

## **RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH: GOD'S PART AND OUR PART**

**The story is told of a farmer who on one occasion was rejoicing with a friend over how well his crops were doing.**

**At one point the farmer's friend observed, "You and the Lord have really made this field grow."**

**Whereupon the farmer replied, with a touch of sarcasm:**

**"You should have seen it when the Lord had it all to Himself!"**

**Now I don't know how true this story is. You never know about anecdotes of this kind.**

**But I have a feeling this farmer wasn't trying either to be sacrilegious, or to dispute the fact that God is fully able to do whatever He pleases, with any aspect of His creation, with all the power at His command.**

**Indeed, God is fully capable of making a field grow, with or without human planning or effort.**

**The third day of Creation and the gourd that grew up over Jonah give ample proof of that.**

**God is fully able to miraculously heal men and women of physical ailments, with or without the cooperation of human medical practice.**

**Indeed, the Bible offers countless examples of physical healings taking**

**place without the involvement of any human medical personnel.**

**But is this the way God usually addresses the problem of physical illness?**

**We all know the answer.**

**God is fully able to supply men and women with physical nourishment or a material livelihood, with or without their active participation.**

**Look at the way He provided food and water for the children of Israel during their flight from Egypt, or for Elijah during the famine, and while he was in the wilderness fleeing from Jezebel.**

**Most of us are familiar with the passage in Phil. 4:19:**

**Phil. 4:19:**

**“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”**

**But how, may I ask, would most Christian parents react to a child who decided to use this verse as an excuse for not getting an education, or not actively seeking employment, thinking God would supply one’s needs without any human help?**

**After all, as certain ones keep reminding us when this principle is applied to the spiritual realm, why does anyone need to help God out?**

**I remember a statement one academic counselor made during freshman orientation when I was starting out as a student at Pacific Union College.**

**Expounding at length on the need for diligence in study, this person declared:**

**“Salvation may come by faith, but good grades come by works.”**

**Brothers and sisters, I maintain that—properly understood—active divine-human cooperation is not only the Biblical definition of salvation by faith, but that this formula is the key to success in every legitimate human endeavor—whether in the classroom, the workplace, or wherever.**

**One of the best inspired statements on this subject is found in the book *Desire of Ages*, p. 535, where Ellen White tells the story of the resurrection of Lazarus:**

**DA 535:**

**“‘Take ye away the stone.’ Christ come have commanded the stone to remove, and it would have obeyed His voice. He could have bidden the angels who were close by His side to do this. At His bidding, invisible hands would have removed the stone. But it was to be taken away by human hands. Thus Christ would show that humanity is to co-operate with divinity. What human power can do divine power is not summoned to do. Christ does not dispense with man’s aid. He strengthens him, co-operating with him**

**as he uses the powers and capabilities given him.”**

**But it seems that what, for most of us, is an obvious reality in just about every aspect of our existence, has been badly obscured in popular theories regarding the gospel and salvation.**

***I. Confusion about righteousness by faith***

**Brothers and sisters, the subject we are addressing this morning lies at the very heart of every great issue that is dividing the Seventh-day Adventist Church today.**

**If you follow contemporary Adventist discussions like I do, you realize it doesn't take long—regardless**

**of the subject—before someone plays what I call the “grace card.”**

**Now what do I mean by that?**

**Very simple. It is the assumption that salvation is secure apart from faithfulness in matters of doctrine, worship, or lifestyle.**

**Attend a church board meeting where a congregation has been traumatized by the divorce of a popular local elder, who has left his wife of 30 years for someone younger and prettier.**

**... and see how quickly someone asks that the church “not be so rigid” in dealing with this talented and gifted individual, whom the church simply can’t afford to lose.**

**“After all,” it will be asserted, “we aren’t saved by how well we keep the law anyway.”**

**Visit a church business meeting divided over the introduction of contemporary worship styles into the Sabbath service,**

**. . . and see how predictable the different views of those on both sides will be, based on their perspective concerning such issues as the gospel, righteousness by faith, Christology, and perfection.**

**Listen to a discussion regarding homosexual practice in the church—a subject concerning which the Bible is unmistakably clear,**

**--and sooner or later someone will argue for leniency based on what is called the “hermeneutic of grace.”**

**And again, what this means is that careful obedience to God’s requirements isn’t a salvation issue in the first place.**

**So why upset the saints, divide families, and exclude members because of an issue of personal behavior?**

**At the bottom line, every issue in contemporary Adventism—sooner or later—wraps back around to the question of how human beings are ultimately saved.**

**Which is why we’re going to take some time this morning to address and summarize this central issue.**

**So why is the subject of faith and works so confusing to so many professed Christians, including many contemporary Adventists?**

**It isn't because inspired counsel is confusing.**

**The Bible is not confusing.**

**The writings of Ellen White are not confusing.**

**What is confusing is the attempt by certain ones to combine the counsel of Scripture and Ellen White with human opinion, human scholarship, and human experience.**

**And what I hope will be clear as our study proceeds is that what seems so**

**confusing sometimes about these issues of faith, grace, and salvation, is really not confusing at all,**

**---once we take human opinion, human scholarship, and human experience off the table, and permit inspired writings to be our exclusive authority once again.**

**So what does the Bible mean when it says we are not saved by works?**

**Rom. 3:20,28:**

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight; . .**

**•**

**“There we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”**

**Gal. 2:16:**

**“By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”**

**Eph. 2:8-9:**

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,**

**“Not of works, lest any man should boast.”**

**Do these verses mean, as certain ones would have us believe, that no human activity of any kind**

**—even when performed in cooperation with divine power—is able to fulfill the conditions of salvation?**

**Or do these verses speak of a particular kind of human activity, as distinct from another kind?**

**Perhaps the best place to go for an answer to this question is the book of Romans, one of the most popular books in the Bible relative to the discussion of faith and works.**

**The problem is, many who preach on the book of Romans fail to start at the beginning of the book.**

**There are those who believe the message of this epistle regarding righteousness by faith starts in the latter part of chapter 3,**

**---where Paul speaks of the works of the law justifying no one, and the righteousness of God apart from the law being manifested.**

**But folks, unless we understand the foundation Paul lays out in the first two**

**chapters of Romans, we won't be able to understand what he means in chapter 3 when he speaks of "the righteousness of God without the law."**

## ***II. Romans 2: Paul Draws the Contrast***

**Let us bear in mind, to start with, that the theme of Paul in this book is very similar to his theme in other books**

**—the fact that both Jews and Gentiles are equally entitled to the blessings of the gospel.**

**The belief of the Judaizers, as some have called them, that the Jews had some inherent advantage over the Gentiles in this respect, is the belief Paul**

**is endeavoring to refute—particularly in the books of Romans and Galatians.**

**Romans 1: Gentile depravity**

**Romans 2: Jewish hypocrisy**

**Now we're going to spend a bit of time with Romans 2, because this chapter—perhaps better than any other—helps us understand just what Paul is talking about when he draws a contrast between salvation by faith and salvation by works.**

**Rom. 2:1-23:**

**“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.**

**“But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.**

**“And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?**

**“Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**

**“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;**

**“Who will render to every man according to his deeds;**

**“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;**

**“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,**

**“Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.**

**“But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:**

**“For there is no respect of persons with God.**

**“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.**

**“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.**

**“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.**

**“Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;**

**“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of every man by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.**

**“Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.**

**“And knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;**

**“And art confident that thou art thyself a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,**

**“An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which has the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.**

**“Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?**

**“Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?**

**“Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?”**

**Now quite obviously, these verses say a great deal.**

**But three points stand out above all others:**

- 1. What matters to God is not ethnicity.**

- 2. What matters to God is not a mere profession of godliness.**
- 3. What in fact matters to God is heart-based obedience.**

**Verses 6-10:**

**“Who will render to every man according to his deeds;**

**“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;**

**“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,**

**“Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.**

**“But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.”**

**Now let's look again at verse 13:**

**Verse 13:**

**“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”**

**In stating this, Paul is simply repeating a principle found elsewhere in the Bible.**

**This becomes clearer in Romans, chapter 4:**

**Rom. 4:6-8:**

**“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works,**

**“Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.**

**“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”**

**Now where is this passage taken from?**

**Psalm 32:1-2:**

**“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**

**“Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”**

**Now note this last phrase: “In whose spirit there is no guile.”**

**Even though Paul doesn’t include this phrase in his citing of this passage in Romans 4, it is obvious he agrees with David, because we read two chapters earlier that:**

**Rom. 2:13:**

**“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”**

**To have a guileless spirit is the same as doing the law. And according to both Old and New Testaments, this is the condition for receiving God’s justification.**

**Other Bible passages are clear that sin must be both confessed and forsaken in order to be forgiven.**

**II Chron. 7:14:**

**“If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and heal their land.”**

**Prov. 28:13:**

**“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth, and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”**

**Isa. 55:7:**

**“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”**

**Matt. 6:14-15:**

**“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.**

**“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”**

**It is on the basis of Bible verses such as these that Ellen White makes such statements as the following, regarding the conditions for receiving justification:**

**1SM 366:**

**“God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul.”**

**There are those who are telling us very loudly in contemporary Adventism just now,**

**---that justification means only to declare righteous, and not to make righteous.**

**But here is the problem with this theology:**

**In the Bible, what happens when God declares something to be so?**

**What happened at the creation, when God said:**

**Gen. 1:3:  
“Let there be light.”**

**Did it stay dark? Did God simply look upon the earth as though light existed? Hardly.**

**When God said, “Let there be light,” the Bible says:**

**Gen. 1:3:  
“And there was light.”**

**Remember when the leper came to Jesus in Matthew chapter 8. He asked:**

**Matt. 8:2-3:**

**“Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.**

**“And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean.”**

**Now what happened when Jesus said this? Did Jesus merely look upon this man as though he was cleansed of leprosy?**

**Or was he in fact cleansed from his leprosy? What does the Bible say happened?**

**Matt. 8:3:**

**“And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”**

**No wonder Ellen White makes the following statement about this subject:**

**Ed 254:**

**“At the creation ‘He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.’ He ‘calleth those things which be not as though they were’ (Psalm 33:9; Rom. 4:17); for when He calls them, they are.”**

**Elsewhere she makes this powerful statement about the nature of God’s forgiveness.**

**Folks, this statement totally destroys the theory that God’s forgiveness, or justification, *declares* us righteous but does not in fact *make* us righteous:**

**MB 114:**

**“God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.’ Psalm 51:10.”**

**Now let’s return to the book of Romans.**

**What are we to make of an apparent contradiction between Romans 2 and Romans 3?**

**Rom. 2:13:**

**“The doers of the law shall be justified.”**

**Rom. 3:28:**

**“A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”**

**What the apostle is describing here is two different ways of doing the law.**

**Let’s look again at the context of Romans 2:13:**

**Verses 14-15:**

**“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.**

**“Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.”**

**But notice how we read, in verses 1-5 and 17-23 of the same chapter, of people who say one thing and do another, who rest in the law, even make their boast in the law, yet who disobey the law's commands.**

**Verse 23:**

**“Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?”**

**These, brothers and sisters, are the “works of the law” which can justify no one.**

**Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9:**

**Eph. 2:8-9:**

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,**

**“Not of works, lest any man should boast.”**

**Notice how “not of yourselves” is a parallel to “not of works, lest any man should boast.”**

**What kind of works produce boasting?**

**Self-generated works.**

**Religious activity apart from conversion.**

**As distinct from:**

**Religious activity produced by conversion.**

**So when Paul declares that we are not saved by works, he is simply repeating a message found elsewhere in Scripture,**

**---which warns the believer against making outward rituals a substitute for heart-based obedience.**

**One of the first of these warnings was given by the prophet Samuel to Israel's King Saul:**

**I Sam. 15:22:**

**“And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”**

**Solomon understood this principle as well:**

**Prov. 21:3:**

**“To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.”**

**Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, God again warned Israel of this danger:**

**Isa. 1:11-18:**

**“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me, saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.**

**“When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread My courts?**

**“Bring no more vain oblations;  
incense is an abomination unto Me; the  
new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of  
assembles I cannot away with; it is  
iniquity, even the solemn meeting.**

**“Your new moons and your  
appointed feasts My soul hateth: they  
are a trouble to Me; I am weary to bear  
them.**

**“And when ye spread forth your  
hands, I will hid Mine eyes from you;  
yea, when ye make many prayers, I will  
not hear; your hands are full of blood.**

**“Wash you, make you clean; put  
away the evil of your doings from before  
Mine eyes; cease to do evil;**

**“Learn to do well; seek judgment,  
relieve the oppressed, judge the  
fatherless, plead for the widow.**

**“Come now, and let us reason  
together, saith the Lord: though your  
sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white**

**as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”**

**John the Baptist addressed the same problem:**

**Matt. 3:9:**

**“Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”**

**And when He rebuked the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus addressed the same challenge:**

**Matt. 23:25-28:**

**“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the**

**platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.**

**“Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.**

**“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.**

**“Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”**

**What is the problem described in all these verses, folks?**

**Boastful hypocrisy. Not sanctified obedience.**

**The problem described in these verses is not too much emphasis on obedience, but rather, emphasis on the wrong kind of obedience.**

**Notice the following Ellen White statement, where she contrasts pharisaic piety with true obedience:**

**MB 53-54:**

**“All their (the Pharisees’) pretensions of piety, their human inventions and ceremonies, and even their boasted performance of the outward requirements of the law, could not avail to make them holy. They were not pure in heart or noble and Christlike in character.**

**“A legal religion is insufficient to bring the soul into harmony with God. The hard, rigid orthodoxy of the Pharisees, destitute of contrition,**

tenderness, or love, was only a stumbling block to sinners. . . . The only true faith is that which ‘worketh by love’ (Galatians 5:6) to purify the soul. It is as leaven that transforms the character.

“All this the Jews should have learned from the teachings of the prophets. Centuries before, the cry of the soul for justification with God had found voice and answer in the words of the prophet Micah: ‘Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of old? . . . He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and

**to walk humbly with thy God.’ Micah  
6:6-8”**

**So when Paul declares that salvation  
is “not of works, lest any man should  
boast” (Eph. 2:9),**

**---he is not talking about the work of  
the Holy Spirit in and through the  
believer.**

**He isn’t talking about doing justice,  
loving mercy, and walking humbly with  
God.**

**Boasting is the fruit of a heart  
religious but not regenerate.**

**What, by contrast, is one of the  
fruits of the Spirit in the life of the  
converted Christian?**

**Gal. 5:22-23:**

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,**

**“Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”**

**Meekness is the opposite of boasting.**

**Very simply, folks:**

**The contrast between righteousness by works and righteousness by faith is the contrast between religious activity apart from conversion and religious activity produced by conversion.**

**Most of mainstream evangelical Christianity, as well as many in contemporary Adventism, fail to understand this contrast.**

**They believe the difference between being saved by faith and being saved by works is the difference between God saving us all by Himself,**

**---as distinct from God and man working together in the saving process.**

**For many in contemporary Adventism, salvation by faith alone means God does everything, and salvation by works means you and I also have something to do.**

**Any theology that says you and I have a proactive part to play in meeting the conditions of salvation is dismissed by these folks as a “works trip.”**

**This “let go and let God” approach to salvation has generally come to Adventists in two forms:**

- 1. Salvation by justification (forgiveness) only.**
- 2. Salvation that includes victorious living, but where such victory is entirely God's work, with no human effort involved except to maintain a "relationship" with Him.**

**Now we can't cover in depth both of these teachings, though perhaps we can talk about them further in our Q&A time.**

**But let's be clear right here and now that the Bible nowhere teaches salvation by forgiveness only.**

**Many of us, I am sure, have heard this particular idea in contemporary Adventism:**

**“We are saved entirely by God’s work for us and not at all by His work in us.”**

**Now none of these folks are saying that God’s work in us is unimportant. They just say it doesn’t save us.**

**Which means, in the end, that the work of Christ in us is marginalized.**

**The problem in Adventism today, my friends, is not that the need for holiness is denied.**

**The problem in Adventism today is that the need for holiness has been marginalized by theories of salvation**

**which deny humanity's part in the saving process.**

**Certainly God's forgiveness is part of our salvation:**

**Rom. 3:24:**

**“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”**

**Eph. 1:7:**

**“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”**

**But according to Paul, salvation also includes the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification:**

**II Thess. 2:13:**

**“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”**

**Titus 3:5:**

**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”**

### ***III. Sanctified Obedience the Condition of Salvation***

**The teachings of Christ regarding the conditions of salvation are often ignored by popular preachers of righteousness by faith.**

**Matt. 19:16-17:**

**“And behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”**

**“And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? there is none good, but One, that is, God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”**

**Luke 10:25-28:**

**“And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”**

**“He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?”**

**“And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.”**

**“And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.”**

**Paul, of course, teaches the same thing.**

**We’ve already seen these verses:**

**Rom. 2:6-10:**

**“Who will render to every man according to his deeds;**

**“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;**

**“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,**

**“Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.**

**“But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.”**

**Rom. 8:13:**

**“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”**

**Heb. 5:9:**

**“And being made perfect, He (Christ) became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.”**

**Ellen White echoes these New Testament teachings in the following statements:**

**RH June 26, 1900:**

**“When the lawyer came to Christ, saying, ‘Master, what shall I do to**

**inherit eternal life?” the Saviour did not say, Believe, only believe, and you will be saved. ‘What is written in the law?’ He said; ‘how readest thou?’ . . . Here the false doctrine that man has nothing to do but believe is swept away. Eternal life is given to us on the condition that we obey the commandments of God.”**

**ST Nov. 24, 1887:**

**“The keeping of these (ten) commandments comprises the whole duty of man, and presents the conditions of eternal life. Now the question is, Will man comply with the requirements? Will he love God supremely, and his neighbor as himself? There is no possible way for man to do this in his own strength. The divine power of Christ must be added to the effort of humanity.”**

**7BC 972:**

**“The gospel that is to be preached to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples presents the truth in clear lines, showing that obedience is the condition of gaining eternal life. Christ imparts His righteousness to those who consent to let Him take away their sins.”**

**6T 147:**

**“We are saved by climbing round after round of the ladder, looking to Christ, clinging to Christ, mounting step by step to the height of Christ, so that He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, and charity are the rounds of this ladder.”**

**Now we need at this point to respond to another false claim that is circulating among us at the present time.**

**That is the claim that the theology we have seen in the inspired writings this morning,**

**---that both justification and sanctification form the basis of our salvation, and that justification means to make as well as to declare righteous,**

**---is Roman Catholic theology.**

**This claim is founded on a dangerous misunderstanding so far as the issues of the Protestant Reformation are concerned.**

**Folks, we have only one inspired commentator on the history and issues of the Reformation,**

**---and her name is Ellen G. White.**

**And here is how she describes the issues of that turbulent era:**

**GC 128-129:**

**“Many of his (Luther’s) own congregation had purchased certificates of pardon, and they soon began to come to their pastor, confessing their various sins, and expecting absolution, not because they were penitent and wished to reform, but on the ground of the indulgence. Luther refused them absolution, and warned them that unless they should repent and reform their lives, they must perish in their sins. . . .**

**“Luther now entered boldly upon his work as a champion of the truth. His voice was heard from the pulpit in earnest, solemn warning. He set before the people the offensive character of sin, and taught them that it is impossible for man, by his own works, to lessen its guilt or evade its punishment. Nothing but repentance toward God and faith in Christ can save the sinner.”**

**Here is a brief summary of the issues of the Protestant Reformation:**

*Roman Catholic Theology*

**Human tradition above the Bible  
Man-made rituals necessary to  
receive God’s forgiveness**

*Protestant Theology*

**The Bible the Christian's  
supreme authority**

**Repentance and faith, through  
Christ alone, the means of  
salvation**

**Here is what we should call:**

**The Catholic/Protestant Divide  
Falsely Portrayed**

*Roman Catholic Theology*

**Salvation accomplished by both  
the work of Christ for us and His  
work in us**

*Protestant Theology*

**Salvation accomplished solely by  
the work of Christ for us.**

**That isn't what the Protestant Reformation was about.**

**It was a protest against the intrusion of man-made traditions, man-made rituals and man-made mediation between God and the believer.**

**It was in no way a contest between forensic righteousness and the work of the Holy Spirit.**

**The call to heart-transformation and perfection of character as conditions of salvation are not an echo of the Council of Trent.**

**They are an echo of the Holy Word of God itself.**

## *IV. Conclusion*

**Matt. 19:25-26:**

**“When the disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?”**

**“But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”**

**The following two verses give us the gospel in a nutshell:**

**John 15:5:**

**“Without Me ye can do nothing.”**

**Phil. 4:13:**

**“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**

**I always like to end a presentation on this topic with Revelation 19:7-8.**

**And because this is one of the few passages where modern translations render the original language more clearly than the KJV, I am quoting this passage from the NIV:**

**Rev. 19:7-8:**

**“Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready.**

**“Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints” (NIV).**

**Anyone who has ever been in a wedding, or gotten ready for one, knows how much work it is!**

**But for the bride and groom, it is work—no matter how exhausting—that is done with joy!**

**I hear people talking against “checklist religion” sometimes.**

**But what bride and groom don’t have a checklist when getting ready for the wedding??**

**But through the weeks and months of wearisome effort, difficulties, delays, frustrations, the overwhelming joy in one another’s love persists.**

**Such will be the experience of God’s people as they prepare for translation.**