

Faith At Work Through Love

Leviticus 19:9-18 Galatians 5:4-6; 6:1-10 John 13:34-35

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St Paul wrote Galatians in order to teach us that we are saved by *faith alone in Christ alone* and **NEVER BY OUR OWN GOOD WORKS**. In theology, this is called **Justification by Faith**¹. It is the Gospel; the Good News of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. It means that you are *declared righteous*, that is, declared “Not Guilty!”² because of the work of Jesus, and **never** by your own good works. God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world to live a perfect life for you and to die a sacrificial death on the cross so that your sins are forgiven, you are reconciled to God the Father, and you will live forever in the Kingdom of Heaven. **The work of salvation is complete**, *and it is freely given to you through faith alone!*

But now what?

What do you do until God takes you to Heaven?

Now, you have *a life to live* as a Christian. This is called **Sanctification**: *your holy life in Christ*. You have been set apart from the world; the Holy Spirit lives within you, you belong to God the Father, and you are redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ! Your life is now changed and transformed. You are a light that shines in this dark world.

St. Paul summarizes your holy life in Christ with this phrase:

faith expresses itself through love (Gal 5:6).

Faith... Expresses Itself... Through Love

¹ [Lutheran] churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strengths, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ’s sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight. Augsburg Confession, Article IV; [Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions](#)

² The New Testament Greek word *dikaio* means to declare righteous in a courtroom: it’s **a legal verdict** of “not guilty!”; Lutherans teach that righteousness/justification is “imputed and forensic” righteousness that comes by faith alone in Christ alone. See Romans 4 for a good overview.

Your faith in Christ shows itself in your love for God and your love for others. The word that St. Paul is using here for **love** is the highest form of love in the New Testament. It is the word *agape*³.

The Greek word “*Agape*” describes the **SACRIFICIAL LOVE** that God has for us. In *Agape* love, God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to be your Savior, and to take your guilt and sin to the cross where He died for you. *Agape* is the normal word to describe God's love for you in the New Testament.

For God so **LOVED** the world that He gave His One and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

But God demonstrates His own **LOVE** for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

But because of His great **LOVE** for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. Ephesians 2:4-5

This is how we know what **LOVE** is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. 1 John 3:16

All of these verses use “*agape*” to describe **God's love** in saving us! **God loves you; and He did the work of salvation for you!**

NOW, we learn from God's love for us *how to love other people*. And so St. Paul says, Faith expresses itself through love (Gal 5:6). And Jesus said, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35 This loving other people is the **result of faith** in Christ; it is a **Fruit of the Holy Spirit**; it is your **sanctification**⁴: your holy life in Christ!

³ “AGAPE” love. There are 5 Greek words for love. One of those, “the Greek word ‘ἀγάπη’ (= agape) is ... rare in classical and Hellenistic Greek literature. ... Only in the NT does ἀγάπη take on its specific coloration as that self-sacrificing love for one another which is inspired by God’s love for us in Christ. “We love, because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)” Lockwood, *First Corinthians*, p.456

⁴ **Martin Luther** writes: “Faith is the divine work in us which transforms us, gives us new birth out of God, slays the old Adam, makes us altogether different men in heart, affection, mind, and all powers, and brings with it the Holy Spirit. Oh, it is a living, energetic, active, mighty thing, this faith! It cannot but do good unceasingly. There is no question asked whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, the works at been done, and there is a continuous and doing of them. But any person not doing such works

In Galatians, the first and foremost way to show love is to hold to the teachings of Christ. Like the Galatians, we are surrounded by false teachers on all sides. There is a lot of falsehood, deception, and heresy being taught *in the name of Christ*, especially **inside** His Church. Loving the Lord your God means that you will hold to the truth of His Holy Word. Loving God means that you will know and understand His teachings and His doctrines, and that you will actively guard against false doctrine and deceptive teachings.

Galatians also teaches us that a sign of love is that we live at peace with each other. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we love and care for each other rather than being critical, angry, or bitter towards others. St. Paul writes, *For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.* Put the love of Christ into your relationships; love and care for other people as God in Christ loves and cares for you.

In Galatians, the Apostle teaches us that one way that God's love is expressed in our lives is when we come alongside of the people to help them and care for them. Paul writes, *“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”*

Carrying each other 's burdens means that you're coming alongside of other people to help them and care about them. This includes having difficult conversations when other believers fall into sin. With grace, and in mercy, we reach out to try to bring those who are falling away back into the faith. Carrying each other’s burdens, coming alongside of other people with love and care and genuine concern, is a way that your faith is expressed in love.

In Galatians, as we love one another, we will be busy doing good for others. Paul writes, *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.* Loving other people means that you are busy doing good works that help and

is without faith. He is groping in the dark, looking for faith and good works, and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are.” [The Abiding Word](#), III.282, Sanctification, Roger L. Sommer

benefit other people. This is why you serve in church; this is how you are a Christian friend; this is what letting your light shine in the community looks like. As you have the opportunity, be busy doing good works. Don't become weary, thinking that it's a drudgery or an inconvenience. Rather see it for what it is, *expressing your faith in love to other people!* Do good to all people because God has been good to you in His Son Jesus.

The good works that you do are summarized in various ways in scripture. One way you can think about good works is that you are obeying the 10 commandments when it comes to other people. It means that in your interactions with other people you are going to value, guard, and protect their authority, their life, their marriage, their possessions, and their reputation; in addition, you are going to guard and protect your own heart from coveting, lust and greed.

Another way that good works are summarized in Scripture is simply with the words *patience and kindness*. If you want to love other people then be **patient** with them and **kind** to them.

This starts in your marriage. Be *patient and kind* to your wife; be *patient and kind* to your husband. Let that love extend to your family, as you are *patient and kind* to your children, and your brothers and sisters, and even your in-laws 😊. The Lord is *patient and kind* with you so that you can be *patient and kind* with the people in your life.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7	4	Love is PATIENT , Love is KIND .
		It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
	5	It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.
	6	Love does not delight in evil, but (it) rejoices with the truth .
	7	It always protects , (it) always trusts , (it) always hopes , (it) always perseveres .

We love other people, because God first loved us in His Son Jesus Christ. St. Paul teaches that our *faith in Christ is to be expressed in love to other!*

MAY IT BE SO IN YOUR LIFE! Amen!

God the Father,

we thank you for your sacrificial love in giving your Son to be our Savior.

We thank you for the faith given to us by the Holy Spirit to know and believe it's true and it's for us.

Help us now to live holy and godly lives, set apart from the world, in order to love You and our neighbor.

Teach us to love others according to Your Commandments, teach us to be patient and kind with the people in our lives.

We thank you for your love for us, and we know and acknowledge that the only way we can love others is because of Your work in and through us.

**We pray this in Jesus our Savior's Name,
Amen.**

Leviticus 19:9-18

“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. 10 And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God. 11 “You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. 12 You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. 13 “You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. 14 You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. 15 “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. 16 You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life[a] of your neighbor: I am the Lord. 17 “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Galatians 5:4-6

You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. 5 For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Galatians 6:1-10

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. 4 Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, 5 for each one should carry their own load. 6 Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

John 13:34-35

[Jesus said,] “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”