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God's Saving Mercy (Abbot Tryphon)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)





We are not compelled to love God, having been created with free will. God does not, nor can He, compel His creatures to love Him. Mutual love requires, by its very nature, freedom to either respond in love, or not. Yet when we respond to God's love with love His mercy leads us into holiness, for entering into this relationship with our Creator transforms us, changes us. When we respond to God's offer to commune with Him, He changes us into His likeness. We were meant from the beginning to be in His image and likeness and our positive response to the invitation to enter into divine communion leads to holiness.

Like Saint Paul we can say that whatever good we do is Christ in us. We can do nothing good without God's grace, which is why Saint John Chrysostom tells us, "faith's workings themselves are a gift of God, lest anyone should boast." No man can call Jesus the Christ but by the power of the Holy Spirit and the gift of faith implants in us the grace to do good works. Can good works save us? No! God's mercy and grace saves us.

"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." (James 1:17)

Our Christian vocation is to acquire holiness (become whole), something that can only take place by the power of the Holy Spirit. Faith by itself, without good works, is indeed dead. Yet good works can only be done with God's grace (Christ in us).

"14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (James 2:14-17)

If we claim Christ to be our Savior yet have no love in us and do no good works, we delude ourselves, thinking we have Christ when in reality we simply have religion. Religion is dead, but Christ in us is alive! Works don't save us, Christ saves us. Good works are a sign that we are being transformed, made holy, because Christ dwells in our hearts. Anything good we do is because Christ is in us, and His grace abounds.

By Fr. Tryphon

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*which can be found here: <http://morningoffering.blogspot.com/>
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