

Making the Cut

Tim Dooley

Tuesday Rachel and David played in the Northern Kentucky Amateur Golf Tournament. They had to place in the top half of their respective divisions in order to “make the cut” and qualify to play in the second day of the tournament. Unfortunately neither of them did. We talked about what we had gone right and wrong, what we learned, and what was needed to play better. Then we discussed a plan to improve... there is still work to do.

While watching them play I received an email through the church’s website. The individual said he had reviewed our beliefs about God and salvation and wanted to point out his “differing view” of the gospel. The first thing he said was that the apostle Paul “never mentioned baptism, confession or anything other than faith in Christ.” His lack of understanding when it comes to what faith in Christ entails set the tone for the rest of the email. His statement about what Paul “never mentioned” is patently false.

The writer mentioned [Galatians 1](#) in his email and if he would read just a little more of his Bible he would have come across [Galatians 3:26-27](#), “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Can one be saved without faith? No. Can one be saved without being in or putting on Christ? No. How does one faithfully obey Christ and put him on? Through baptism!

In [Acts 22:16](#) Paul said he was commanded to be baptized in order to have his sins washed away. “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” And in [Romans 6](#) Paul said, “...do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin” (3-6).

Also Paul said “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” ([Romans 10:9](#)). The email went on to explain this individuals understanding of the gospel message as revealed in [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#). Nothing he said here caused me to disagree with him nor did I disagree with his affirmation that we are saved by the grace of God and through Jesus Christ. However, he assumed that we believe and teach that one can earn salvation and some how deserve it in eternity. Let me be clear, I have never said that we can merit salvation nor do I think it is deserved! I do believe and trust that God will do what He said and that is that all who obey Him and are faithful will be saved ([Hebrews 5:8-9](#)). The author’s false doctrine of salvation by grace alone is a sad battle being waged upon the souls of men everywhere!

We believe and teach that “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” ([Titus 2:11-14](#)).

You see, the grace of God doesn't mean that we are saved unconditionally! God requires all men everywhere to repent ([Acts 17:30](#)). He requires all to obey Him in order to escape His wrath ([2 Thessalonians 1:7-8](#)). Yes, God so loved the world that He sent His Son to die for our sins ([John 3:16](#)). His work is completed; our work has not! He expects us to love, obey and serve Him faithfully.

There is only one road that leads to heaven and that road is Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” ([John 14:6](#)). Will we “make the cut?” only if we put in the diligent spiritual effort required. We will have to lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us,” and “run with endurance the race that is set before us” ([Hebrews 12:1](#)). “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. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”