

Luke 17; Lord's Day 24

THE PLACE OF GOOD WORKS

- I. Not for salvation.
 - A. Any effort to add to man's efforts to what Jesus has done is a most serious error.
 - 1. Sinful human nature (sinful pride) always wants to say that good works merit something with God.
 - 2. Matthew 7:21-23 is Jesus' answer to all who think that man can add to what Jesus has done.
 - B. The Reformed faith maintains that man's works cannot and do not merit with God.
 - 1. It is Christ alone through grace alone by faith (God's gift) alone – Lord's Day 11; Belgic, Art. 22.
 - 2. One, the only righteousness which God approves is absolutely perfect.
 - 3. Two, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified - by the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20).
 - 4. Three, even the perfect human (Adam before the fall) is only an unprofitable servant to God (Luke 17:7ff).
 - 5. Four, the perfect slave is still unprofitable because he only what is required of him (Luke 17:10).
 - C. Our works do nothing to earn or lose - the good do not add to and the bad do not detract from what Jesus did.
- II. Salvation by grace alone does not mean that good works are unnecessary.
 - A. First, salvation puts each elect into communion with Christ, and He makes us fruitful as vine gives life to branches.
 - B. Second, God gives us a forgiveness and righteousness which makes us aware of His work toward and in us.
 - C. One saved by grace (undeserved love) will never be careless and profane about his relationship to God.
 - 1. First, objectively true religion is to serve God.
 - 2. Second, the connection of Jesus to each believers makes us willingly yield ourselves and our members in His service.
 - 3. Third, the justified sinner is dead to sin, i.e., principally no longer loving sin.
 - D. Finally, God treats us as children (not slaves) and gives us wonderful incentives to encourage us in our godly walk.
- III. Good works are rewarded, but it is the reward of grace (not because of any merit).
 - A. First, we realize that Scripture does speak of rewards promised to believers.
 - B. Second, the Biblical word "reward" does not conflict with salvation by grace alone without works.