

August 16, 2012

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

This morning we continue our examination of what we believe as Anglican Christians. Last week we examined the issue of Good Works and how we as Christians are called to respond to God's love by "loving our neighbor as our self" (Mark 12:31).



Today we look at Article 13 of the Articles of Religion on the topic of Works before Justification: "**Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of His Spirit, are not pleasant to God, for as much as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.**"

This article addresses the very common question—both in the sixteenth century and now—"Don't all "good" people go to heaven? Does it really matter what you believe? After all people of all religions do good by helping the poor and sick?" The question that this article addresses is related to the previous article on Good works.

The question here is on the definition of Good. Often when people say that someone is "good" what they really mean is that he is decent. He doesn't harm anyone, he keeps most of the Ten Commandments which require doing no harm rather than good. Another common understanding is that which is "Good" is anything that has a "positive outcome" for self or another. I do "good" at work and I receive a reward—bonus pay or time off.

The problem is, of course, that because we live in a fallen world these good things can and will become tainted or corrupted eventually. A good action done for selfish reasons isn't really good at all but only bears the appearance of Good.

However, in the Christian sense that which is Good comes from God the source of all Goodness and not from

man who is tainted with evil. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." Therefore that which is Good is inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit and has eternally good consequences—uncorrupted and untainted. Because of this, that which is good and inspired by the Holy Spirit is generally done behind the scenes not looking for reward by the one doing the good. Jesus said; "**Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.**" (**Matthew 6:1 ESV**)

That which is good by worldly standards often springs out of selfish and hypocritical motives—wanting to give the impression of goodness—wanting the rewards of acclaim or attention. Thus, that which the world says is Good may not be good at all but, bad because rather than good consequences they may actually lead you farther away from God having eternally bad consequences. However that which is Good in the Christian sense is simply the response to God's having loved us in the first place—theonly reward is the knowledge that we are loved beyond measure.

Godspeed,

Bishop Menees

[August 2012 Edition of The San Joaquin Anglican](#)

[Diocesan Calendar](#)

August 17-19th - Men's Retreat @ ECCO

Bishop Eric and Fr. Van

August 18th - Diocesan Council @ 10 a.m.

August 19th - Bishop @ St. Martin's in Fresno

Laotian and Spanish Congregations

August 21st - Yosemite Deanery Clericus

August 26th - Bishop @ Church of Resurrection in Placentia

September 1st - Gathering of Mission Clergy

September 2nd - Bishop @St. Peter's in Kernville

September 8th - DOK Mini-Fall Retreat

@ Jesus Our Savior in Modesto

September 9th - Bishop @ St. John's in Porterville

& St. James in Lindsey

September 16th - Bishop @Christ Church in Lemoore
September 23rd - Bishop @St. John's in Petaluma
September 29th - Daughters of the Holy Cross
 Fall Gathering @ St. Mary's in Fresno
September 30th - Bishop @ St. Francis in Turlock
October 5-7th - Clergy Wives Retreat @ ECCO
October 12-14th - Women's Retreat @Potosi Pines
Sponsored by Jesus the Good Shepherd of Henderson, NV
October 27th - Honored Women's Luncheon
October 29-31st - Clergy Retreat @ ECCO
November 2-3 - Diocesan Convention @ St. James Cathedral
December 1st - Deacon's Day @ St. James Cathedral
April 29th - May 1st - Clergy Conference

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