

March 12, 2021

My mother became a widow when I was six years old. I grew up as witness to a woman who depended upon God her through years of loneliness, child-rearing issues, and financial hardships. She was a living, breathing portrait of peace and her heart was filled with the hope of Jesus' Second Coming. One afternoon, during the last year of her life, she asked me if she had "done enough" for Jesus. Stunned, I realized she lacked confidence that Jesus would call her forth in the first resurrection.

My mother **knew** God. She understood that Jesus was the way, the truth, and the life, but as her health failed and her body grew weak, all her personal mistakes and missteps rose up to frighten away the surety of her inheritance. Some of the most Godly, sanctified people I know have never felt secure in their relationship with God because they believed their salvation hung by the thread of their own obedience. This is a false doctrine. *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8,9.*

The Bible tells us that *He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you. 1 Peter 1:3-4.* New birth means we were born into a new relationship with Jesus. As we grow and develop, we learn to know, trust and love Him. As our love for Him grows, it reveals itself through obedience and good works and the manifestation of humility and kindness

At some point, however, the clarity of our salvation becomes muddled. The rubber meets the road when we don't see ourselves adequately fulfilling the ideal of our new birth. This ideal sounds a lot like being perfect, and because of our failures of performance, we find ourselves sliding into the weeds of uncertainty. Having passed that initial point where our past sins were erased with a prayer, we feel condemned by our current crop of failures because they occurred after we gave our hearts to God. Our human perspective struggles to understand unmerited grace given over and over again and we tend to reject such madness because we cannot replicate it in our own hearts. We are not, however, willing to let go of that grace, so we try to earn it back by fixing our behavior. Suddenly, instead of being a joyful, born again Christian in the kingdom of God, we become intent on trying to prove to God, ourselves, and those around us, that we're good enough to be there.

Just as parents do not require their children to prove they're worthy to be born into the family, Jesus does not require such proof from us. We are born into Christ's family through grace. While God would love us to live perfectly for our own joy and benefit, our salvation is not connected in any way to our performance. Christ recognized that our earthly reality is sin, even as we seek to live in His family, within His saving grace, so He offered us 1 John 2:1 which says: "*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*"

Today, rejoice in the truth that you are a child of God! Do not buy into the lie that you must be 'good enough' to be saved. Jesus came and died for us while we were yet sinners. He paid the price for our salvation while we were yet sinners. He is not going to take it away because we are still sinners.

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, Titus 3:5