

Romans Session 50 How Christ Died for God 4 The Cross Exalts God's Grace

We are still trying to answer with Paul the question, what then is this saving faith that is completely apart from works?

Romans 3:27-28 (NASB77)

²⁷ *Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.*

²⁸ *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.*

The last time we were together we were looking at some things that neither proves or disproves true faith.

We talked about:

A visible morality

An intellectual knowledge of God's truth

Having a Religious involvement

Having an active ministry in the Church

Knowing and harboring the conviction of sin

Having some kind of assurance of salvation

Having the experience of a past decision.

These things neither prove or disprove true faith

Today we want to start discussing those things that are reliable proofs of a saving faith.

THE FIRST RELIABLE EVIDENCED OF SAVING FAITH;

This first proof is a *love for God*;

Romans 8:6-8 (NASB77)

⁶ *For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,*

⁷ *because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so;*

⁸ *and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Paul is saying that the unsaved person cannot love God and has no desire to love Him.

The true child of God, however, despite his often failing his heavenly Father, will have a life characterized by delight in God and His Word.

Psalms 1:1-2 (NASB77)

¹ *How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!*

² *But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.*

Psalms 42:1-2 (NASB77)

¹ *As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for Thee, O God.*

² *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?*

Jesus declared;

Matthew 10:37 (NASB77)

37 " He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

The true believer will say with Asaph,

Psalm 73:25 (NASB77)

25 Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth.

Love for God will be the true believer's direction of life, if not the perfection of it.

Peter declares,

1 Peter 2:7a (NASB77)

7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe

A SECOND RELIABLE EVIDENCE OF SAVING FAITH;

The second reliable evidence of saving faith is *Repentance from sin and the hatred of it* that always accompanies true contrition.

This second mark of saving faith is the reverse side of the first.

The person who truly and genuinely loves God will have a built in hatred of sin.

It is impossible to love two things that are contradictory of one another.

Matthew 6:24 (NASB77)

24 " No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other.

To love the holy and righteous God is, almost by definition, to have a deep abhorrence of sin.

Proverbs 28:13 (NASB77)

13 He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

This verse links the two inseparable parts of true repentance: the confession and forsaking of sin.

When confronted by Nathan concerning his sins of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah,

David's repentance was genuine, as reflected in Psalm 51

Psalm 51:1-4 (NASB77)

1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.

4 Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, And done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, And blameless when Thou dost judge.

The true believe hates sin while he is doing it and always after he has done it, because it is completely contrary to his new nature in Christ.

Even though a believer's humanness sometimes draws him into sin and like Paul, he does the very thing he knows he ought not to do, he will have no peace of conscience until he repents of it.

True repentance is more than just simply sorrow for sin.

Judas became bitterly sorry for his sin of betraying Jesus, to the extreme of committing suicide; but he did not repent of his betrayal or ask Jesus for forgiveness.

Paul commended the Corinthian believers for being made sorrowful to the point of repentance;

2 Corinthians 7:9 (NASB77)

⁹ I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

True repentance always includes *godly sorrow*, sorrow that one has disobeyed and offended his Lord.

Listen, no Christian ever becomes completely sinless until he goes to meet the Lord

1 John 1:8-9 (NASB77)

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If a person's sin does not bother him and increasingly put him under conviction about it, that person's salvation is questionable.

The test for true repentance is not simply sorrow for the way sin harms oneself (as it always does), but sorrow for the sins offense against the Holy Lord, which above all else leads a believer to implore God's forgiveness.

Someone has written, "*when God touches a life, He breaks the heart. Where He pours out the spirit of grace, there are not a few transient sighs that agitate the breast, there are heart rending pangs of sorrow.*"

A THIRD RELIABLE EVIDENCE OF TRUE FAITH;

Is *genuine humility*. A person cannot be saved as long as he trusts in and exalts himself.

Salvation begins with confessing one's poverty of spirit.

Like the prodigal son, the true believer who sins will eventually come to his senses, his spirit senses that convict him of sin.

He will then, again like the prodigal, go to his heavenly Father and humbly confess his sin and his unworthiness of forgiveness, while pleading for it on the basis of his Father's grace

A FOURTH RELIABLE EVIDENCE OF TRUE FAITH;

This fourth evidence is *devotion to God's glory*, which is closely related to the love of God and repentance of sin.

The true believer will say with Paul;

Philippians 1:20 (NASB77)

²⁰ *according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.*

As already noted, although that desire will not be seen in perfection in the true believer's life. It will always be evidenced in the direction of his life.

A FIFTH RELIABLE EVIDENCE OF TRUE FAITH;

Prayer is the fifth evidence of true faith, because you are sons

Galatians 4:6 (NASB77)

⁶ *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"*

The heart of a genuine Christian cannot help calling out to God, who is his heavenly Father and whose own Spirit is within him to generate that yearning.

Now every genuine Christian will freely admit that he does not pray as often or as earnestly and persistently as he should.

But in his innermost being communion with his heavenly Father will be the desire of his heart.

Jonathan Edwards observed, "*Hypocrites are deficient in the duty of prayer.*"

A SIXTH MARK OF TRUE FAITH;

The sixth mark of saving faith is *selfless love*, not only for God, as in the first mark, but also for other people, especially fellow Christians.

1 John 2:9-10 (NASB77)

⁹ *The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.*

¹⁰ *The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.*

Later John said;

1 John 3:14 (NASB77)

¹⁴ *We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.*

The person who does not sincerely care for the welfare of true believers is himself not a true believer, but still abides in spiritual death.

Again in that letter John says;

1 John 4:7-8 (NASB77)

⁷ *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.*

⁸ *The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

A SEVENTH MARK OF TRUE FAITH;

Separation from the world, is the seventh mark of true faith.

Believers are called to be in the world but not of it.

They are in the world to testify to Christ, a central testimony of which is not to reflect the world's standards and ways.

1 John 2:15-16 (NASB77)

¹⁵ Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

On the other hand;

1 John 5:4-5 (NASB77)

⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith.

⁵ And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The person who has saving faith has ,

1 Corinthians 2:12 (NASB77)

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God,

THE EIGHTH MARK OF SAVING FAITH;

Spiritual growth, is the eighth mark of true faith. The central truth of the parable of the soils in Matthew is that true believers will always grow spiritually to varying degrees, because by faith they have genuinely received the seed of the gospel.

Like the farmer and his crops, the believer does not understand how he grows spiritually, but he knows that because he has spiritual life within him he will grow

THE NINTH AND FINAL MARK OF SAVING FAITH;

This mark is *obedient living*.

1 John 2:3-5 (NASB77)

³ And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

⁵ but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

Although no one is saved by his good works, those who are truly saved will produce good works, because we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Eph. 2:10