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TIME OF REFLECTION

“Justification by faith is the key to eliminating racism.”

~Shai Linne, rap artist and pastor

“[A]ccording to the world, life is like a ladder. At the top of the ladder is success, and at the bottom of the ladder is failure. Apart from Christ, we all naturally see life through this lens.”

~Katharine Roberts, director and founder of Verity Fellowship

“Look around and you will see systems and processes of justification everywhere in human affairs.... Other animals communicate, struggle for dominance, and form alliances. But they don’t justify why they do what they do. We are the justifying animal.”

~Gregg Henriques Ph.D. in “The Justification Hypothesis” in *Psychology Today*

“...the Good News of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ...is the astonishing announcement that God has done the whole work of reconciliation without a scrap of human assistance. It is the bizarre proclamation that religion is over – period.”

~Robert F. Capon (1925-2013), American Episcopal priest, author and chef

“But to fulfill the law means to do its work eagerly, lovingly and freely, without the constraint of the law; it means to live well and in a manner pleasing to God, as though there were no law or punishment. It is the Holy Spirit, however, who puts such eagerness of unconstrained love into the heart.... So, too, faith comes only through the word of God, the Gospel, that preaches Christ: how he is both Son of God and man, how he died and rose for our sake.... That is why faith alone makes someone just and fulfills the law; faith it is that brings the Holy Spirit through the merits of Christ. The Spirit, in turn, renders the heart glad and free, as the law demands. Then good works proceed from faith itself.”

~Martin Luther (1483-1546), German religious reformer

“To live like Jesus is Lord is going to make my life dysfunctional in relationship to a good deal of American practices.”

~Stanley Hauerwas, Duke University professor and public intellectual,
named “America’s Best Theologian” by *Time* magazine (2001)

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “A Faith that Works out in Justifying Obedience” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *James 2:8-26 (ESV)*

⁸ If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. ⁹ But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹² So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. ¹³ For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So 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 apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.