**The Purpose of the Pastor-Teacher Gift, No. 3 – BD08-01**

We are considering in this basic Bible doctrine series the matter of the place of the local church and particularly the relationship of the pastor-teacher to it. We are looking now again at the purpose of the pastor-teacher gift. A brief review: With the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven, Satan has directed his attack now from the Lord to the individual believer. God has therefore made provision for a method whereby the believer can prepare himself to withstand the attack of Satan, thereby filling up a spiritual deficiency within the believer.

The Bible has provided us the mind of Christ, and the pastor-teacher in the local assembly is the transmitter of that mind. There is a system for understanding spiritual things that we’ve called the grace system for perception of spiritual things. This enables any believer to learn life principals of the Bible. Whatever you may do with them is something else, but you can learn them.

Positive reaction of your will, positive volition, toward the Word which you have learned serves to develop a structure of spiritual maturity within your soul that we’re going to begin looking at in detail. This structure of spiritual maturity is essential for you to be able to withstand Satan successfully. Without it, you can just forget it. You’re dead. You will accomplish nothing in spiritual good and divine good, and you will have a defeated Christian life. You will experience frustrations. You will experience nothing but complications, and your life will be one series of drudges one after another of the events that come to it.

Now the knowledge of the Word of God in your mind becomes usable full knowledge in your human spirit when you respond with positive volition, an act of faith, you’re believing God, to the truth that you’ve been taught. A Christian who is positive to the Word builds a frame of reference in his soul. This frame of reference is very essential for your understanding of advanced doctrine.

Every now and then somebody says to me, “I don’t really understand some of the things you say in the service,” and what they’re suggesting is that we are presuming and moving on without explaining. Well I know that what the person is telling me is that “I haven’t listened to enough of the Word of God being taught that I’ve developed enough frame of reference so that I understand the things that are coming to me.” This is exactly what happens. You build a frame of reference that enables you to understand advanced doctrine. We are indeed not forever explaining elementary and basic things.

You also develop from this frame of reference a new conscience. It gives you a divine viewpoint. It clears guilt from the subconscious. It gives you spiritual discernment. It guides you in your prayer. It gives you content for prayer and direction for witnessing. Now we have been examining the place of the pastor-teacher in the local church. Of course you can immediately see how important this is to you as individual believers because this is one of the first things you have to decide in associating yourself with a local church. When you go to make the decision, “Am I going to attend this local church or this local church or this local church,” what’s the basis upon which you make that decision? Well after you’ve understood Ephesians 4:12, you should have no difficulty in the world in knowing the basis upon which you make that decision, and you should be a discerning enough Christian to be able to spot the answer to this questions.

So Ephesians 4:12 has been our anchor point. We have been looking at the first part of this verse and we pointed out that this verse has the word “for” three times. “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” And we said that the phrase here is a purpose, and the purpose is tied to verse 11 which says that we have been given pastor-teachers which is a combined gift. The purpose is first of all for the perfecting of the saints.

Now you should know by this point that the pastor-teacher’s job in this phrase is explained as preparing the congregation for the attacks of Satan. The word “perfecting” you should now know means to prepare, to equip for spiritual combat. And the saints are the members of the local church who listen and learn and thereby become prepared as they respond positively to what they learn to meet the attacks of Satan. We may translate this first part therefore as “face-to-face” because that’s what the word means here. It uses the Greek word “pros” which means you facing me and me facing you. It’s not enough just to listen to tapes. The Word of God says you are to be in a local assembly in a congregation of other believers. There is an elevating and an ennobling effect upon your soul as you gather for the study of the Word of god mutually with other believers. Face-to-face with training and equipping the saints for combat.

Now we come to the second phrase which is, “for the work of the ministry.” Now this one, while the first phrase had to do with the pastor-teacher giving people the equipment for preparing them for spiritual combat, the second phrase has to do with production of divine good on the part of the individual believer. Now this is what the Christian life is all about. The reason God left you here on this earth, though you are totally saved and are ready now for heaven, is that you spend a lifetime producing divine good. This is exactly what most Christians do not do, nor are they able to do it. The work of the ministry.

The grammar here indicates that the first clause, “for the perfecting of the saints,” equipping them for combat is the key one. The next two purposes here are dependent on that one. In other words, if the pastor-teacher doesn’t perform the first one here, the second two cannot be realized, and the congregation is hopelessly at sea.

“For the work of the ministry” is speaking about your ministry, not the professional ministry of the pastor-teacher. This is your ministry. How are you going to perform the work of the ministry? Well, as you are equipped for spiritual combat in the first place. Without a functioning pastor-teacher there is no way for this system that God has provided for you to learn spiritual things—the grace system for spiritual perception which is not dependent upon your human IQ, then there is no way for that system to function. It is short-circuit. There is no way for spiritual maturity which is developed in your soul so there is no divine which you’re capable of producing.

The word “ministry” here speaks of your work. The word “work” here is a Greek word, “ergon,” which means either what you do, the work itself, or what you produce—the act of working and the product. So the second purpose of a pastor-teacher in his ministry is the production of divine good through the people of the congregation.

**Divine Good**

So let’s take a look this morning at a summary of the doctrine of divine good. What are we talking about when we say the production of divine good? Number one: The production of divine good defeats the attack from Satan during the church age. In Romans 12:21 the apostle Paul says, “Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” The way you overcome the attacks of Satan and the evil which he directs against you is through the production of divine good in the church age.

Secondly, God has provided the grace system for perception. This is provided for the production of divine good. Colossians 1:9 says, “For this cause we all also, from the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will and all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Now the word “filled” in this verse is that word that we have already referred to that means meeting a spiritual deficiency in the believer’s soul. This is His desire—that the spiritual deficiency, which is the lack of spiritual maturity (you’re not born with this) needs to be filled up in our souls. And the word “knowledge” is the word for full knowledge, that “epignosis” word that we’ve been talking about. It means the full knowledge. This is knowledge where you have responded with positive volition to what you have learned.

What you have in your head doesn’t do you a bit of good. We have plenty of Christians that have got all kinds of knowledge of the Word of God in their head but they have questions about it. They have reservations toward it. They have resistance to certain points. And when you resist, it’s useless. It blanks out. All you have is knowledge. The Bible has a different word for what functions in your life and that’s full knowledge, and that’s in your human spirit, and that’s the point at which God touches your life and where He deals and guides in the things of your life. “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God,” and here again the Greek is full knowledge, the “epignosis” of God.

Then in 2 Timothy 2:21 we read, “If a man therefore purge himself from these (the list of sins up here and of human good); he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and fit for the master’s use and prepared for every (divine) good work.” In 2 Timothy 3:17 we read, “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all (divine) good works.”

So God has provided for us a system here of spiritual perception, and the pastor-teacher feeds the information into the system, and as you receive it, you are filled, your spiritual deficiency is corrected, and you come to a full knowledge of the Word of God.

Number three in this summary: The Christian’s life on earth was designed for production of divine good. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus (and now we have the purpose) unto good works (divine good), which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Now here’s another very important factor. It isn’t simply that you do a good thing. In your life as a Christian, it’s those good things that God has ordained for you to do. Now do you know what God has ordained for you to do in your life? Obviously you’d be hard-pressed to give a full detailed explanation of that, but God the Holy Spirit is there to lead you step-by-step into that divine good—this good, this good, this good, this good, and that’s the only way you know what God wants you to do.

There are Christians again who say, “Well, there’s the job in the church. It needs to be done. The work needs to be done. I’ll get in and do it.” You may be the worst one in the world and the last one that God ever thought of wanting to do that job. Just because the work needs to be done is not reason that you should do it. It is those good works which God has foreordained for you to perform.

Now listen to it again. “For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus.” We were born again unto the purpose of the particular good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in. So just doing good is not divine good in itself. Yet the Christian’s life on earth is designed for you to produce a specific divine good.

Number four: The production of divine good is a sign of stability in the Christian’s life on earth. 2 Thessalonians 2:17 says, “Comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word (or stabilize you in every good work) and work.” The Christian who is producing divine good is a stable Christian. When you find a Christian who is unstable, who fluctuates up and down between productivity and non-productivity, between depression and happiness, who’s in the valley then on the mountaintop, you know that that is a sign of a Christian who is not producing divine good. He may be a very active church member, but there is something out of kilter in his life in reference to doctrine, and he is not producing divine good. When you are phased in to God’s thinking, you’re tied into His production, you will be a stable Christian.

Number five: Divine good will be rewarded. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.” Now there is here in the Scripture a time of judgment that you as a Christian will face which is called the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is not a judgment in reference to your sins because that has already been totally settled, as you know, by the removal of the wall between us and God. But this is a judgment that has to do entirely with evaluating your works, whether they were divine good or whether they were human good. The purpose of this evaluation is that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that which he hath done whether it be good or bad.

Now there are good good works and bad good works, according to whether God has produced them or you have produced them. So you’re going to be rewarded or you’re going to lose reward on the basis of what kind of quality you produce.

Number six: Grace is the principal in producing divine good. 2 Corinthians 9:8 tells us that grace is the principal in producing divine good. “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you that ye always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work. It is the grace of God that enables you to produce divine good.

Here you are, a human being, a creature who God has made, and yet you can do that which God stamps upon your production as being divine good. You can produce what God Himself can produce for He does it through you.

Number seven: Where does divine good come? Now there are three sources of divine good. One: This one concerns a baby Christian, those who are new in the Christian faith, or those who have never been taught Bible doctrine. Now you could have been a church member for fifty years and just be the biggest baby in the faith that you can imagine. A baby in the Christian faith produces divine good only from the filling of the Holy Spirit. He keeps all known sins confessed and the result is his life is clean and God uses him. He produces divine good simply from the fact that he’s free to be used of the Lord.

However, when you proceed in maturity, with doctrine in your human spirit, you step to the adolescent stage of the Christian life. You not only produce divine good from the filling of the Holy Spirit, but you also produce it from that full knowledge which has accumulated in your human spirit as a result of your positive volition toward the Word. Your positive response toward doctrine has given you “epignosis,” full knowledge, and this expresses itself in divine good. What you’re doing is in effect breathing spiritually. You breathe out toward God this “epignosis,” this full knowledge in your human spirit.

That’s why you can love God. That’s why you’re obedient to God. That’s why you pray to God. This is breathing out the full knowledge of that which has come to you from the Word. Toward other people you are breathing out this full knowledge in your human spirit. You breathe out toward your friends, and you deal with your friends accordingly, and toward your fellow members. The church member who causes trouble in the local assembly and who acts like the devil is a person who does not have full knowledge in his human spirit.

But the Christian who has full knowledge in his human spirit, he’s the Christian who’s stable. People are not forever saying things to him that are hurting his feelings. He is not forever getting up in arms over what somebody has said. He is a stable Christian. Instead he reacts to them the way God reacts, and toward that one person who is your true love. When you have full knowledge from doctrine in your spirit, you will breathe this out in genuine love. You cannot really love a person until you have doctrine in your spirit; that is, where you have negative reactions, where you have reservations, where you have outright rejections of the Word. If you see this in somebody that you’re interested in on a marriage basis, you’d be wise to reconsider. A person negative toward the Word does not make a good lover and does not make a good friend.

There’s a third level of producing divine good and that’s from the mature Christian, a person who has walked with the Lord and has developed some understanding from the Word of God in some considerable degree. He produces not only from the filling of the Holy Spirit and from full knowledge in his human spirit, but he has built a spiritual maturity structure in his soul which we will begin looking at in detail and spelling out the areas that constitute spiritual maturity in a Christian’s life. You’ll be able to evaluate yourself and you’ll be able to see, “I’ve grown up here. I’ve grown up here. I’m not too good here. I’m pretty good here.” You’ll be able to see to what extent you have developed spiritual maturity. When you’ve developed a structure of spiritual maturity (the Bible uses the word “edification” for that), then you are a top-notch producer of divine good. You’re producing it on a triple basis as the result of coming to that state of maturity.

Number eight in the summary of the doctrine of divine good: The mature level of production of divine good is the work and the objective of the pastorate. This mature level is what the pastor’s job is all about. Every breath he takes and every second of blood flowing in his veins is preoccupied with, “How am I going to get the people of this congregation to this point?” And if he’s not preoccupied with that, he’s not doing his job, and you may be sure that the people will never get anywhere near this point. You will have a congregation filled with babies who will be clawing at one another and sniping at one another and splitting up from one another. You may have a few adolescents in there who struggle to try to be a little more stable, but you won’t have very many mature Christians.

This is his business, and the mature production is the business of the pastorate is all about. Which means therefore that this is what constitutes success in the ministry, not statistics or fame. Just because a pastor’s name is well known doesn’t mean that he’s in great standing with God at all. You can have great fame in the ministry. You can have great religious notoriety and not be particularly famous with God at all. You can even enter Bible studies under very famous people and find that after you’ve listened a while…

Like somebody said to me the other day, “You know, this here is a series, a very prominent series, very much advertised on radio. The more I listened to it the more I realized what a bomb out it is. Yet if you were to tell that to Christians, the average Christian would be shocked because the people who are teaching it are the most famous names in the evangelical religious world that you’ve ever heard. But they’re feeding out a lot of inspiration and guff. They’re feeding out a lot of things that are interesting in passing at the moment, but they are not feeding the substance of which a spiritual maturity structure is made.

This spiritual maturity structure is important because it moves the Christian to witnessing, it moves him to giving, to praying, to doing right, and not to brag about it, or to seek thanks. Now I hope you get that. If you are producing divine good, you will not be going around saying, “I wish somebody would thank me for what I do once in a while. Here I’ve gotten up every morning at 7:00 o’clock,” just like old Silver Lips there. Now if you’ve ever gotten up at 7:00 o’clock in the morning and tried to blow a small trumpet mouthpiece with those puffy fat sleepy lips, you don’t know what a problem you’re faced with. Now you’d think a guy would be complimented. He wasn’t complimented. Not once. He was complained about plenty. And they kept threatening to switch buglers. That was a divine service, if he wasn’t expecting compliments, and he’s experienced enough that he knew better than to expect them, so it’s probably safe for him.

If you go around and you’re doing things for the Lord and you want people to thank you, or you go and say, “Oh you never thank me for it.” And sometimes they’ll say that to you. They’ll kind of say, “You don’t ever thank me for things. You don’t ever say nice things to people for these good things they do. You don’t ever commend them.” If you’re looking for complimenting and you’re looking for being able to brag a little about what you do, and you like the Lord’s Supper because it gives you a chance to stand up and tell what you’ve done for the Lord, so everybody can ooze over you a little bit, you have tipped up off right there dear friend that what you’re producing is human good. God has scratched it off the board, and you might as well forget it too.

So if a pastor-teacher performs the first function, which is equipping the saints for spiritual combat, then divine good is going to follow from the church members as night must follow, and that’s great information to know. If the pastor-teacher is giving you information from the Word of God so that you are receiving the mind of Christ, which is what the Bible is called, and you take these life principals and you respond to them with positive volition, they’re there in you to operate, and they will operate. They function right out of your spirit and you become a person who thinks, who moves and feels and acts like God. The result is divine good.

**Human Good**

Now on the other hand, let’s look at the other side of the coin. Let’s look at the doctrine of human good. The doctrine of human good is something entirely different. Now this is what you and I produce when we are acting on our own, when it is not God the Holy Spirit who is directing and moving us. Hebrews 6:1 says human good is classified as dead works. Hebrews 6:1 says, “Therefore leaving the principals of the doctrine of Christ let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead human works, and of faith toward God.” What the writer is saying is that we ought to go on now from elementary things to where we’re producing divine good, and not forever going back and laying new foundations because we’re still producing the dead works of human good.

Understand that these are good things. We’re not talking about bad things. We’re not talking about things that people would agree these are not things that you should do. These are the things that nobody could object to doing. These are things like praying and putting money in the offering box and supplying money to buy tapes to give to people and helping in summer camp and teaching in Sunday School and working in the clubs. These are all good things but they can be dead works. A Christian may be witnessing. He may be praying. He may be giving. He may be working around the church and producing human good. So it is important for you to remember that the nicest people, both saved and unsaved nice people, are producing what the Bible calls hay, wood, and stubble human good. And they’re doing it with a rosy glow in their bones. We have churches filled with Christians, unfortunately, who are sitting there cranking out their human good and feeling so good about it, not realizing that God is going to someday reject the whole thing.

Now what’s the difference between the human and the divine good? The difference lies in who controls and motivates the doing of these good things. If you are doing this because God the Holy Spirit is in charge of your life, He has filled you because known sin has been confessed, then it’s divine good. If it’s under the old sin nature within you, which also produces good, then these same things of human good are motivated by various lusts, like this lust to be praised, like the lust for somebody to thank you for what you’ve done. If this is in your bones that you feel hurt because someone hasn’t complimented, praised, flattered you a little and thanked you for what you’ve done, then you know that it is human good, because if God the Holy Spirit has motivated you to do something, boy you’ll do it and your thrill will be that you obeyed God, and you don’t care whether anybody thanks you for it or not. How much genuine Christian work would ever be done if our continuing in the real thing were dependent upon people recognizing that we had done a good thing, and complimenting us and thanking us for it, and son on?

People come to church and the pastor wants to get a chance to greet them at least once a week at the door, and they (feel like they) have to say something to him. Now they could say any number of things to him. “That’s a nice suit you’re wearing. I like that tie. That’s a beautiful tan you have. You get better looking all the time.” But instead they always say, “Oh that was a beautiful sermon. Nice sermon.” They feel that they have to say something about the sermon, and they may have hated it.

And if he’s standing there waiting to hear what you’re going to say about the sermon, then he’s out of fellowship, because he couldn’t care less what you think about the sermon if he’s operating on divine good. But he’s very much interested in what God thinks about it. He’s only interested in seeing how far you have come in improving in your status of spiritual maturity so that you’re untying the knots in your life and getting things straightened out. That’s what counts with a pastor-teacher who’s doing his job—not whether you were attracted and the cockles of your heart were warmed by your sermon.

It’s not what you do that is the primary issue but it’s who controls and motivates why you do it. You do Christians a great disservice if you give the impression that a good is of value itself. That’s Boy Scout stuff when it comes from old sin nature. So don’t give people the idea that just because they good deed God says, “I commend it.”

Number two: Human good is never acceptable to God. Here’s a word that I’ll just leave in the English rather than unravel it to you in its Hebrews. Isaiah 64:6. It’s strong enough in the English. It’s even more loathsome and horrifying in the word that God uses in the Hebrews. “But we are all as an unclean thing in all our righteousnesses (our human good) are as filthy rags.” Now that’s a strong strong expression. It’s as filthy rags. So when somebody comes up and asks you to compliment what they’re doing for church work, or says something about your not complimenting, just remember that what they’re asking you to compliment very often is their filthy rags. And God does not expect us to go around complimenting each other’s filthy rags. That’s what our human good is. If it’s divine good, then it doesn’t need to be complimented and doesn’t need to be praised, and we’re not looking for it because God is motivating us to do that work, and that’s the satisfaction in itself.

Number three: Human good has no place in the plan of God. 2 Timothy 1:9 says, “Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our human good works, but according to His own purpose in grace which He hath given us in Christ before the world began.” God never called us with the intention of including our human works in the process of it.

Number four: Human good will not save mankind. Titus 3:5 says, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done (human good works), but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. Human good will not save mankind. No one is ever saved by good acts such as keeping the law, joining the church, water baptism, the Lord’s Supper, or changing your behavior patterns. Nobody is ever saved by public moves or public expressions about salvation.

How are people saved? We need to understand this in order that we won’t be directing people to some act of human good and deceiving them into the idea that they’ve been saved. An unbeliever has only two parts to his being when he’s born. He has a body and he has a soul, but his human spirit is dead. So since his human spirit is dead, there’s no means for the unbeliever to be able to understand spiritual phenomena. That’s what 1 Corinthians 2:14 says. The person who is spiritually dead can’t understand anything of spiritual matters. “But the natural man (that’s the unsaved man) receiveth not the things of the spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they’re spiritually discerned (or understood).”

So here’s this person who’s born into the human race. He comes to an age of accountability. He has a body and he has a soul but he has a dead human spirit, and therefore cannot respond to God under any basis. Now how is he going to come to salvation? Along comes a Christian who gives him the information of the gospel, such as you have in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, which tells about the death of Christ as a substitute in behalf of our sins. Now this is communicated by a witnessing believer. The information that this person gives may be true or it may be false or it may be mixed. Every bit of it goes into the mind of the unbeliever.

Now the Holy Spirit comes along and He acts for the unbeliever as a human spirit in this case. It is the Holy Spirit that comes and acts as the human spirit for this unbeliever whose human spirit is dead. The result is that the unbeliever understands the gospel. John 16:8-11 tell us about this provision. A person could not be saved if God had not made this arrangement. John 16:8-11 says, “And when He is come (that is, God the Holy Spirit), He will reprove (or convict) the world (here’s the convicting work of the Holy Spirit) of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me…” The sin of which He will convict the world is the only sin that sends a person to hell, and that is the sin of not believing in Christ as Savior. “… Of righteousness because I go to my father, and ye see me no more…” This is a standard of righteousness represented by Jesus Christ of which we’ve all fallen short. “… Of judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged.” His hold and claims upon us have been broken by the victory of Christ on the cross.

Now this is what the Holy Spirit makes clear to an unsaved person who has received the gospel. And thereby the Holy Spirit takes the information that’s true and He uses only that part to bring conviction to the unbeliever of his need of Christ and how to receive Him. Whatever is true works upon the mind and now the unbeliever is in a position to make a choice. Now this is the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. So don’t go around praying that the Holy Spirit is going to convict somebody so that they can be saved until first you’ve gone to that person and given him the information upon which to be saved.

Have you ever sat in idiotic church meetings where a preacher has talked about all kinds of interesting stories and all kinds of interesting illustrations? He has talked about some parts of the Bible here and some parts of the Bible there, and then he gave an invitation at the end for people to be saved. Anytime you sit in a church service and somebody invites people to be saved, to receive Christ as Savior, your mind as a knowledgeable Christian should flash back across that meeting and what was said, and thing back whether the information was given to people that they needed to be saved. If you stand there and spend a sermon arguing how Jonah could have been swallowed by the whale, that doesn’t mean that the gospel has been preached and people can make an acceptance of the Savior.

This is why people think, “Oh, if I just join the church, I’m in.” It hasn’t been clarified to them because the Holy Spirit couldn’t make it clear to them because there was no information given in the first place. Now there’s no way for an unbeliever to comprehend spiritual things because he has no frame of reference. His frame of reference is reasoning, or his senses, and that’s all he knows—rationalism and empiricism. These never bring you to salvation.

So the individual volition is now free to act because the spirit of God has made it clear. And what are you acting upon? Well you’re acting upon the record of God, and you say, “Yes” to it, or you say, “No” to it. If you say, “Yes” to it, you enter the family of God. If you say, “No” to it, you reject the person of Christ and you’re doomed forever.

1 John 5:10-12 says, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.” And this witness which we have in ourselves of having believed upon the Son of God is made to our spirit. For Romans tells us that it is His spirit that witnesses to our human spirit that we are the children of God. Verse 11 says, “And this is the record that God hath given to us, eternal life, and this life is in the Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.”

Now I don’t care what you’ve been taught all of your life, all of your rinky-dink Mickey Mouse rituals to go through. The Word of God says you’re going to heaven because you have Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. If you don’t have Him as such now, that’s the first thing to do; to say, “I accept Him,” and to believe what God has said—that His Son has paid for your price. Now you can go ahead and go through all your rituals and through all your other things, but when it comes to the point of salvation, don’t enter any works. If you say, “Yes, I believe in Jesus Christ, and I’m going to do this so I’ll be saved,” you have rejected works and you will not be saved. Grace says it’s God alone and no human good with it. The individual volition responds and that’s how people are saved.

I’m not sure it’s right to say you can invite Christ into your heart because I don’t think a spiritually dead person can extend Him an invitation in any way. All you can do is believe God because God gives you that capacity. So there’s only one meaning for salvation, in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, and that is believing—trusting what God has said, whether it’s Genesis 15:6 about Abraham believing God and it counted to him for righteousness, or John 3:16.

And by the way, it isn’t the issue of making Christ Lord either. Every now and then, this is kind of a bad thing, people say, “Are you going to take Christ as Savior and Lord?” Here’s that circle of eternal fellowship that you enter when you believe in Christ as Savior. Here’s that inner circle of temporal fellowship. The minute you’re born again, you enter that inner circle. You have all known sins confessed. All callouses that have developed upon your soul in resistance to God are peeled away, and you start as a fresh, full, solid, breathing Christian. The first time you sin, you step out of temporal fellowship. You lose contact with God. You’re still saved, but now He is no longer Lord.

This is how you make Christ Lord. If He is your Savior, when you believe in Him, He becomes your Lord at that point. And to make Him Lord means that you confess and come back into that inner circle, then He hears your prayer, then He uses your life, then you’re producing divine good. All the while you’re out here, you’re producing human good. All the while you’re in here, you’re producing divine good. That’s why it’s important to use 1 John 1:9 and keep that sin confessed. Here is where Christ is Lord because here is where He’s running the show. When He’s out here, it is the old sin nature which is Lord and running the show.

Don’t get people aggravated about, “How am I going to make Jesus Christ Lord of my life? I’m going to pray. I’m going to get out there and look at the clouds and I’m going to read poetry. I’m going to get a guitar and I’m going to sit back and strum and sing to myself and hum and see if I can’t really kind of get the Lord to be the Lord of my life. That’s human effort, and God loathes it. There are organizations who in the sincerity whip people up with the idea of drawing out a response of some human motivation in order to make Christ Lord.

**Revelation 3:20**

Revelation 3:20, by the way, where He says He stands at the door and knocks, this is not a salvation verse. This is talking to Christians. “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and sup with him and he with Me.” Do you know what this is talking about? This is the spiritual maturity structure of your soul that we’re going to take up next Sunday. That’s what He’s talking about. “Anybody who has come to a point of spiritual maturity in his soul, that he’ll open the door, I’ll come in and I’ll fellowship with Him, and I will so control and guide and give him such a tremendous and victorious life, he won’t be able to contain himself with the excitement of what’s happening to him, and he will no longer be a drudge.”

Now anytime you add anything to believing, you have stepped out of line with leading people to salvation, and you have invited them to human good. You don’t ask them to add anything to believing or you frustrate the grace of God. You may be tempted to say, “Raise your hand. Walk an aisle. Tell me you’re sorry. Change your life patterns,” but it’s all human good.

Number four: Human good will not save mankind (Titus 3:5). None of your human good will take one step toward saving mankind, as we’ve already read in Titus 3:5. The believer is to be evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ as to the nature of his production. Now you’re acquainted with 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 which tell how your works will either be hay, wood, and stubble, or they’ll be gold, silver, and precious gems. At present the church is the body of Christ. At the rapture she becomes the bride of Christ. Then she will receive a wedding gown of a resurrect body minus the old sin nature.

Now during our life on earth, when the Holy Spirit controls and we’re in this inner circle, we’re producing divine good. When the old sin nature controls, we’re producing human good. No human good is going to be allowed at the wedding feast of the lamb. You’re going to be dressed only in the righteousness of divine good which Christ has created. So all human good that we lead people to perform is going to be lost for them. It’s going to go through the fire of judgment and it’s going to be gone.

Now in the sixth place, you should distinguish between human good and morality. There are some rules that whether you are a Christian or nor, there are rules of morality for the protection of society, and that is not human good. Those are morals and everybody is expected by the Word of God to abide by them. You are not to steal from people. You are not to murder people, and so on. Romans 13:4-5 says, “For he (the civil leader and authority) is the minister of God to thee for good, but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid for he beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God and avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject not only for wrath but also for conscience sake.” Morality is necessary for the preservation and perpetuation of the human race and it applies to believer and unbeliever alike.

Finally, human good is the basis for the unbeliever’s indictment at the Great White Throne judgment. A man went out last Sunday morning, and he had heard something along this line in the service, and he was confused. He wanted to know what’s in those books of works that they open at the time when unsaved people stand at the Great White Throne. Everybody seems to think that the things that they have in those books are all of our bad works. No. The wall has been removed and the death of Christ has destroyed the bad works. They are gone. What is left here is our good works, and these in Revelation 20:11-15 are the product of the old sin nature—human good, all of which God has rejected. Our sins were covered at the cross. Our human good was rejected at the cross (Titus 3:5). And after the second resurrection, unbelievers are not going to be faced with their sins, but their good works are going to be read. They have said, “I’ll stand on my good works,” and those books of good works are going to be opened. It couldn’t be bad works because those have been covered by the death of Christ. So the human good of the unbeliever will prove to fall short of the righteousness of God, and on that basis their name will be blotted out of the book of life.

The second purpose of the pastor-teacher’s ministry is to enable the people to have the equipment to produce divine good, and to have the discernment to recognize when they’re producing human good and to reject it. Think this through. There are eternal rewards that are dependent upon your getting this doctrine straight. If you fail here, and you squander your life going to a church where there’s no doctrinal instruction so that you can build the spiritual maturity structure, you’ll pay for it for all eternity. It may be a nice church to attend now, but it’s going to be a very costly price for you and for your friends and for your family and for all those who are important to you. So learn the difference between divine good and human good. One is what God accepts. The other He rejects totally.

Our Father we want to thank thee for the fact that we are not left to be the helpless creatures of our old sin nature that we innately are. How we praise thee for the presence of God the Holy Spirit for the tremendous realistic guidance that comes from Him. So Father help us not to be tiresome to thee by going around with our cute human viewpoint, questioning and doubting the basics of the Word of God and how thou dost function, and thinking that because life seems to move along pretty good for us, and times are not too bad, and things are falling in place for us personally, that somehow our lives in the long run have some merit to them. Help us to see ourselves as the filthy rags in which we’re dressed and that we’re taking pride in, and help us to get our thinking rearranged as we look upon that glorious garment of righteousness of divine good with which thou art so eager to clothe every believer in this room this morning. May that be our goal. May that be the thing we pursue. May that be the thing to which we devote our lives so that when we stand in Thy presence at the Judgment Seat, it will be, “Well done, thy good and faithful servant.” Here is the moment for you to enter your great reward. To this end we pray to the glory of Christ. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971