

## Speaking Truth In Love

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast”* (Eph 2:8-9). Here Paul was responding to false teachers among the Jews who taught that Christians had to keep the Old Testament Law to be saved (cf. Gal 4:10, 21; 5:2-6). Paul declared that no one is saved by the works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 2:16). Paul argued that point many times in the books of Ephesians, Galatians and Romans.

No one can earn salvation by working for it. However, certain works are necessary to receive God’s gracious gift (Rom 6:23), i.e., *believing Jesus is the Christ* (Jn 8:24), *repenting of ignorance and sin* (Acts 17:30), *confessing faith in Jesus* (Rom 10:10), *continuing in His word* (Jn 8:31-32). Salvation is, therefore, a conditional gift, but meeting the conditions does not put God in our debt.

Some say, “Baptism is a work, and works play no role in salvation.” But *baptism* is not a work of the type Paul referred to in Ephesians 2:9. If it were, then *faith* would play no role in salvation, because Jesus called *faith* a “work” (cf. Jn 6:28-29). *Baptism* is an act of faith. Paul said *baptism* is one’s submission to the “working of God” resulting in the forgiveness of sins (cf. Col 2:12).

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