

## ***The Proof is in the Doing***

In Matthew 21:28-32 Jesus tells a parable about a man who had two sons. He came to the first one and said, "Son, go, work today in my vineyard." The son told his father he would not go, but afterwards he regretted saying that and went to work. The father went to the second son and also told him to go work in the vineyard. This son said, "I go, sir," but he did not go. Jesus then asked His audience, "Which of the two did the will of his father?"

This seems like such a simple question that it doesn't even need to be asked, but with this question Jesus is teaching an important lesson that we often fail to apply to our own lives. Jesus is reminding us that the proof of our love, faith, and reverence for God is in the *doing*, not the *saying*. How many times is this lesson taught throughout the pages of the New Testament?

- "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. **You will know them by their fruits.** Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?" (Mt 7:15,16).
- "Not everyone who **says** to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does** the will of My Father in heaven" (Mt 7:21).
- "But be **doers** of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).
- "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone **says** he has faith but **does not have works**? Can faith save him?" (James 2:14).
- "My little children, let us not love in **word** or in **tongue**, but in **deed** and in **truth**" (1 John 3:18).

Every one of these verses is well known to us, but do they express a principle by which we live?

Do we claim to love Jesus, but yet fail to keep His commandments? Do we profess to love one another while refusing to actually do good to one another? Do we just give lip service to Paul's command to give preference to one another (Romans 12:10)? When we examine ourselves do we do more than just acknowledge our weakness, or do we set about to affect change in our lives?

The point is this; make up your mind, today, to stop talking about what you **need to do** and get busying **doing it!** Pick just one thing you know you **need to be doing** and just **do it.** Maybe you **need** to be more hospitable; **invite** someone over. Maybe you **need** to be a better father; **sit down** and **talk** to you children. Maybe you **need** to study more; **open** your Bible and **study.**

They say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The reason this statement is true is because God doesn't accept lip service; He only accepts true service from the heart. Don't allow the guilt of past failures to keep you on the road of good intentions. Simply decide today that you're going to travel the road of good works, for *it* is the road that leads to forgiveness, mercy, and eternal life.

- **by Simon Harris**

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## ***Worst or Best?***

In Ephesians the second chapter, Paul in just a few verses shows the worst and best condition in which one can find himself. Consider the following:

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:11-13).

One is either "in Christ" or not. "Without Christ...having no hope...without God in the world" - can it get any worse than that? In such a state one is doomed to eternal damnation in the fires of hell. That's exactly where the Ephesians were prior to their conversion.

On the other hand, when one obeys the gospel, is "baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3:27), and remains faithful to the Lord (Rev. 2:10) - can it get any better than that? In such a state one looks forward to eternal bliss in the joys of heaven. Thankfully, the Ephesians got there.

Which scenario will it be for us, the worst case or the best? It all hinges on what we do with Jesus. In Christ, or without Christ? The choice is yours. Please choose wisely!

- by David McPherson

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### ***'End-Time' Predictions***

Remember Edgar Whisenant? Probably not, but he was the retired NASA engineer who became famous (or infamous) by making predictions about the second coming of Christ. His first guess was September 12, 1988. He became an instant celebrity when he wrote a book explaining his reasons why the event would absolutely, positively, no-doubt-about-it occur on that particular date. He was featured in magazines and newspapers throughout the world. His book sold hundreds of thousands of copies. But, as you obviously know, September 12, 1988 came and went like any other day.

Whisenant went back to his drawing board. What could have gone wrong? Finally he announced that he had discovered his error. He had made the simple mistake of forgetting to allow for an extra year between 1 BC and 1 AD. And so he began to assure everyone that the second coming was certain to be on September 1, 1989

But, of course, this second prediction also failed. But, never fear, Whisenant made more calculations. News reports quoted him as saying he was "96 percent" certain the second coming would still occur sometime in 1989 - and if not in 1989, then definitely in 1990 or, at least, in 1991, or 1992, or 1993. "No way it's going past 1993," he said with the utmost resolve.

Men like Whisenant are nothing new. End-time date setters go all the way back to the first century (2 Thess. 2:1-3). We wonder if folks will ever wise-up and take Jesus at His word: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36).

- by Greg Gwin