

SOTERIOLOGY

FAITH vs WORKS in the Orthodox perspective

Introduction:

- Abraham: Genesis 12:1-3, 15:6, 22:1
 - Peter : Acts 3:1-10, 3:11- 4:4

FAITH vs WORKS

- The Orthodox church believes in the balance between Faith and Works.
- Salvation cannot be attained by doing only one of them.
- Faith must lead to works and Works must strengthen our faith.

What is FAITH?

- *“Now Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Heb 11:1)*
- For orthodox Christians, justification by faith is dynamic, not static.
- Faith is not something Christians experience only at one critical moment, expecting it to cover all the rest of their lives.
- **True faith is not a decision; it's a way of life.**

Characteristics of the Saving Faith

- Sound Faith.
- Loving Faith.
- Working Faith.
- Faith that will endure for life.

Sound Faith

- “The works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, ..., **dissentions**•, **heresies**, ...and the like of which I tell you before hand, just as I told you in time past, that those who practice such things **will not inherit the kingdom of God.**” (Gal 5:19- 21)
- “A bishop must be blameless... holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, **by sound doctrine**, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.” (Tit 1:7-9)
- “For the time will come when **they will not endure sound doctrine**, but according to their desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers.” (2 Tim 4:3)

What is the Sound Faith?

- One Faith:
 - “One Lord, **one faith**, one baptism” (Eph 4:5).
- Apostolic Faith:
 - “He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me” (Lk.10: 16).
 - “If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we (the apostles) have preached to you, **let him be accursed.**” (Gal 1:8-9)
- Biblical Faith:
 - Believe in the Word of God.

Loving Faith

- “Now abides faith, hope, love, these three; but **the greatest is love**” (1 Cor 13:13)
- “Though I **have all faith**, that I could remove mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing**” (1 Cor 13:2)
- “God is not unjust to forget your **work and labor of love.**” (Heb 6:10)

Working Faith

- “By works faith was made perfect.” (**Jam 2:22**)
- “Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” (**Jam 2:24**)

Faith that endures for life

- “He who endures **to the end** will be saved.”
(Mt 14:13)
- “Be faithful **until death**, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Rev 2:10)

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WORKS: Types of Works:

- Evil Works: the works of “the flesh” (Gal 5:19)
- Dead Works:
 - Done by believers for the wrong reasons.
 - Done by unbelievers with no faith.
 - The works of the law (of Moses):
 - “A man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ... we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” (Gal 2:16)
- Good Works:
 - “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mt 5:16)

WORKS: Is it a contradiction?

- “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something of which to boast, but not before God. For what does Scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (**Rom 4:2,3**)
- VS
- “Was not our father **Abraham justified by works** when he offered Isaac his son on the alter? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him righteousness’. And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works and not by faith only” (**Jam 2:21-24**)

FAITH and WORKS

- Faith is the first Step to salvation.
- Simeon the elder:
 - “Lord, now you are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word, for **my eyes have seen Your salvation**” (Lk 2:29-30).
- St. Paul and St. Silas:
 - “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (**Acts 16:31**)
- Jesus and Zacchaeus:
 - “Today salvation has come to this house” (Lk 19:9).

FAITH and WORKS

- “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead also” (**Jam 2:26**)
- “Do you not know O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?” (**Jam 2:20**)
- “You see that a man is justified by works and **not by faith only.**” (**Jam 2:24**)

FAITH and WORKS

The Balance between Faith and Works.