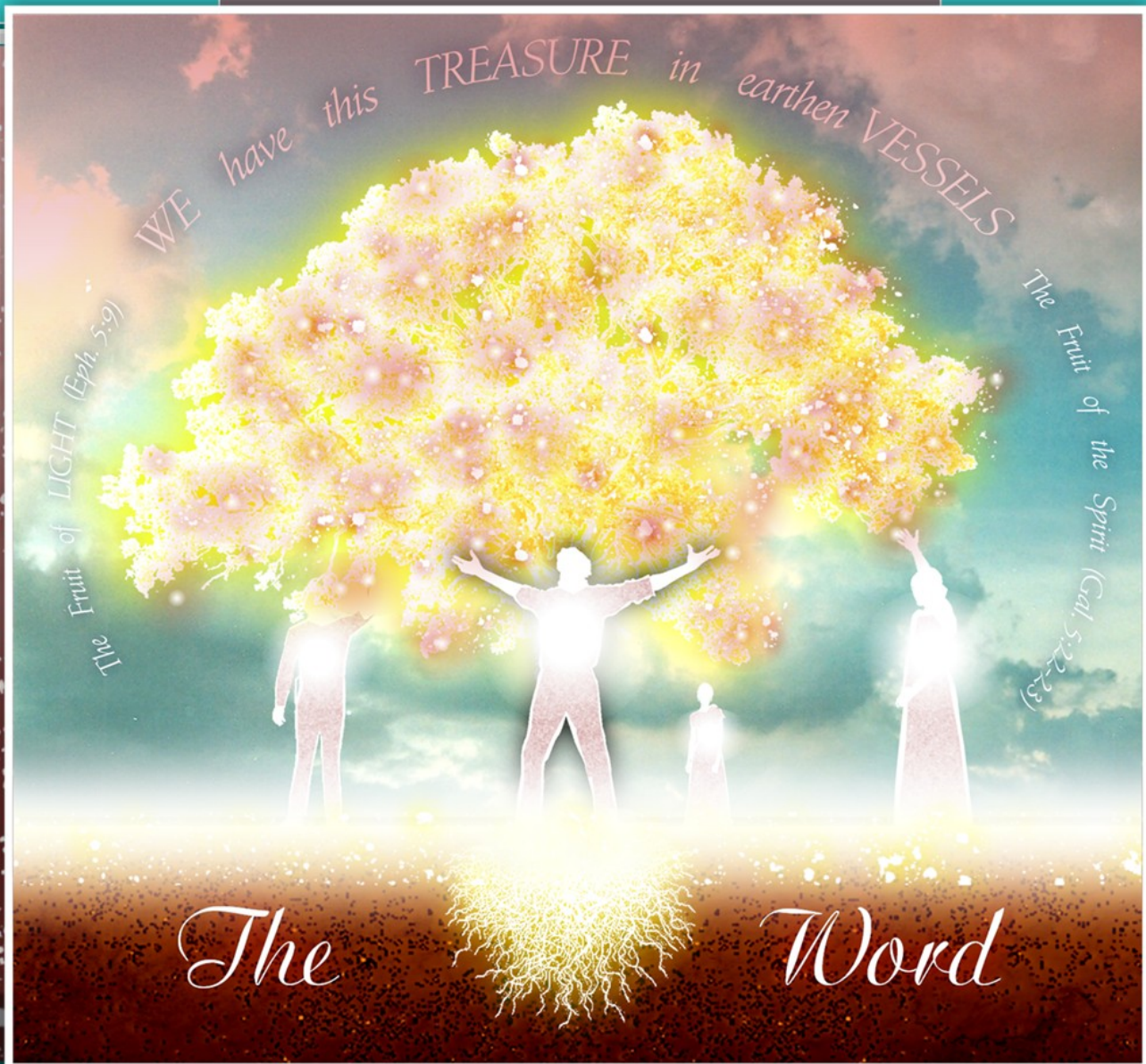


# - GOOD WORKS -

*"And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."*

*(Matthew 13:23 ESV)*

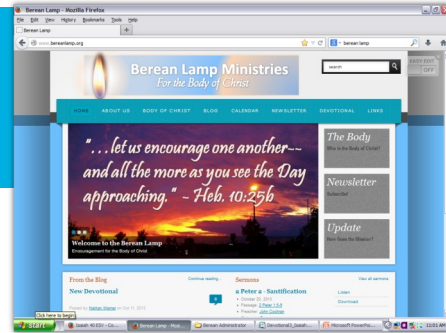


**Berean Lamp Ministries**  
*For the Body of Christ*

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## The Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)



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The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

Visit [www.bereanlamp.org/lampstand/](http://www.bereanlamp.org/lampstand/) for an explanation of the cover art.

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## Created for Good Works

By Scott Moller

*“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*  
(Ephesians 2:10 NIV)

We have been re-created, born-again through faith in Jesus Christ. Scripture tells us that we have been re-purposed through our salvation from the purposes we used to live for before we were saved. Our new purpose is to do the works of God, just as God gave Jesus works to do. Jesus said, *“the works that the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about Me that the Father has sent Me”* (John 5:36b). *“For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all that He Himself is doing”* (John 5:20a).

Do we approach each day looking for what God has shown us He is doing, that we should imitate Him? Or do we let distractions and the cares of this world convince us we are created to get what we need—that we are to work for the “good” of ourselves? This is what the world broadcasts constantly into our ears, trying to distract us from the works God has shown us to do through His Son Jesus.

With distractions and cares, it is so easy for us to lose sight of the real reason we are on this earth—to serve God! In this manner, *“whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. **You are serving the Lord Christ**”* (Colossians 3:23-24)! Amen.



By Natalie Warner

## Fellowship Nurtures Good Works

By Nathan Warner

*“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”*  
(Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV)

In the book of Acts we see that the first Churches in Jerusalem “were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42). These Believers weren’t going through the motions here – they devoted themselves to **Scriptural teachings, Fellowship, Communion, and Prayer**. What was their motivation? Did they have really great speakers? Maybe they offered comprehensive programs? Perhaps they had a band performances or dance? No, Jesus Christ was their motivation for why they were devoted to these things! They were motivated by the very real salvation from sins and the rescue from eternal separation from God that Jesus provides. They were motivated in obedience to His commandments to love one another more than themselves (John 13:34-35)! They were motivated in obedience to Jesus’ command that they celebrate His sacrifice often (1 Corinthians 11:25)! They were motivated by His command to pray without ceasing (Matthew 26:41 and 1 Thessalonians 5:17)! God’s love for them and their love for God was their motivation for why they devoted themselves to these things.

While the modern Church is weak in all four areas of the original Church, it is perhaps weakest when it comes to true Christian FELLOWSHIP. And a lack of true Christian fellowship can hamper Believer’s dedication to Scriptural teachings, Communion, prayer, and good works.

### WHAT IS FELLOWSHIP?

Christian fellowship occurs when the mem-

bers of a church body gather together in the name of Jesus – when we come together for Him and for one another, “*for where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst*” (Matthew 18:20). Christian fellowship occurs whenever two or more people come together in the name of Jesus, to honor, worship, and learn more about Him, and to share their gifts with one another.

After all, it is through fellowship – through the Body of Christ, for the Body of Christ – that the gifts of the Spirit work: “*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good*” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). “*For the body does not consist of one member but of many*” (1 Corinthians 12:14). Therefore, “*the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it*” (1 Corinthians 12:21-27). The Body is not to neglect its members, just as the members are not to neglect the Body. We are not to be a passive “audience,” but active in good works (through the gifts and service of the Holy Spirit) towards one another, which is the very meaning of Christian Fellowship.

### WHAT ARE GOOD WORKS?

True Christian good works proceed from the Holy Spirit in us. Good works are found in



every fruit of the Spirit: *“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law”* (Galatians 5:22-23). This fruit is meant for others. It nourishes, heals, supports, and encourages those around us. God is working through you to touch the lives of others for good.

How do we know what good works are? It is by the inspiration of the Spirit of God that His Word prepares us to do them: *“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Yet, regardless of how good our good works are, they cannot make us “righteous” before God’s judgment – they cannot save us, *“for by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them”* (Ephesians 2:8-10). Here too,

we see that by becoming a Believer in Jesus, we have been born again, re-created as a new creation for doing good works.

### NEGLECTING FELLOWSHIP CAUSES HARM TO THE BODY

How are the gifts of the Spirit employed and how can we possibly “stimulate one another to love and good deeds” when we neglect Fellowship? Fellowship is foundational upon which good deeds are built. Good works are done for others. How can you do good works for others when you are not in fellowship with others? How do you know what people’s struggles and needs are when you don’t spend time in fellowship with them? How can you be *“contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality”* (Romans 12:13), when you aren’t around to practice it, and don’t even know what people’s needs are? The modern church has crippled the Body of Christ by neglecting true Christian Fellowship.

Fellowship itself is one of the mightiest works for good. Why? Fellowship is encouragement to the Body, for we are *“mutually en-*

*couraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine”* (Romans 1:12 ESV)! Paul longed to be with the Church in Rome, so that he



By Maria Madsen

could encourage them in their faith and they could encourage him in his faith! We may not realize it, but when we neglect fellowship with Believers, we are discouraging, dissuading, and hindering the faith of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. We cause injury through absence. This is why the preacher says, *"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!"* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12) We are to be in fellowship even when no one is falling, because *"iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another"* (Proverbs 27:17). We are benefitting one another's faith and understanding when we are in Fellowship. But most importantly, we are to *"bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ"* (Galatians 6:2). How do we do that if we're not around to bear them?

#### FELLOWSHIP CAN BE PAINFUL AT TIMES

Fellowship takes a lot of work, and it can be painful. Like any family, God's family has a lot of immature members. Beyond that, we all have immaturities, and we all still sin. At times, we all set our will ahead of God's will. When we do this, we will inevitably come into conflict with Believers who are seeking the Father's will. There can be a lot of judgment, conflict, and hurt in Church at times because of this. How do we deal with this? As long as Fellowship comes together for Jesus and for one another, we should not leave it. Like any large family, the more mature siblings lead by example: *"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God"* (Colossians 3:16). *"Be hospitable to one another without complaint"* (1 Peter 4:9), and *"with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"* (Ephesians 4:2-3). No one said it

would be easy to find Christian Fellowship and to stay in it, but we are to do it in obedience to our Lord and in support of one another.

We need to be supportive and accepting of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ, for Paul says, *"As the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches"* (1 Corinthians 7:17b).

#### "WHAT AM I GETTING OUT OF IT?"

Culturally, modern Christians have a serious problem with commitment and faithfulness in their Christian lives today. We treat Church the way we treat any other worldly organization in our society: "What is it doing for me?" "What am I getting out of it?" We judge the Body of Christ the way we judge all worldly venues. "That movie wasn't worth the money!" "That play was a waste of my time!" We judge everything by how well it serves our own personal interests. "We're not going to that restaurant again, those fries were salty!" If SHOPMART's prices aren't to our liking, we complain, get in our car and drive to the MARTSHOP across town instead. The world's only commitment is to what it gets out of something. Perhaps this world-view mentality has seeped into the modern Christian's approach to the Church.

But the Church isn't a shop, a club, or a worldly organization. It isn't something to be approached like a brand. We're not to be thinking, "This Church is too plain! I'll just shop for something with flavor!" as if we're taking samples in the chip aisle of MARTSHOP. God doesn't describe His Church as a business, club, convention, pag-eant, or community center. He says the Church is His FAMILY, and unlike our blood relations (who may still be unbelievers), He has brought His family together through faith in His Son. We ought to take our relationships more seriously in God's family. Jesus said, *"whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother"* (Matt. 12:50). Do we neglect our earthly brothers, sisters, or mothers? Do we neglect our natural



relations when attending to their needs and their will, even when It means sacrificing our interests? How much less should we neglect fellowship with those who seek to do "the will" of our Heavenly Father?

### BE DILIGENT IN FELLOWSHIP

It is true that our Salvation does not depend on Christian fellowship, Church fellowship, or Church attendance, but our Salvation also does not depend on good works, communion, prayer, and many other things that God has still called us to do. Does that mean we should neglect doing them? Should we half-heartedly obey our Lord and Savior who saved us simply because His salvation is not dependant on how well we obey Him? What does it mean to be undedicated to God's Word, fellowship, communion, prayer, and good works? Like the Church of Laodicea, we will become useless, lukewarm towards God, as Jesus said, *"I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot"* (Rev. 3:15a). Because of their lukewarm attitude to Him and others, Jesus warned them to return to being *"zealous"* (Rev. 3:19b). Like the Church of Jerusalem, we need to be zealous, to be **DILIGENT towards God's Word, Fellowship, Communion together, and Prayer.**

We also need to understand that no matter how good our works are, they don't mean much if we abandon fellowship in the love of Christ and fellowship in love of one another: *"I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for My name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first"* (Rev. 2:2-5a).

The world is filled with uncommitted people in these days, and many uncommitted people will come and go in the Church. We must not let this discourage us, but we must remain zealous, diligent, and faithful to Jesus and towards one another in the love of God. Even so, Amen.



By Lynn Warner

## It Is No Longer I Who Live, but Christ

By Ginny Larsen

*“For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”*

(Galatians 2:19-21)

*“Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.”*

(1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

Our works – what are they? What do we see as works acceptable to God? What works are in vain? What works were “*prepared beforehand for us to do?*” (Eph. 2:10) We can heartily “serve the Lord” full of zeal, yet it is all works of flesh that count for nothing and perhaps are even harmful to truly reaching people for Christ. Many organizations have been started in the name of Jesus that are nothing more than men’s organizations and contrary to God’s true Word. None of us as Christians who love the Lord want that! None of us wants to be an offense to the Gospel, even while we think we are sharing the Gospel. Yet it happens. While well-meaning, we can even drive someone further away from Christ. We can misrepresent Him as Peter did in the Garden of Gethsemane, acting of his own accord when he struck a soldier with the sword, cutting off his ear. He thought he was defending

his Lord and serving Him. We can be used by the devil, thinking we are speaking for God, as Peter did when he rebuked Jesus for saying He must die. Shortly beforehand, the Lord commended Him by saying the Father had revealed truth to him, when He proclaimed Jesus was the Son of God. Now Jesus said, “Get behind me satan!” and stated that Peter did not have in mind the things of God but the things of man.

Until we learn the meaning of what it is to be “in Christ” and “Christ in me,” we also will not learn the works that are acceptable to God in our daily lives. In fact what we perceive as works are not always the “works” He is looking for. What we miss and don’t necessarily call “works” is *His* working in and through us in our normal daily lives, sometimes without us being aware. How we respond to someone, how we reach out to someone, or how we go about our chores in what frame of mind, faith, acceptance, disposition – these all are works that we don’t think of as important or even as “works.” Until He has worked in us the nature of Christ in the little things, how can we truly please Him in the big things? If we grumble over the small tasks and the irritations of a normal day, forgetting to “put on Christ,” how can we in Christ walk out as His representatives – as true witnesses to those around us? If we are not loving our families and the body of Christ, how can we represent Christ? We can zealously serve others all the while neglecting our relationships. All the works we do then are wood, hay, and stubble, and it is all lost.

To be in Christ is the theme of all of the apostle Paul’s teaching. All begins there. We were crucified with Christ – dead to law, to sin, to ourselves and our self-pursuits, to this world, and to the devil’s reach. We were risen with Christ to Heavenly places where He is, where our true life is hidden. It is past tense. It is not something future, it is now as we were placed “in Christ.” If we don’t walk and work in faith in this life, in the reality of it, and the power of it, and the life of Christ Himself in us, our works are dead works. They are only the flesh trying to please God. Religious flesh cannot please God anymore than non-religious flesh.



**Only the works of Christ are acceptable to God.** Only HIS works are “good” works. Only HIS righteousness is acceptable to God. So only as it is His life working in us and through us to do His good will, can we be pleasing to God. Only what is of faith can be pleasing to Him. Our faith in Him through difficulties, learning to stand dressed in His full armor, learning to overcome by believing and embracing His promises, these are works empowered by the Holy Spirit in us. When these are happening in us as a result of our abiding in Him, then true outward works are the natural fruit that will please Him and glorify Him to others. Only He glorifies Himself, we cannot glorify Him with OUR works, but His through us.

Every day we are to be a “living sacrifice unto Him” – *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect”* (Romans 12:1-2).

We present ourselves to God in faith, knowing He alone is the power in us, as we go about our day, that we would see ourselves as His vessel, that He is able to work through every part of our daily life, not just when we are doing some “Christian service.” As I clean my house, I present myself to Him, to do it for His glory. As I have conversations with those I encounter, I present myself to Him, that He can use me as He will in those conversations, keeping me from saying anything that would not glorify Him or benefit another. As I have free time, I present myself to Him, and make myself available to what He wants me to do with it. I present my mind, my eyes, my ears, my all to what is pleasing to Him. Our *good* works are everything that flows from us in



By Maria Madsen

thought, word, and deed, unto Christ out of our faith in Him. Only as it is “Christ Who lives in me, and the life I now live I live by faith in Him” can I be pleasing to Him.

We cannot work to sanctify ourselves. By faith, rather, we work out in our daily lives that which He has worked in us. “Sanctification is the imparting to us of *God Himself* by the Holy Spirit in the soul” (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary on 1 Peter 1:4). Our sanctification is His life in us, and through us, and our working it out even as He works in us to “will and to do” by faith. *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure”* (Philippians 2:12-13).

We cannot work to *keep* ourselves, it is His power that keeps us through faith in His finished work alone, which is given by the presence of His Spirit in us through regeneration. It is not a faith in *our* faith to keep us, but in His work in us and His power – a rest in the eternal life He has given to us and the power of His life in us. We walk in that faith in which His works flow, and respond to the Spirit He has given us as He works in us. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”* (1 Peter 1:3-5).

We cannot work to justify ourselves before God. Nor can we be perfected by or works. *“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, **are you now being perfected by the flesh?**”* (Galatians 3:1-3)

It is Christ alone and His work, embraced

through faith (a complete reliance in Him, all He is, and all He has done) that we are saved, that we are kept, that we are perfected. His works were completed and accepted in Heaven. We have been raised up with Him, in Him, and His work of righteousness becomes imputed to us, as we embrace and rely on all He is and has done, abiding in Him. Only the fruit of His Spirit in us then is acceptable in Heaven. Abiding in Him is what enables us to bear fruit unto Him. *“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples”* (John 15:4-8).

Father, enable us to see and grasp the life of Christ in us, the reality of our being “seated in Heavenly places with Christ” and abide in You daily, that our works will not be burned up but well pleasing to You, on that day when we stand before You, and You are glorified in us! In Jesus’ name may it be so. Amen.





*"Whatever YOU do, work HEARTILY, as for the LORD and not for men, KNOWING that from the Lord you will RECIEVE the inheritance as your REWARD. You are SERVING the Lord Christ." (Colossians 3:23-24)*



By Patty Buswell



*"This is my Uncle Helmer who lived his life as an example to us all by his Christian walk. When his baby granddaughter was put into his hands, all he would say is, 'teach her about Jesus, teach her about Jesus, teach her about Jesus.'" - Patty*



## A Scriptural Primer: GOOD WORKS

Good works are sometimes a controversial subject in the Church. There may be many reasons for this, but perhaps a central one is that nearly all false religions emphasize human efforts and works for “salvation” of one kind or another. Even people claiming to know Christ have emphasized “good” works as what makes us acceptable to God. Many churchgoers today believe that it is the “good” they do that means they can go to Heaven. This is a gross misunderstanding of the Gospel, which clearly says our salvation is a gift that cannot be earned by works, no matter how good they are. As a result, some Christians can get uncomfortable when people are exhorting Believers to “good works,” focusing on this rather than faith in Christ.

While our salvation is not determined by our works, and our focus must be on faith, we have been re-created (born-again) in Jesus to perform the good works of God. We cannot ignore them! Scripture clearly teaches that there will be losses and rewards in the resurrection based on our works. Let’s look at what Scripture says about Good Works. (Translations in KJV, NASB, and ESV).

### ALL THE WORKS OF GOD ARE GOOD

So much of Scripture is praise to God for the works He has done. All of these works are good works. *“O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon His name: make known His deeds among the people. Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him: talk ye of all His wondrous works. Glory ye in His holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD”* (PSALM 105:1-3 KJV).

*“Great are the works of the LORD; They are studied by all who delight in them”* (Psalm 111:2).

Only God knows what is good, and He has made everything for His own glory: *“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits. Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established. The LORD hath made all things for Himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil”* (Proverbs 16:2-4).

### GOD’S WORKS ARE GOOD AND SHOW HIS CHARACTER

*“In the day of my trouble I shall call upon You, For You will answer me. There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord, Nor are there any works like Yours”* (Psalm 86:7-8).

*“For the word of the Lord is right; and all His works are done in truth”* (Psalm 33:4).

*“But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works”* (Psalm 73:28).

*“Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”* (Psalm 107:8).

### HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT ARE GOD’S WORKS?

*“Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness With men who do iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies”* (Psalm 141:4 NASB).

There are works in this world that are not of God. They are works of the devil, works of the flesh. How do we tell them apart? Good works show God’s character, whereas works of the flesh do not: *“Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit*



is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:19-23 ESV).

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil: "Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

"To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. They profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work" (Titus 1:15-16).

"The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed" (1 Timothy 5:24-25).

#### GOOD WORKS BRING GLORY TO GOD

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

"Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:11-13).

"Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom" (James 3:13).

#### GOD HAS CREATED THE BELIEVER TO DO HIS GOOD WORKS IN THE EARTH

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work'" (John 4:34 NASB).

"But He answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working'" (John 5:17).

"We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4).

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also" (John 14:12a).

#### WE ARE TO ENCOURAGE ONE AN- OTHER TO GOOD WORKS

More than just doing good works when it suits us, we are to DEVOTE ourselves to them that we not be unfruitful: "And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful" (Titus 3:14 ESV).



Fellowship in love is crucial to good works: *“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near”* (Hebrews 10:23-25).

We are not saved by our good works, but we are to be devoted to good works now that we are saved: *“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless”* (Titus 3:4-9 ESV).

You cannot have true belief in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit and not produce fruit—you cannot have true faith and not have works: *“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he*

*offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness’—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead”* (James 2:14-26).

*“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. **Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works,** to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed”* (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

*“Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us”* (Titus 2:6-8).

There are many good examples for us of Believers who performed good works: *“Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of **good works** and acts of charity”* (Acts 9:36 ESV).

**WE ARE NOT SAVED BY OUR WORKS,  
BUT WE ARE CREATED TO DO THEM**

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them”* (Ephesians 2:8-10).



*"Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you" (Titus 2:13-15).*

### GOD WORKS GOOD IN US AND HE WORKS GOOD THROUGH US

All of God's works are for our good: *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).*

*"And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).*

Jesus said, *"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works" (John 14:10).*

*"To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power" (2 Thessalonians 1:11)*

*"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8).*

*"Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all His energy that He powerfully works within me" (Colossians 1:28-29).*

*"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, **for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.** Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain" (Philippians 2:12-16 ESV).*

### ALL WORKS WILL BE EXPOSED

The works that all men do will come to light and be revealed: *"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed" (2 Peter 3:10).*

Just as *"the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil"* (1 John 3:8b). We are to imitate Jesus, exposing the works of the devil: *"Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them" (Ephesians 5:11).*

There is coming a day when the Christian will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and their works will be revealed. *"For no one can*



*lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire” (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).*

*“For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God” (John 3:20-21).*

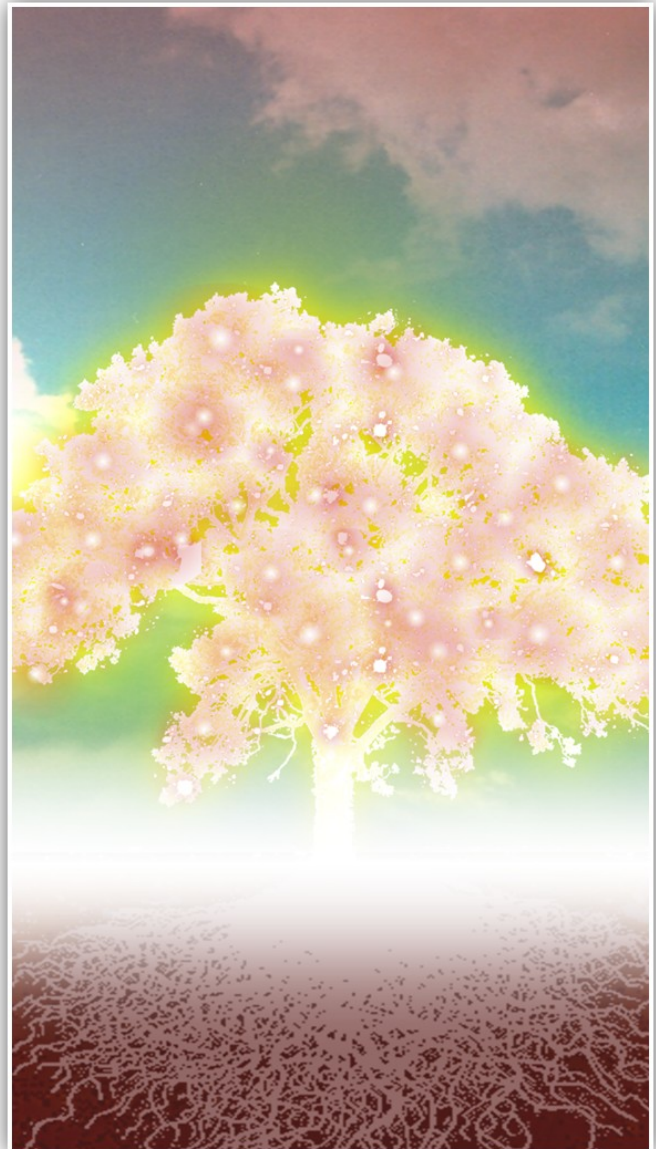
#### REMEMBER, YOU ARE WORKING FOR GOD

Jesus cleansed us from dishonor when He saved us; *“Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work” (2 Timothy 2:21).*

We need to remember that as a Believer, we are on earth as a laborer for God: *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).*

*“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3:23-24).*

*“For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for His name in serving the saints, as you still do” (Hebrews 6:10).*



#### HOW SHOULD WE REACT TO DIFFICULT SITUATIONS?

How should we look at difficult situations in our lives? In speaking about the man who was born blind, the disciples looked at the situation with judgment, but *“Jesus answered, ‘It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him’” (John 9:3).* This is also how we should be seeing the difficulties and trials around us—future displays of the good and mighty works of God.



# GOD EQUIPS US FOR THE WORK HE HAS FOR US TO DO

*“And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).*

God’s Word equips us: *“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).*

*“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:9-10).*

*“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word” (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).*

At the end of our lives, may we also be able to say to our

Heavenly Father, as Jesus did, *“I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4).*

EVEN SO, AMEN!



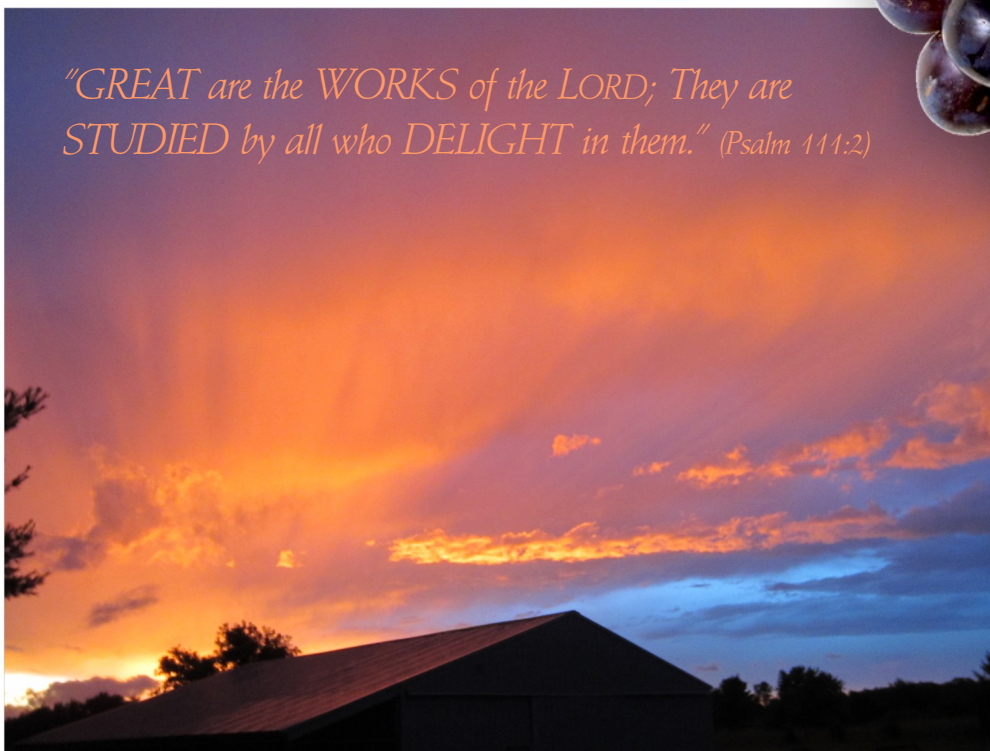
By Elliot Madsen







By Maria Madsen





## GOOD WORKS and SABBATH REST

*“There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.  
For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works,  
as God did from His.” (Hebrews 4:9-10 NASB)*

*“So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” (Matthew 12:12b)*

God took six days to create all things, then He took a day of rest,  
And decided that this seventh day would be forever blessed.  
It was not that He had tired for His strength had not diminished.  
It symbolized that the work He'd done was perfect, good, and finished.

He did this to foreshadow the plan that He had for man's salvation,  
For man would fall but be redeemed and become a *new creation*.  
The work He would complete in Christ, and believers would be blessed,  
With the promise of eternal life and God's true Sabbath rest.

By faith we enter into this rest when we trust the LORD to save us,  
And turn from sin and fleshly works that would otherwise enslave us.  
It's a Sabbath meant for every day and not just one in seven.  
It is yielding up control of life to our Father God in heaven.

We cannot add to the work Christ did to win this Sabbath rest,  
But God has other good works for us to do at His request.  
He created us to serve His church and to witness to the lost,  
By the power He sent through the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

We're to share His timeless truth that leads to hope and consolation—  
Making sure, all the while, that we build upon *His* foundation.  
We're to look for opportunities to serve the needs of others,  
And promote a patient faith amongst our fellow Christian brothers.

Such works will receive a final reward from the Father up above,  
Who looks upon these efforts now as being the fruits of love.  
For it's not about striving to earn God's love but longing to help and serve Him,  
Knowing full well what He did for us and that we don't deserve Him.

By JANE TITRUD

## The Women with the Alabaster Jars

By Lynn Warner

Near the beginning of Jesus' ministry, a Pharisee invited Him to dinner. As He was seated, a woman of the city, a sinner, appeared with an alabaster jar. She *"stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment"* (Luke 7:38).

The Pharisee, in his heart, judged both Jesus and the woman. He reasoned that if Jesus were truly a prophet, He would know who and what manner of woman had touched Him, for she was a sinner. Jesus answered his reasoning by relating an example of two debtors in Luke 7. One debtor owed 500 pence and the other owed 50 pence – neither could pay. The creditor forgave both debtors. Jesus asked, *"Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him most?"* Simon the Pharisee answered, *"I suppose that he to whom he forgave most."* Jesus said, *"Thou hast rightly judged."* Then Jesus judged Simon's neglect of the etiquette of hosting his guest. He did not wash or dry Jesus' feet, nor did he greet Jesus with a kiss of greeting or anoint His head with oil. Yet the woman, a sinner, had washed His feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, kissed and anointed them with oil. Jesus told him, *"Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little"* (Luke 7:47). To the woman, he said, *"Thy sins are forgiven"* (Luke 7:48). And he said to the woman, *"Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace"* (Luke 7:50). Meanwhile those at the table began to say within themselves, *"Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"*

The woman ministered to Jesus with what she could; Jesus explained her motivation with the example of the two debtors. Her good work, the beautiful thing she did, sprang from her love of Jesus, because her many sins were forgiven. John describes her motivation, which we desire to be our motivation to good

works: *"We love Him because He first loved us"* (1 John 4:19). God will continue the good work He begins in us: *"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ...and this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment. That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God"* (Phil. 1:6, 9-11).

The second woman with an alabaster jar appears near the end of Jesus' ministry. He was in Bethany, in the house of "Simon the Leper" and *"as He sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on His head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on Me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but Me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray Him unto them"* (Mark 14:3b-10).

Again, a woman ministered a good work unto Jesus because of love for who He was, and what He was about to do. She knew He was facing death, and she did what she could to acknowledge that and honor Him. Both women were judged and criticized by those dining. The contrast between the first woman, a sinner, and the Pharisee who believed he was righteous but did not love Jesus, was striking. The Pharisee loved his place and position; he did not love Jesus. He had his lists of good



works, but did not have the love of God that comes by recognizing we are sinners and need forgiveness through Jesus—*“to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little”* (Luke 7:76). He did not believe Jesus had the power to forgive sins. The contrast between the second woman and “Simon the Leper’s” guests is also striking, for immediately afterwards, Judas left to betray Jesus. In their response to the woman, the other disciples showed they did not understand when Jesus had taught them He must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes—be killed, and after three days rise again. Mark 8:32-33 states: *“And He spake that openly. And Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.”* He then declares that *“whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospels’ the same shall save it...whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation: of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels”* (Mark 8:34b-35, 38).

Both women in these situations denied their lives in honor of Jesus. The very costly precious ointment in the alabaster jar represented each woman’s earthly and probably future security – their “life.” Each woman broke the bottle and poured out the ointment. Both were harshly judged and criticized by the men. But Jesus corrected the men. The women were not ashamed of Jesus and they honored Him with their lives. They loved Him because He first loved them. They were forgiven, accepted by God. They had no fear, because *“there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love”* (1 John 4:18).

Later in Mark, the disciples contrasted themselves with the women when they asked Jesus for position and power. In Mark 10:37,

James and John came to Jesus: *“They said unto Him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory.”* However Jesus’ reply was that *“whosoever of you will be chiefest will be the servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give His life and ransom for many”* (Mark 10:44-45).

The disciples seemed to be as interested in place and position as the Pharisees. They had not yet experienced being forgiven much, thus loving much. The Pharisees and disciples loved themselves and the world more than God, more than Jesus. They did not have righteous judgment, having judged Jesus and the two women wrongly. And Jesus corrected both the Pharisees and the disciples, who minimized, denied, suppressed, and rejected Jesus’ revelation of who He was and what good work He had come to earth to accomplish.

The lesson of the two women with the alabaster jars is that our motivation and good works arise out of the revelation that our sins are forgiven because Jesus loved us so much He gave His life for us - *“We love him because he first loved us”* (1 John 4:19). And Jesus said in Luke 7:47b, *“to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little.”* God has begun a good work in us and will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Paul prays of this work (and let it be our prayer, too): *“That your love may abound more and more in knowledge and all judgment, that ye may approve the things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruit of righteousness by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God”* (Philippians 1:9-11).

Note: Jesus said, *“Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God”* (Matthew 19:17b). Therefore good works must follow or come from the only source of Good – God! If you perform a good work, you are living in God’s righteousness at that moment. When we see, know, and recognize that Jesus is righteous, we are drawn to that righteousness – as the officers of the Pharisees said, *“Never man spake like this man”* (John 7:46). Being drawn to that righteousness is our first steps of love.

**September/October Newsletter Theme—  
CHILD OF GOD  
Submission Deadline: September 25  
Publish Date: October 4**

**Child of God...**

- What makes a child of God?
- What does it mean to be God's child?
- How are we born again?
- What does it mean to be adopted?

**Verses on Child of God (from the ESV version)**

**Ephesians 1:3-6** — *“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, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”*

**John 1:12-13** — *“But as many as received Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

**Romans 8:15-16** — *“For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.”*

**Galatians 4:1-7** — *“Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.”*

**Further Out—Nov/Dec 2016: THE FATHER'S WILL**