, Scott. You cannot be bad in heaven, because God loves you so much that before he lets you go to heaven.

He will make you perfectly. Holy Scripture says that without holiness. No one will see the Lord and

it gives us a promise. It says that we don't know what will be like in heaven, right? Being not bad at all, is something that I can't even imagine. I try to think about what it'll be like, but my whole lifelong to this moment.

The only experience I have as experience in which there's still a lot that's bad in me. So in in first John he says we do not know what we will be like. But We know that when he appears, we'll be like him because we'll see him as he is.

So I have a promise that this goodness that, I don't know what it's like at all. I'm going to have it because I'm going to be like Jesus and if you believe in Jesus you have that promise too. And then the the next thing it says, and he who has that, hope he, who is sure that he's going to be like Jesus.

He purifies himself even as Jesus is pure, which means I don't even know what it's like to be that. But I still aim it that because I know that that's what God has guaranteed for me. And if that's what God wants to do for me, it's better than anything that I want to do for me.

So I will try and aim at what God is doing for me. So no, You can't be bad and be in heaven, But if you trust in Jesus, he's gonna get rid of the bad before he brings you to heaven, you don't have to worry about that, You just purify yourself.

Now, you use everything. He says that he's going to use to make you holy and he's going to be the one who does it. Is a great question. So how did Satan rebell in heaven? Satan was not loved before the foundations of the world in a way that would aim being united by faith to the second person of the Trinity and enter into the pleasures of God, Satan was given a will to be the first critical theorist.

He said, power and authority are bad since I don't have them and I should and that's literally how he became the devil.

I get the choice. You're saying, Satan could be bad because he wasn't love from the beginning of. He had a genuinely free will Just like we all have genuinely free will. In terms of that we make real choices, does the free will go away when we get to heaven.

No, You'll just be good. So you'll only make good choices. Okay, yeah. All right, Let's pray.

Oh our Father, you are good. And the best work is to know you and your goodness to love you and adore you and worship you to delight in you with the delight that you have, that you have in your self from all eternity. And so we're so grateful to you for the reality of your working.

Good works in those. Whom you save only by Jesus's works because we want this best to work. We want to love you. And enjoy you and have everything that we think and say and do come out of that pleasure and be aimed at your glory, our hearts ache for it even, not really knowing what it is because we just don't have a point of reference.

But we thank you that you are committed that even that which we don't know what it will be. We will certainly have that when he appears we will be like him and see him as he is. Oh Lord Jesus. That we may not now see you as you are grant the ministry of your spirit that we would see you by faith and lay hold of you in the worship and rejoice in you and magnify your name.

Help us. Now, as we come to the public worship, we pray in your own precious name. Lord Jesus. Amen.