The Blood of Christ (Outline)

By Victor M. Eskew
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I. Introduction.

A. Jesus shed blood at Gethsemane, in the halls of Pilate, and at Calvary.

B. Christians remember his blood each Lord's Day.

C. Peter called it "precious" blood (1 Pet. 1:19).

1. The word precious means "dear, valuable, costly."

2. The blood of Jesus is invaluable.

II. The Precious Blood of the Lamb.

A. The blood was real.

1. While on earth, Jesus had a human body of flesh, blood, and bones (John 1:14; Phil. 2:5-8; Luke 24:39).

2. Jesus' blood, like ours, was composed of red cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma. It was real blood.

B. The blood was royal.

1. He was of the house and lineage of David, whose dynasty

continues to the end of time (Isa. 9:7; Luke 1:32-33).

2. His kingship was mocked during his crucifixion (Mark 15:16-20).

3. Jesus was raised from the dead to sit on his eternal throne (Dan. 7:13-14; Acts 2:32-36).

4. Jesus is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15).

C. The blood was innocent.

1. Jesus did nothing wrong (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22).

a. Judas said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. 27:4).

b. The wife of Pilate said, "Have nothing to do with this just man" (Matt. 27:19).

c. Pilate said, "I find no fault in this man" (Luke 23:4).

d. Pilate also said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person" (Matt. 27:24).

2. The people who knew Jesus best could not convict him of sin (John 8:46).

3. If the enemies of Jesus could not convict him of sin, who can?

D. The blood was substitutionary.

1. Jesus gave himself for us (Titus 2:14).

2. Jesus "bare our sins in his own body" (1 Pet. 2:24).

3. Jesus "washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5).

4. Jesus' stripes heal us (Isa. 53:5).

E. The blood is satisfying.

1. God is holy (holiness is a general term for moral excellence).

a. "The Lord our God is holy" (Psa. 99:9).

b. "Holy and reverend is his name" (Psa. 111:9).

c. His pure eyes cannot behold evil (Hab. 1:13).

d. Men fear God because he is holy (Rev. 15:4).

2. The holiness of God demands that sin be punished.

a. God is just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:26).

b. God cannot tolerate evil.

c. God must judge and condemn sin.

d. God can justify sin only by the merit of a substitutionary sacrifice.

e. God can only be just if he forgives by a blood sacrifice, because "the blood of it is for the life thereof" (Lev. 17:14).

3. Jesus' blood satisfied the demands of divine justice.

a. Jesus was made a sin-sacrifice for us, though he knew

no sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

b. Jesus became an "offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2).

F. The blood of Jesus was effective.

1. It cleanses from sin (Matt. 26:28; 1 John 1:7).

2. It redeems from sin (Eph. 1:7).

3. It gives life to the dead (Eph. 2:4-5; 1 John 5:11).

4. It purchased the church (Acts. 20:28).

5. It was shed once, never to be shed again (Heb. 10:11-12).

III. Conclusion.

A. The blood of Jesus is precious.

B. His blood is real, royal, innocent, substitutionary, satisfying, and effective.

C. We remember his blood each Lord's Day.

Working the Works of God

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
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The Bible teaches that works have nothing to do with salvation, and it teaches that works are necessary to salvation.

Still, the Bible does not contradict itself.

How can this be? How can the Bible say two things that seem to be diametrically opposed and yet not contradict itself? It would appear to be self-evident that works cannot be both necessary and unnecessary to salvation.

Since the Bible is inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17), it must be true and therefore cannot contradict itself. Truth, in order to be truth, must be coherent. If two statements contradict, either one or both of them must be false, but there is no way they can both be true. How, then, do we deal with the fact that the Bible says works are not necessary to justification, and also says that we are justified by works?

Some assume a "take your pick" attitude and go blithely down the path not knowing how to reconcile the two statements — and, possibly, not caring. The honest person however cannot do this and must either reject the Bible or find a logical way to harmonize the two statements.

Various Works

To understand the Bible we must define its terms correctly. It is necessary to understand accurately how Bible writers use the word “works” (sometimes “deeds”), or we will be confused. A survey of how the Bible uses this word will help us to avoid the confusion of misunderstanding. A failure to understand something correctly leads to incomprehension and perhaps unbelief.

Following is a partial list of “work(s)” mentioned in the Old and New Testaments:

- The work God does – Gen. 2:2; Judges 2:7; Ps. 71:17; 1 Cor. 12:6; John 6:28-29; John 10:37; John 14:10
- The work man does in providing food and shelter – Gen. 3:17-19; Exod. 23:12; Exod. 26:1; Eccl. 2:4; Matt. 21:28
- The work man does in obeying specific commands of God – Gen. 6:13-22; John 9:4; 1 Cor. 15:58
- Work of iniquity (evil) – Ps. 6:8; Ps. 14:1; Jer. 1:16; Ezek. 33:26; Matt. 7:23; Luke 13:27; John 3:19; Rom. 1:27; Eph. 4:19; Rom. 13:12 (“works of darkness”); Gal. 5:19-21 (“works of the flesh”)
- Work of righteousness (good) – Ps. 15:2; Acts 10:35; Matt. 5:16; Rom. 3:27; 1 Cor. 3:13-14; 2 Cor. 9:8; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14; James 1:4; James 3:13
- Works that are worthy of repentance – Acts 26:20
- The mighty works (signs, miracles) of Jesus – Matt. 11:23-24; John 10:32; Acts 2:22
- Works of the Law of Moses – Rom. 3:20; Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:2
- Greater works done by Jesus’ disciples – John 5:20; John 14:12
- Good and bad works by which all men shall be judged – Rom. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 20:12-13; Rev. 22:12
- Human works apart from works of God – Rom. 9:11; Rom. 11:6

- Converts to Jesus – 1 Cor. 3:14
- Apostolic signs, and wonders, and mighty works – 2 Cor. 12:12
- Work of sinless perfection – Eph. 2:9; Col. 2:21-23
- The power that works in the saved – Eph. 3:20; Eph. 4:12
- The word of God that works in the believer – 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 1:11; 1 Tim. 2:10; 1 Tim. 5:12; 2 Tim. 2:21
- Works that justify – James 2:24; James 3:13
- Works of the devil – 1 John 3:8
- The ungodly works of ungodliness – Jude 1:15

This gives a sample of various "works" mentioned in the Bible. It is a mistake to suppose that the word work(s) always refers to condition of acceptance with God. It does not!

Even a casual glance at this list will convince the thoughtful Bible student this is a complicated subject, having many interrelated parts. It is difficult to deal with because of the need to take different relationships or points of view into consideration.

The mighty acts of Jehovah are works. Creation (Ps. 8:3-6; Ps. 19:1; Ps. 33:4; Ps. 92:5; Ps. 102:25; Ps. 104:24), redemptive acts in history like the Exodus (Judges 2:7-10).

Jesus is our perfect example in all things (1 Pet. 2:21). The Savior went about doing good (Acts 10:38-39; John 4:34; John 5:36; John 10:25-38; John 15:24; John 17:4). His words and his works confirmed his authority and mission.

Humans are sinless at birth, seeing that Jehovah is the Father and Giver of the human spirit (Heb. 12:9; Eccl. 12:7). As the child matures it comes to understand that some things are right and other things are wrong, but chooses to do wrong things and ignore right things. This is called sin – sin of omission and sin of commission. This is the something a person knowingly does to himself. Iniquity separates a soul from its

God (Isa. 59:2). Those who die in sin cannot go where Jesus is; they “shall not inherit the kingdom of God (John 8:21; Gal. 5:19-21).

In his infinite compassion Jehovah sent Jesus to offer himself sacrifice for sins (John 3:16; John 10:18; Matt. 26:28).

We access the grace of God and the blood of the Lamb of God through belief (John 8:24).

“They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:28-29).

Saving belief is a work that includes other works. Faith is shown by works (James 2:18). “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:20). Abraham was justified by works produced by faith (James 2:21-22). Works make faith perfect (James 2:22). Sinners are justified by works and not by faith only (James 2:24). Faith without works is dead (James 2:26).

Jesus said, “He that believeth (a work) and is baptized (a work) shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). “Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” (James 2:22). In baptism the sinner, “is buried with Christ” and is “raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). In baptism we are buried “with” Christ and we are raised “with” him believing that God will keep his promise to save “he that believeth and is baptized.” Peter tells us that baptism saves (1 Pet. 3:21). In baptism our sins are washed away (Acts 22:16).

The spirit that is born again in the water of baptism (John 3:5) enters the kingdom of God, where faith continues to work, bringing glory to God (Matt. 5:16). The saved “work the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 16:10), abound “in every good work” (1 Cor. 9:8). Servants of righteousness “end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:5). The child of God is “created in

Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10); the saint is "fruitful unto every good work" (Col. 1:10). The Christian "works out his own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). Paul prayed that God the Father may "comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word" (2 Thess. 2:17). Women professing godliness are to adorn themselves "with good works" (1 Tim. 2:10). If a man desires the office of bishop, he desires "a good work" (1 Tim. 3:1). Widows to be enrolled are to be "well reported of for good works" (1 Tim. 5:10). The new covenant lauds the good works of some that are "evident, and cannot be hid" (1 Tim. 5:25). Those described as "a vessel unto honor" are "prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21). "The man of God" is "furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17). Preachers are to be "an ensample of good works" (Titus 2:7), "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Followers of Jesus are to "be ready unto every good work" (Titus 3:1). Paul desired "that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister" (Heb. 6:10). "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). Our Lord Jesus "make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13:21).

The "wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13). Behave seemly among the pagans, "that, wherein they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:12). "My Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth (1 John 3:18). Jesus knows and commends the works of his disciples on earth (Rev. 2:2, Rev. 2:9, Rev. 2:19; Rev. 3:8). Those who die in the Lord are blessed because "their works follow with them" (Rev.

14:13).

On the last great judgment day, God will render unto every man "according to their works, whether they be good or evil" (Eccl. 12:14; Rev. 20:12-13; Rev. 22:12).

It is because of a present and future judgment that we must avoid the works of the flesh … the works of darkness … the works of the devil. Abstaining from all evil works is critical to the believer.

In the light of what the new covenant has to say about the importance of good works – works of faith – works that justify (James 2:24) – it seems strange that anyone would say that works have nothing to do with salvation … unless, of course, he is blinded by denominational dogma.

The Bible does warn us that we cannot live to maturity and be sinless (Rom. 3:27; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 4:2-6). "All sin and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). It also tells us the works of the Law of Moses cannot save us (Rom. 9:32; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:10). If eternal salvation could come by the Mosaic Law, then the death of Jesus was needless, because the people had that law for 1,500 years before Jesus was born of a woman (Gal. 2:21). We are also told that we cannot save ourselves by austerities (Col. 2:18).

Some honest person may be misled into wrongly supposing that when the Bible tells us we cannot be saved by our own works because it is not possible for us to live without sin – sooner or later all will sin and fall short of God's glory, that it is saying that even works of faith and righteousness – works of God – do not save. Also some will read Bible passages which say that the works of the Law of Moses cannot save, and mistakenly conclude that works have nothing to do with salvation. This study should clear that up because it gives indisputable proof that there is no justification without works.

It is indisputably true that works are necessary to justification (James 2:24), but it is also true that some works cannot save – the work of living a perfectly sinless life – the work of devising our own scheme of redemption – the works of the Law of Moses – the works of darkness, which are the works of Satan.

So, it is true that works both save us and have nothing to do with our salvation, depending on what kind of works you are talking about.

It is not possible for a reasonable adult to be sinless and therefore, in this sense, one cannot save himself by his own works. We cannot be saved by the works of Satan, nor by the works of the Law of Moses, nor by any human invention. Such works have no power to save and many of them are an offense to God.

Still, it is true that the work of faith (the works produced by faith, see Rom. 1:5; Rom. 16:26), bring the sinner into a right relationship with his Creator, help to maintain that relationship, and will one day be the reason for his promotion to glory (Matt. 25:31-46). To say that works have nothing to do with salvation is to fly in the face of Bible teaching.

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Miracles

by Alstone L. Tabor
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Do miracles occur today? If they do, who performs them? Perhaps most important, what is a miracle?

Most of us believe that God performs “miracles” daily as we consider the worlds in orbit and development of a tiny seed into a great plant. But this usage of the word “miracle” means “an unfathomable wonder” not a direct sign from God given as some special confirmation of His will. Our bodies are a miraculous creation! In this sense God continues miracles, and “miracles” is used, in this sense, by many writers in a poetic way. “To me, every hour of the day and night is an unspeakable, perfect miracle” (Walt Whitman).

A speaker recently declared that he believed in miracles. He told of his heart transplant and that his heart stopped beating twice and that the doctors and nurses started it again with electrical shocks. He said that he had died twice and came back to life.

This event was, understandably, a miracle to the speaker. By this definition, nearly everyone believes in miracles. But his wonderful experience is in no way comparable to the miracles of the New Testament. Those miracles were signs of a special sort which God used to confirm the inspired word. Marvelous medical advancements are different; they do not defy explanation, as do Biblical miracles, but are merely wonderful examples of human achievement.

Biblical miracles were real miracles. When Christ healed the sick, raised the dead, and gave sight to the blind, He never declared, “I will perform this miracle provided you go to the hospital and let the surgeons operate on you.” His miracles did not depend, even in part on the skill of earthly physicians or technology.

Miracles, such as the restarting of a stopped heart, do depend upon man and his skills. Such “miracles” do not have the same force upon those who witness them. When Jesus performed a miracle, no one could doubt that God had intervened in the natural world. God may, or may not have intervened in the heart transplant case, but doubt exists. Jesus’ signs left no

doubt, to the observer, that God had suspended natural laws to do His will.

One denominational Houston preacher who has a large following declares that he believes miracles happen today in the same way as Christ and the Apostles performed them. He says that he prayed for his young daughter, and she was healed. The daughter is now grown, and a few weeks ago, was opening the mail for him when a bomb went off in her lap. Does he rush in and pray that God will heal her? He claims his prayer was answered before. Does he rely on a miracle now? No sir! He rushed her to the emergency hospital and implored the surgeons to do their work. If God miraculously heals today, why not pray for her right there in the office and let God do the healing, without benefit of surgeon or nurse?

Would this sort of "miracle," say the rushing of Bartimaeus to the emergency room in Jericho, have confirmed Christ or his word? Certainly not! Christ did not perform miracles in this fashion.

God is all powerful and one day will perform the miracle of miracles by resurrecting all that are in the grave (John 5:28-29). He will also instantaneously change those then living (1 Cor. 15:51-52). But today He does not give the spiritual gifts of healing, tongues, prophecy, miraculous knowledge or any of the other gifts mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:6-10. God Himself told us that miraculous gifts would cease. "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

He tells us plainly that faith, hope and love (these three shall abide or continue) not the eleven gifts which included the miraculous and healing gifts of the twelfth chapter. Only

three were to abide! “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13).

What is that which is perfect? David declared in Psalm 19:7, “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” James calls the New Testament “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25). So when the law of God was completed (made perfect), then miraculous gifts ceased. God said they would fail, cease, vanish away! I believe God rather than Oral Roberts, Pat Robinson or John Osteen. God no longer performs miraculous feats such as raising the dead, walking on water, the gift of prophecy, healing or speaking in tongues.

We believe in prayer, but we do not believe prayer will cause God to grant us the miracle-working power that He gave in the first century. Some people believe that God has to perform a miracle for prayer to be answered. That position is not supported by scripture. God’s hands are not tied, nor his power limited. God does move in our world. God provides many things in answer to prayer. Prayer accomplishes much, but God has not promised miracles in our age of the same kind that He performed through Christ and the inspired apostles.

Consider Heb 2:3-4:

> *“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?”*

Consider also Mark 16:17 and Mark 16:20:

> *“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on*

> *the sick, and they shall recover." Did this occur? Read verse 20. "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."*

The miracles or signs described in the preceding passages were to confirm the word. In that time without a written New Testament early Christians could know that God inspired certain messages because God confirmed the word by His miracles. He has confirmed His word: He does not need to continue the confirmation.

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men… And he gave some Apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man… That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine…" The first century church needed all these miraculously inspired people as they had no written New Testament then. Later the word was committed to writing. Obviously we no longer have Apostles or Prophets, nor do we have inspired evangelists, pastors or teachers. The inspired people were to continue "Till we all come in the unity of the Faith" (Eph 4:8).

We now have that faith, in the unified form, in the New Testament. Jude declared that we should "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). This is not our personal faith, but the system of faith which had been revealed in God's Holy Word. Miraculously endowed gifts were to last "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God…" (Eph. 4:8). This unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God was completed, made perfect, when the last word of inspiration was written.

Now instead of all these miraculously endowed individuals, we have the “perfect law of liberty” completely given to mankind. God said supernatural things were to cease (1 Cor. 13:8), so His word being true, we have none of these today.

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It’s Up to Me and to You

By Hugo McCord
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Many gifts from God, as our lives, as the air we breathe, are absolutely free. But whether or not we are (1) thankful to God and (2) live for him and for others is wholly in our hands. It’s up to me and to you.

Thankfulness

Some “believe that he [God] is” but are not “thankful” to him (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 1:21). To be thankful (says Webster) is to be “impressed with a sense of kindness received,” to be “ready to acknowledge it,” to be “grateful.”

To be thankless (says Webster) is “not feeling or expressing thanks, not acknowledging favors,” and Webster quotes Shakespeare, “How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child.”

After Jesus had healed ten men of leprosy, only one of them, a Samaritan, “when he saw that he was healed turned back and praised God with a loud voice, and fell on his face at the feet of Jesus, giving him thanks” (Luke 17:16). Jesus was shocked that the nine Jews were thankless, and he asked, “Were

not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was none found to return to give God the glory except this foreigner?" (Luke 17: 17-18).

A psalm written 3,000 years ago is timeless:

> *Shout joyfully to Yahweh, all the earth. Serve Yahweh with gladness. Come before him with singing. Know that Yahweh, he is God. He made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Be thankful to him, and bless his name, for Yahweh is good, his kindness is everlasting, and his faithfulness is from generation to generation (Psa. 100).*

Paul was grateful "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst" (1 Tim. 1:15), "who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20), exclaiming about Jesus, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable [indescribable, inexpressible, unutterable] gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).

All Christians are exhorted, "Always give thanks to God, even the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20); "Give thanks for everything, which is God's will in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:18).

Living for Others

Jesus not only died for others (Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:14-15), but he is a prime example of living for others. "He went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

To believing, penitent hearts (Acts 16:31; 2:38), as their bodies are raised from the water of baptism (Acts 10:47; Col. 2:12), Christ is their everything (Col. 3:11).

Redeemed sinners ("all have sinned," Rom. 3:23) realize that

if “one died for all, then all had died” (2 Cor. 5:14), “and since he died for all, the living should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised” (2 Cor. 5:15).

Living for the Lord includes daily Bible reading (Col. 1:10; 1 Pet. 2:2), daily praying (Rom. 12:12; 1 Thess. 5:17), a weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7), a weekly contribution (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and living for others as “living sacrifices” (Rom. 12:1), being “ready for every good work” (Titus 3:1, 8, 14).

No matter how selfish and self-centered a sinner was before his baptism, no longer does a Christian live “to himself” (Rom. 14:7). Every morning, as Jesus “went about doing good,” on the mind of every Christian is, “what can I do today to help somebody?”

Those who live for Jesus not only live to serve other Christians, but they look for opportunities to serve non-Christians, as Paul taught: “Therefore, as we have an opportunity, let us do good to everyone, especially to those of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10), “contributing to the needs of the saints, showing love to strangers” (Rom. 12:13).

The first ones at Corinth in A.D. 51, “hearing, believing,” and being “baptized,” were “the household of Stephanas” (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 16:15); apparently Stephanas himself and his wife had children old enough to believe.

Their conversion was more than “joining a church.” Theirs was a life-long commitment to live for Jesus and to live for others. Six years later (A.D. 57) Paul wrote of them: “They have set themselves to serve the saints” (1 Cor. 16:15). The KJV says that “they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.” The word addict means to give oneself over to a thing, and generally, says Webster, in a bad sense. The word is used in reference to alcoholics or those given over to

drugs. But the KJV used the word in a good sense, that the Stephanas family addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

Sadly, some Christians allow selfishness to take over, and live only for themselves. Phygelus and Hermogenes “deserted” Paul (2 Tim. 1:15).

Demas, who had been one of Paul’s “fellow workers” (Phil. 24) “deserted me,” said Paul, “having loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4:10).

On the other hand, most Christians crucify selfishness, living for their Lord and for others: “Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24).

During Paul’s three years at Ephesus (A.D. 54-57) a Christian by the name of Onesiphorus “served” Paul in such a way that he could say to Timothy that “you know better than I the ways he served me in Ephesus” (2 Tim. 1:18).

Then later, during Paul’s last day in “chains” in the Mamertine Prison in Rome (A.D. 67-68), for some reason Onesiphorus was in Rome (2 Tim. 1:16-17), over 600 miles away from his home in Ephesus, and somehow he knew that Paul was there. The Mamertine Prison is a three-quarter cellar with a tiny window opening toward a cemetery.

In A.D. 67 Paul wrote, “When he [Onesiphorus] was in Rome, he searched diligently and found me. …He often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains” (2 Tim. 1:16-17).

Paul appreciated his good friend, and, apparently after Onesiphorus died, Paul penned two prayers about him in a letter to Timothy: “May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus,” and “May the Lord grant that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day” (2 Tim. 4:16, 18), and Paul asked Timothy to greet “the family of Onesiphorus” (2 Tim. 4:19).

An unselfish Christian lady in Bartlesville, Okla., a member of the Sixth and Dewey congregation, showed no self-pity when paralysis made her bedfast. She had never missed a Bible class or a church service until she became bedfast. Then she asked that the names of the Sunday morning auditorium Bible class absentees be sent to her every Monday morning. With her telephone in bed she called each absentee. I preached for the Sixth and Dewey congregation six years (195 1-57), and I am sorry I have forgotten the name of the bedfast Christian of whom it could be said, “She has done what she could” (Mark 14:8). She was a good example for every church member.

I am thankful that the Lord, though he does not need it, has “a book of remembrance … written before him, for them who reverenced Yahweh, and who thought about his name” (Mal. 3:16), “whose names are in the book of life” (Phil. 4:3).

In conclusion, “None of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself. If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Whether, therefore, we live or die, we belong to the Lord” (Rom. 14:7-8).

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