**FAKE NEWS vs FAITHFUL NEWS (#5)**

***Telling God “Thank You” With Good Works***

Forbes Magazine published an article by Peter Suciu titled “*More Americans Are Getting Their News From Social Media*.” Pew Research discovered that 55% of all adults now get their “news” from social media web sites. Their conclusion was, “social media is now a part of the news diet of an increasingly large share of the U. S. population.” Do you realize what that means? Look at the viewership numbers. TV has the old standard 3 Network News stations: *ABC World News Tonight* has 2,137,000 viewers. *NBC Nightly News* has 2,084,000. *CBS Evening News* has 1,144,000. Combine that with the Big 3 cable news shows: *Fox News*: 3,600,000. *MSNBC News*: 2,000,000. *CNN News*: 1,800,000. That’s a combined viewership of TV’s Big 6 of 12,765,000.

Compare that to those who follow social media sites and get their news there. These Big 6 dwarf TV by a monstrous chasm.

Facebook: 2,450,000,000 YouTube: 1,900,000,000 Instagram: 1,000,000,000
Reddit: 430,000,000 Snapchat: 360,000,000 Twitter: 330,000,000

What does this tell you? It tells me that everyone has their political bias and too often slants the news to fit that bias, whether conservative, moderate, or liberal. The article concluded this way: Bias that might not exist in the actual pages of the newspapers does unfortunately have a way of showing up on social media. Whether its Facebook, YouTube, or Google searches, someone is pulling the strings lobbying their own agendas, because there are no consequences, you can say anything you want and there are no consequences."

In the old TV show *Dragnet* I watched as a kid Sgt. Joe Friday would come to a crime scene and say to an excited witness who was blabbering on and on, “Just the facts ma’am, just the facts.” It’s so hard today to get “just the facts.”

That is why I love my Bible. Jesus puts it so wonderfully when He said, “*Sanctify them through truth, Your Word is truth*!” (Jn. 17:17). “*You shall know the truth and* *the truth shall set you free*” (Jn. 8:32). Ahhh, so refreshing to hear unfiltered truth. That is why we have studied this week the “*faithful sayings*” from God’s word. These are true today, tomorrow, and forever. Read them, knowing they are true and will bless your life:

1. **“*This is a faithful saying, … Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners…*”**
(1 Timothy 1:15)
2. ​*“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.* (I Timothy 3:1)
3. “*This is a faithful saying*: *“… godliness is profitable for all things*” (I Timothy 4:8-9)
4. *This is a faithful saying: “If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.
If we endure, we shall also reign with Him…”* (2 Tim 2:11-13)
5. “*This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men*.” (Titus 3:8)

Look again at that last one. Paul tells Timothy to “*affirm constantly*” this saying. That means he insists they all but make this a common chant among themselves. Can you not hear these Christians on the island of Crete greet one another in the marketplace, in their homes, at the assemblies with: “Keep on gratefully doing good works brother, for God’s grace has been so good to us! Tell God ‘thank you’ by maintaining good works.”

Why do I think they said this “faithful saying” that way? Just look at the text right above it in verses 4-7 that leads into verse 8:

*4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly…”*

When I have received “*kindness … love … mercy … washing of regeneration … renewing of Holy Spirit … grace … heirs … hope of eternal life*” then what should be my response? Good works! Brethren, good works are nothing more or less than simply saying to God “Thank You!” I can’t repay the debt, but I can say “thank you Lord!”

Sometimes we in the Lord’s church are accused of believing in “works salvation.” Nothing could be further from the truth. If we stack up all our *sins, iniquities, transgressions,* and *lawlessness* on one side of the scale, then all our *good works* on the other side of the scale, could it ever balance out? Never! Not in a million years.

That reminds me of the old illustration of the mouse riding on the back of the elephant as they crossed a swinging rope bridge in the jungle. When they got across the mouse boasted to all his jungle friends, “Wow! Did you see that? We really shook that bridge!” Yeah, right. God’s works combined with my works is equivalent to the elephant’s contribution and the mouse’s contribution to shaking the bridge. My works wouldn’t make the bridge waver an inch! God’s works provided all the power and momentum. And yet, remember this, the mouse had to ride the elephant to make his boast, and I have to ride God’s grace to save my soul. I must get on God’s back. That takes ***work***.

But what “good works” am I to do to shake the bridge (save my soul)? Go to your Bible software program and type in “*works*” and see what you find. I’ll give you just a taste:

Matt. 5*:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Romans 2: 5 the righteous judgment of God, 6 who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; … 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good…”

Ephesians 2: *10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

Titus 3: *14 And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.”*

You will find enough quotes on good works to fill many pages. And yet remember, while God reminds us that “*faith without works is dead*” (Jam. 2:14-26), all faith is to us is a response to God’s amazing grace that balances the scale of justice in our favor. Good works are our shout back to heaven – “Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!”

Until next week… Tell God “Thank You” for His grace that set you free by provoking one another to love and good works (Heb. 10:24).