

If you look in your hymn books, chapter 16 is on page 857. And we're going to start right there. Let's pray. Let's open this in prayer first. Dear Lord God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for the Lord's day. We thank you for the day that which we come in. Oh Lord, a rebel in the resurrection of Christ by whom we are justified. And Lord, we just ask you to overwhelm us with your exalted majesty today and use this time to prepare us to worship your right. Lord, work up zeal in our hearts to do those good works which were prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We are now in chapter 16 of the Confession of Faith. Just as an introduction, I'm gonna go, this is a really long chapter. And this is my last Sunday teaching. So I told you we'd try to get, I was hoping to 18, that shows you how, I was originally gonna combine saving faith and repentance unto life, but I decided to break those in two, which would have put us at 18. But anyway, we're gonna stop at 16 this year, and pick up next year, chapter 17. Thank you for your patience. This has been taxing, and thank you for your attention. I've been blessed by your interaction. Even though we don't talk a lot in here, the interaction afterwards has been very positive, so thank you very much.

But I want to remind you a couple of things. Why do we embark on this study? Last year we said we had two goals for the church. And to not only know that, but to warmly embrace our theology, which we believe is biblical theology. And we had two goals. We wanted everybody in the church to read the Confession of Faith. Just that simple. And if we walk through it, you have to read it. So that's a good thing. But secondly, to read it devotionally. You know, asking yourself, you know, if this is true, well, how should I live? How should I think? How should I speak? How should I love? What should I be devoted to? What should I put all my attention towards?

You know, there's a saying out there in money management that money follows attention. What you pay attention to, you increase. You pay attention to your money, it tends to do better than it does if you just forget about it and neglect it. In fact, in Proverbs it says, know well the face of your flocks. So you pay attention to it. Well, what do you devote your attention to? You know, Psalm 37, 4 says to delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. What are you delighting in? What you delight in is what you'll devote time to.

If you're really into hunting, you don't, during season, you're out in the woods every day. But out of season, you're still thinking about it. Man, that one I killed, if I had done this, I would have done better. And you start working out strategies. If you're a Ole Miss football fan, you're thinking about who's gonna play quarterback this year? Who's gonna play linebacker? Who's gonna do that? We devote attention to all sorts of things that aren't necessarily sinful, but are less than, that are just less than.

You know, when Jesus taught the parable of the sower and he talked about the seed sown on the weedy ground, on the weedy ground, you know, what was it? The deceitfulness of riches, the worries of the world, and the desire for other things. Just the distractedness of life, the desire for other things.

You know, what this hopefully calls you to do is to focus on those things, as Dave said, keeping the main thing the main thing. That's what we try to do. And that's what you want to devote your life to, the main thing, which is Jesus Christ. So this study should draw our affection and our attention to the God of our salvation. And I pray that that's what is done.

Second thing, we talked about its goals in introduction. We also talk about, I want to talk about grace. Because to that end, the grace of God should rivet your attention. And that's what we've been talking about literally for seven weeks. We've been talking about the grace of God and salvation. That is all we have talked about every Sunday morning. In this quarter, we have had a hard focus on the grace of God and salvation.

In chapter 9, we talked about man's free will in his four states. The state of innocency, the state of the fall, the state of grace, and the state of glorification, okay? And we talked about the varying degrees of ability in each of those. You know, once Adam fell, we have freedom of will.

We just don't have the ability to choose what's good. And then after we are saved by God's grace, which we had nothing to do with, He gives us the grace to be able to not sin. And then we talked about, in glorification, you will only be able to not sin, which is a blessed thing to look forward to. But the point being is, because of who we are, we needed God's grace to save us from our sins. Okay? Simply, we are sinners. And we talked about that we were confronted with that chapter 9 that Isaiah was confronted with, you know? Remember Isaiah? He was a prophet in Israel already. He was already a prophet in Israel. By chapter 6, he was the prophet in Israel to the kings. And 6, he was confronted with God. Chapter 6 of Isaiah.

And what does he say? Woe is me, I am undone. So hopefully chapter nine drew that conclusion in your own life. Just woe is me, I'm undone if I'm resting in me. You know, I'm a man of unclean lips, I live among people of unclean lips. And that's what it did. But then, happiness, right? An angel takes an altar, a coal from the altar and goes to him. He's undone, he can't go to God. And he sears him and says, what does he say to him? He said to Isaiah, He declared, which is what we are in justified. He declares to Isaiah, your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven. That's what God does to us in justification.

Okay? God takes the initiative in redemption and truly cleanses and renews our hearts. He chooses to use the power of His Word in effectual calling, chapter 10. Then we talked about justification 11, adoption 12, sanctification 13, and then we went back and worked inside the context of effectual calling, what man does when God changes him.

He repents and believes. That's what man does. It's a grace. Faith is not even yours, but you actually believe. Repentance is worked out in you through the Holy Spirit. And God chooses to use His Word, that is His means of grace to affect these things in our lives.

So that is chapter 9 through 15. We just did. Wish I could have done it that fast then. Today we're going to wrap up this quarter with chapter 16, which is good works. And we're going to go back to Isaiah 6 here for a second. Think about, remember what happened after that?

You know, we love the Isaiah, the part where he gets the sins taken away and forgiven. And then in verse 8, he heard the voice of the Lord. Of course, the word comes out. He heard the verse of the Lord saying, whom shall I send and who will go for us? Then Isaiah said, here I am, send me.

Okay, you've received the redemption in Christ. It's all of his grace. You're overwhelmed by it. Isaiah's living in the reverie of redemption. His sins are forgiven and his iniquities taken away. And God says, who can I send? And he says, send me. That's good works. That's good works. You can see the framework in God's Word here of how that happens. God saves us and He calls us and He sends us to do good works.

It says in Ephesians 2.10 that we are created in Christ Jesus. We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works that we should walk in them. So in chapter 16, A redeemed man's life acts according to God's will.

That's what a good work, we're gonna talk about that in a minute. So we've talked about our goals, God's grace, and now we're gonna talk about good. Because that's a debated, a lot of things go under the rubric of good. What is good? That matters when we talk about good works, okay?

You know, in Mark 10, 18, Luke 18, 19, remember the rich young ruler? Y'all remember that? He comes to Jesus and he says, good teacher. And Jesus looks at him and he goes, why do you call me good? Only God is good. Okay, so that's going to temper our view of what good is, right? Jesus asks, why do you call me good? Only God is good. What is good? Well, I love the Webster's 1828 Dictionary. I'll tell you, it means valid or legally firm, so you have a good title. Everybody owns a home, right? You want to have a good title to that home, okay? You don't want any defects on the title, all right?

It's not weak, false, or fallacious. It's complete or perfectly sufficient in its kind. The reference there in Webster's is Genesis 1, and God said it was very good. Everything was complete. The animal kingdom, the oceans, the earth, the plant kingdom, and man. It was all good. It was complete and sufficient in its kind.

Having moral qualities best adapted to its design and use, or the qualities which God's law requires. By the way, this is straight out of Webster's. Virtuous, pious, conformable to moral law of God, Pleasant to the taste. Full. Valuable. Useful. Kind. Benevolent. Affectionate. Faithful. Cheerful. Favorable to happiness.

God is good. But He's more than that. Remember in the shorter catechism we testify what is God. God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

God is not just good. He is goodness. He is the essence of what it is. All good is derived from Him. He emits good because He is goodness.

For me to talk more than that is to talk about things that I can't explain. So I will say this. We are now at chapter 16. And so I'll break it down for you the way chapter 16 lays out. 16.1 What are good works? And what they only are. 16.2 They are fruits and evidences of faith. 16.3 The Holy Spirit is the worker, yet we are to do them.

16.4 No such thing as supererogation. In other words, more than God requires to store up and bank on. And that still is in effect in medieval Catholicism, but it's still in effect today. But that particular paragraph was particularly directed towards Roman Catholicism. 16.5, Our best works do not merit the pardon of our sins. 16.6, Our good works are acceptable in Christ ours. 16.7, unregenerate man's good works are sinful, and yet it is even more sinful for him not to do them.

Okay? So if I don't get through, that's the summary of the whole chapter right there. Let's look at 16.1 and 16.2. I'm going to read these. Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy word. and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or upon any pretense of good intention." Paragraph 2. These good works done in obedience to God's commandments are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith. And by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life."

We're going to hang out in 1 and 2 for a long time, and if we get to the rest of them, y'all have already heard a summation of it, okay? Because it's a lot in each one of these paragraphs. Good works. We all have an idea of what doing something good to somebody is. But what we're talking about here is basically evangelical good works. Good works that are commanded by God. It is a good work if it is commanded by God. We know that We have Exodus 20 where God commands the law.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, and the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bow thyself to them, nor serve them. For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God gives thee. Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor, thou shalt not covet. Jesus opens that up in the Sermon on the Mount, doesn't He? He says the law, not one jot or tittle of that law will pass away.

And then He goes, wait a minute, murder's not me just killing somebody, it's me hating somebody. He's gonna deal with your heart. Adultery's not just me leaving my wife for another woman, it's me lusting after that woman before I ever do anything. Covetousness is, have I made wealth my God? all the while living upright and doing all the right things, paying my taxes and my bills and all those good upright things to do, hiding behind a heart of greed.

Greed is idolatry, Paul says. That's God's Word. Those things are good. The positive aspects of those things are. So be faithful. Tell the truth. Work hard. Be content. Honor those in authority over you. Worship God on His day. Do it from a heart that loves Christ. Do it His way and only worship Him.

Those are all positive commands coming from thou shalt not, right? So if I can say thou shalt not, I can say thou shall do those things. That's it. Okay, in Micah 6, we're told that we are to be how we carry out God's commands, acting justly. loving mercy, walking humbly in His ways. He tells us to do these things and we're going, you're God. Of course I want to do them. Because remember we just got through chapter 15. We just got through chapter 14, 13, 12, 11, 10. He's done all this for me. Who can I send?

Isaiah who had been forgiven and cleansed said, send me. Well look, what did God tell him? Well go tell all these people that I'm fixing to punish them. You know, after God got to tell him what he was supposed to be doing, and finally Isaiah says, well, how long do I have to do that? You know, it's like, ooh. But he humbly did it. Isaiah did it. He exhibited good works by doing what God had given him to do. He gave that message. Hence, we have the book of Isaiah, which at the end was a glorious message, which is a New Testament book.

The Ethiopian eunuch was reading, who is this man? you know, that would bear our iniquities. But anyway, that's how we're to walk. It included, we just heard 2 Peter 1, verses 5 through 10. What happens, right? All those things. Remember, Mack just preached on it. I'm not going to ask you if you remember.

Diligence in your faith supply moral excellence and your moral excellence, knowledge and your knowledge, self-control and your self-control, perseverance, perseverance, godliness, godliness, brotherly kindness, and brotherly kindness, love. If these qualities of yours are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins, which is what Isaiah remembered. Therefore, brethren, being all the more diligent to make certain about his calling and choosing you, for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble."

Those are good works. Galatians 5 has good works, right? The fruit of the Spirit, those are good works. Those are things God commands us to do. Good works are what God commands us to do and only that, by the way. So, sometimes we think, you know, well that's not really practical because, you know, we get into that, particularly in like the second commandment, which is the regulative principle of worship. God tells us how He wants to be worshiped, right?

And our deal is we need to get a lot of people in the doors. Let's do all kinds of things that would just be for attracting people. Let's emphasize, let's have a band, let's have kind of an entertainment style worship. It gets people in the door. And yeah, we're gonna do a 10 minute message that tells them about Jesus, but we're coming here to get people and not to worship God. And God says, the Bible says, worship is about God. We come to give worship to God. That's what it's about. So we've got to be careful. Under the guise of good works, a lot of bad things are done. Good works walk humbly in God's way because good works aim at God's glory. That's what they're shooting for. How do we figure out what that is? Romans 12, 1 and 2. You know what it says?

We're renewed by the transforming of our minds. We take His Word, and then we prove what is excellent. We take His Word, and we prove what is eternal. We prove what is good. I better read before I go through all the... Prove what the will of God is, that which is good, acceptable, and perfect.

You take His Word. You're renewed by His Word. You take His Word. And if it's not in His Word, then you don't do that and call it a good work. He alone can show what is pleasing to Him. His worship is most pleasing to Him, and He regulates it precisely with positive commands not to be added to, no matter how holy they make people feel.

Man, I go there, I just felt God. Well, I don't know. I've heard it said here one time, somebody's preaching. And one person said, man, the Spirit was with him today. I hope it was the Holy Spirit, because I'm not sure what he said was true. It needs to be according to God's Word, no matter what it makes you feel like. You can know that those feelings are good if they are in accordance with God's Word.

The Word is driving all this. Just don't lose that. That's the important thing. He alone shows what is pleasing to Him, Hebrews 13, 20, 21. And He alone can equip us with everything good for doing His will through Jesus Christ. That's in Hebrews 13, 20, 21 if you're keeping up with verses. If you're a Christian, this is important to you. And you need to heed what God says about good works. And you need to avoid so-called good works that were invented by men. Jesus preached on that all the time.

Because you had the Pentateuch and you had the Torah, which is the law, five books of the Bible. And then you've heard of the Talmud, which essentially would be like Matthew Henry's commentary, except it was on the whole five books. And it was thicker than the five books. And they were taking That was rabbi's thoughts on those five books.

And basically, they were making those laws of God. And Jesus kept pointing that out. That was made up by men. That was not what God said. God said, keep the day holy. I made it for man for his good, so be holy and rest. Be holy don't work. Be holy set aside recreations that you can normally do on other days. Be holy because it's holy. It's consecrated. But it's not so rigid that you don't eat if you're hungry. God never asked us to do that. He made hunger. He made us, gave us bodies. Okay? So don't make up man-made rules and apply them to this.

But keep God's law. That's what Jesus kept saying over and over again. So if you're a Christian and you want to please God, which you would want to do if you're a Christian, you want to do what He says. This is true in all things, and obviously in worship being the height of all things that we do. So I've stayed in worship. But remembering Isaiah again, God is displeased when we worship with our mouths and not with our hearts. Isaiah, remember that? These people worship me with their mouths, but their hearts are far away from me.

Okay, so he doesn't want hypocritical religion, which is taking God's name in vain, back to the Ten Commandments. You sing these hymns, but you don't think about the words in them, because you like that tune, you've been singing that hymn all your life. I know it, I just recite the words, don't think about what I'm singing. That's taking God's name in vain.

That's what he's talking about to Isaiah. They're doing all the right things, but at the same time, as he tells them that he also wants them to do it the right way. He wants them to do it the right way. It matters to him that you do it the right way. Yes, it's your heart, but yes, it's also the correct actions. It's not either or, it's and. He's to teach children that, you know, God wants it all. It's not, he wants my heart, but he doesn't care about if I do this.

No, he wants your heart and he wants that. He wants everything about you. The way you walk, the way you talk, the way you think, the way you eat, the way you drive, the way you work, the way you dress, all those things. He wants it all. And He wants it all when we're trying to do good works. He wants our whole heart, but He wants us to do prescribed works the way He prescribed them. He wants both.

It's not an either-or. And that's what He's telling Isaiah. In Matthew 15, verse 9, Jesus explains that man-focused worship is empty, hopeless, and ultimately vain. Let me look over here real quick. When I quote that, I'll read that to you, Matthew 15.9. We need to move here.

Matthew 15.9, But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.

So that's Jesus. He's quoting Isaiah. Jesus quoting Isaiah and his sermon, preaching. So worship is to God. Everyone there participates. We all are participating in worship. You either hear, that's a verb, and listen, that's a verb. You pray, that's a verb. When prayer is going on, we are to be praying with the preacher. You give, that's a verb. You sing, that's a verb.

Everybody's participating in worship. We don't need more people than what God's prescribed to lead in worship. Everybody's participating. If you're in the room, you're participating. Okay? We need to regulate worship by God's Word and wholeheartedly embrace it.

Sometimes we purportedly do good works out of a zeal for God, which I know lots of people do because there's so much, some erroneous theology, and we know that, and we do it ourselves with supposedly good theology.

We want to please God, and we go off and just do something, I did it for God, and you realize, oh no, That really wasn't the way he wanted me to do that.

And it was not according to knowledge in Romans 10.2. There is a zeal that's not according to knowledge. Knowledge comes from the word. I'm gonna stick back to the word. This is done in a myriad of ways from outright subversion in the church. That happens. It happens in the PCA, okay? So just tell you that. to plain old misapplication of the word out of a sincere heart.

I had Mary Cato teach me from the time I was really young, but one of the lessons she told me that stuck with me, I think I was probably eight or nine, was the story of the little girl who couldn't read yet, and she loved her kitten. And there was a box of cat food and a box of rat poison next to each other. And she grabbed the rat poison because she wanted to feed her kitty. And she ended up killing the kitty. Did she want to? Was she sincere? She loved her kitty. She wanted to.

There's sincere misapplication of God's Word. Sincerity, you can be as Mary, I remember her telling me, JMO, you can be sincerely wrong. You can be sincerely wrong. We must stay in the Word. You can be sincerely wrong. Sometimes good works can claim the authority of a good intention. Well, he meant well. Or it could be an empty pretense.

What did Saul do in 1 Samuel 15? When God told, through Samuel, He told him, wait till I get there to offer sacrifices and to kill everybody, every man, woman, and child of Mount Amalek, every one of them, kings, goats, everything. And remember Samuel gets there, what's this bleeding of sheep out here? And there's the king over there, which Samuel ended up having to kill, because Saul didn't do it.

Well, we say these to worship. And Samuel looks at Saul and says, God says, I desire obedience. I like this. To obey is better than sacrifice. As we said, to obey is better than sacrifice. Do my will, God says. Don't play worship. Do my will. Don't use worship as an excuse to sin.

We do that sometimes here. You have entertainment style worship. This is in evangelical churches. Sometimes we go the opposite extreme. We do the bells and smells thing. We try to get high churchy on us. All these different things we bring into worship. We have holy days. Be careful that we're not doing what Saul did. We're playing worship and not obeying God.

He desires you to be obedient and to worship Him in your worship. Obey Him. You don't need a PhD in theology to read God's Word. We've already talked about that last year in the perspicuity of God's Word. You read it the plain text. Don't bring your own prejudices to it. Hear what it says. It's pretty plain about women not preaching.

I mean, you can do all the hoops and Greek you want to play with. Thankfully, I was on a committee with our favorite Greek professor, Guy Waters, who once said, that's not what the Greek says. And I'm trusting him that he can read Greek. I can't, but it doesn't say that.

But the point being is, we've got to do what God's Word says in His plain reading. For the most part, He's not trying to trick us. He wants good. He wants His church to grow, but He's ordained the means by which it grows. That's what He's saying. So, obedience to God's Word is a good work, and it is the evidence of a true and lively faith, which is what we just read here a minute ago. Good works confirm. They do a few things, we said, if you look in paragraph 2. They confirm thankfulness to God. Psalm 116, Psalm 107, 1-4 we read at prayer meeting the other day. It talks about how good God is. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

And then it just recounts all the works He does in redemption. How we keep failing and He keeps bringing us back. We sin, then we cry out to God, then He brings us back. We sin, we cry out to God, then He brings us back. He says His loving kindness is everlasting. He doesn't quit even when we try to.

And out of that gratitude, out of that thanksgiving, it says, let all the redeemed of the Lord say so in Psalm 107. You are required to praise God because He is willing to do all of these wonderful things to redeem you. So it confirms your thankfulness when you go out and do what He says to do. Expressing thankfulness is the beginning of good works.

Because in Romans 1, they did not acknowledge me as God nor give me thanks. That was evidence that you don't know God. The beginning of good works is gratitude to God. It doesn't stop there, but you've got to start there. Secondly, good works are the evidence of true faith and love to God. We'll see it in 1 John 2, 3, 5. Matt just preached on 2 Peter, which we just did a minute ago. Has God called, effectual calling, we're going to drive back to that, and chosen you? Well, here's evidence of it. Here's evidence that you actually are gods because you're trying to live this way for Him, to Him, and through Him.

Good works thirdly are edifying to the brethren. You edify me when I see you. When I see, I won't say names here, but people deaconing to others they don't really know well or anything else, just given of themselves, edifies me. When I see an upright man who I serve on the session with, and I trust Him, and He is trustworthy. That is edifying to me, okay? When I see people that go regularly to visit nursing homes, rake other people's leaves, they just tend to their business in a godly way.

That builds me up to want to be more like Christ. Because, you know, Paul said this a lot, imitate me as I imitate Christ. Good works draw out imitation from other believers. Okay? Good works are edifying to the brethren. We bless one another. We stir them up to more zeal for Christ, even by such practical good works according to II Corinthians 9, 2, as giving to the needy. You know, Jesus said, give a cup of cold water in my name.

You know, when you see somebody actually live that out, when I see somebody else Like Jesus, when we just heard the sermon two weeks ago from Carl Kalberkamp about the ten lepers healed, and only one came back

and said thanks. Only one came back to Jesus and said thanks. Giving thanks to someone who has done you well edifies that person, But if somebody else happens, you don't do thanks so other people will hear it, but other people will know of it. Because I'll bet you the person that receives the thanks is going to say, you don't believe this, I just did some little simple thing for so and so and they just were so full of gratitude to me.

I just was blessed by them doing that. Well, that blesses the other person, another person in the congregation or of the redeemed, you know. So it is a way to stir up the brethren to love and good deeds. Your good deeds do that for others. Our good works, giving, speaking, listening to, being with in times of crisis, cause others to glorify our Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5, 16 says, that let your light shine before men.

Okay? Why? The ultimate goal to bring glory to your Father in Heaven. That's the end of it. That's why you should do it. But what is that light? How does your light shine before men? Well, the way you love one another. The way you are good to one another. The way you exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. That's time to go. I'll end with Van Dixon Warren. Like I said, we get through 16.2 and Christian's obedience does suggest that our actions will sometimes speak louder to the world than our words.

As Peter once explained, by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people, 1 Peter 2.15. Doing good silences the gainsayer. You can talk bad about Him and you can talk bad about His church or whatever, but He does me right. He's kind to me. He shows me things. And what do people do?

They glorify God in heaven whether they even want to or not. Christian obedience does suggest that our actions will sometimes speak louder than words. We cannot ignore the world in all that we do, but the chief purpose of all labors is to glorify God.

We want to be filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Christ," Paul told the Philippians, because our concern, Philippians 1.11, is the glory and praise of God. He's echoing the words of His Master who told His disciples, that is, to the Father's glory that you bear much fruit. Bearing good fruit will show that you are Christ's disciples. For you see, now that we have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

So let us take Christian obedience seriously. We're to obey God's Word. Okay. And three and four, I'll say two things. Number one, you're dependent on the Holy Spirit. Good works are the fruit of the Spirit, right? They're evidences of faith. Our ability to do good works does not come from ourselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And apart from Christ, we cannot bear good fruit, John 15, 4 and 5. The importance of the Holy Spirit must not be underestimated. Two, stirring up God's grace. Listen to this. Our work relies on God's Spirit, but that does not give us the right to be negligent, or wait until the Spirit moves us. Wait until you feel like obeying God. It does not.

We are to rouse ourselves up, Hebrews 6, 11 to 12. The goal of this study is to do what elders are charged with doing in 2 Timothy 1, 6, which is to fan the flame. We have to fan the flames of obedience. to one another and

in our own souls. It is our job to do it. We're all charged to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. And then, of course, verse 13 follows it up, because it's God who's at work in you to willing to do His own good pleasure. God's working in us, but He does it by us working. So it's our responsibility to work. Chapter 4 talks about the limits of good works. Good works won't save you. Not your good works.

Jesus Christ works to save us. He went through and talked about Nehemiah, Van Dixhorn did. What a great man Nehemiah is. We've all had studies on Nehemiah. Hopefully we'll do it again soon. Going to get there. He talked about the Old Testament leader Nehemiah. He was a faithful man used by God to transform a nation for God's glory. A man who can shamelessly catalog a number of his achievements. He did so.

God, I did this. God, didn't I do that? God, didn't I do that? God, didn't I do that? But the striking thing is that after listing his good works, Nehemiah approaches the end of his book with the prayer that the Lord would spare him. according to the greatness of His steadfast love." According to Chesed. I did all this for you, God, but I'm not resting on that. I'm resting on Your steadfast love. Okay? Nehemiah's good works had a limit. Okay? He knew they couldn't get him to heaven. He did them because He was going to heaven based on the steadfast love of His Father. And we must too. Our works in God's best, why we cannot merit eternal life? Because we talked about this, Jesus did that. And then a couple of the last ones, our good works, they're frail, they're tainted with sin.

And then good works, not doing according to the Word or not by a Christian, because there are people that do quote, good things, build hospitals. God counts it as sin. Whatever is not of faith is sin. A lot of people have saved lives through that. But that's not good work according to God's Word. It has to be done to Him, through Him, and for Him. If it's not for God's glory, then it's not a good work. Because it's not according to His Word.

So anyway, Those of you who have been redeemed of the Lord, it says, let the redeemed of the Lord say so. He is good and He has saved us, and He has saved us two good works that we should walk in them. They're absolutely not set. We need to do good works. Because He is in sanctification. We talked about this.

He's going to make us look more and more like Christ. And sometimes that's going to take some chiseling. Remember Michelangelo chiseled a block of marble and cutting off some arms and plucking out some eyes and a few other things. But our goal is to look like Christ. And Jesus went about healing sick people, you know, exercising demons, preaching the Word, feeding the lost. And we are to emulate our Master. So let's pray.

Dear God, thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the salvation in Christ. We thank You for the Holy Spirit that would even give us the desire to think about somebody other than ourselves. God, we thank You that Jesus Christ would come in and rescue us. Lord, that He would save us and love us. We ask that You would cause us to revel in Him in the coming hour. In Jesus' name, amen.