

From the Pastor:

The next section of James (James 2:14-26) contains a fairly lengthy discussion of the subject of faith and works. It is this record of James that led Martin Luther to declare that James was an epistle of straw. Martin Luther rejected the letter of James as being genuine because James clearly said that “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26). Luther believed that salvation was by faith alone. Tradition has it that Luther wrote the word “alone” at the end of Romans 1:17 where the Scripture records, “the just shall live by faith.” Then Luther wrote in “alone.”

Luther came to reject several teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. He especially disagreed with the practice of selling indulgences. Further, not understanding the truth of Paul’s writings, Luther taught that salvation and, consequently, eternal life are not earned by good deeds but are received only as the free gift of God’s grace through the believer’s faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin. This statement is based on various scriptures that record Paul’s teaching which Luther did not understand.

It is true that salvation [eternal life in the family of God] is not earned by anything that we do, but is indeed a free gift from God through faith in His grace. This is supported by Scripture.

Galatians 3:11 records, “But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’” The quote “the just shall live by faith” is from Habakkuk 2:4.

However, we understand what Paul was saying. No amount of law-keeping can justify our sins [forgive our past sins]. Forgiveness of sins comes only after real repentance when God forgives us [purges our sins by the blood of His firstborn Son]. We repent [throw ourselves onto God’s mercy and grace promising to no longer live in sin] seeking forgiveness. If God sees in us a real heart of repentance, He forgives.

We also understand what Paul said in Ephesians 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” Salvation is a gift from God. We can’t earn it.

However, by our obedience to God’s laws, we are not trying to earn salvation, nor are we trying to justify ourselves. What we are doing is seeking to show love for God by living the way He created for us to live (1 John 5:3). The apostle John clearly said that if we claim to know God but do not live by the standards He created for us to live by, we are liars (1 John 2:3-4). James was showing that our faith in God must be supported by our actually seeking to act on what God said to do.

If we say we love our brethren but do not seek to provide for their needs (if we are able), we are not practicing our faith and love toward God (James 2:15-17).

James shows that Abraham was considered the friend of God because he acted on what God told him to do. Abraham’s faith in God was demonstrated by his obedience to what God had told him to do.

This is the important lesson of this passage. We can’t claim to be living by faith in God if we are not committed to living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God



Victoria

Sermon: Larry Tucker

Corpus Christi

Sermonette: In Accord
Sermon: Arnold Mendez

Harlingen

Split Sermon: Orlando Mascorro
Split Sermon: Arnold Mendez

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”

Proverbs 4:23

	Victoria	Corpus Christi	Harlingen
Sunset Today in:	5:44pm	5:48m	5:52pm
Sunset Friday 1-11	5:49pm	5:52pm	5:57pm

Announcements and Schedule

Sabbath 1/5	Regular times and locations for all congregations.
Sabbath 1/12	Regular times and locations for all congregations. Mr. Moody will be in Corpus Christi. Mr. Ralph Levy will be in San Antonio Mr. Chapman will be in Victoria. Mr. Watts will deliver the sermon in Harlingen.

Regional Teen Formal: March 2, 2019 – Spring-time in Tokyo

There's a grand event in the making, and we hope you plan to come! Please register now; don't wait or you might be late! The Sabbath service will be held at 1 PM at our normal meeting location, Unity of Dallas, but the dinner and dance will take place at a new location this year: The Westin Stonebriar Hotel & Golf Club in Frisco. All teens: Go to <http://www.cogwadallas.org/teens> to register for the dinner and dance. Also, PARENTS, if you have a graduating senior in your family, please refer to the senior questionnaire link at the website for the senior acknowledgements that evening. REGISTER ASAP - Registration deadline is February 15th. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Hansen at rachel.hansen@sbcglobal.net.

From Clyde Kilough:

Since we began publishing One Accord, it has been available online and, for those who requested, in print. We have concluded, though, that probably a number of members and their children miss seeing some editions if they are depending on the online version. We certainly want everyone—all ages—to be able to keep up with the Church news, spiritual articles and announcements that are conveyed through One Accord. Therefore, since the expense is minimal for the value received, we are planning to automatically mail a print copy to all households in the U.S. We wanted to announce this in advance so that when you see a copy of the January 2019 issue arrive in your mailbox, you will know why! We hope you and your family will enjoy having this in hand.

Upcoming Activities: Dates to Remember

San Antonio Pot Luck: The next potluck will be February 2. There will be no potluck in January.

Corpus Christi – 4th Annual Goose Island State Park Campout. February 22nd – 24th. There will be no local services that Sabbath in Corpus Christi; Sabbath services will be at the campout.