

## Faith and Works

***Does the Catholic Church teach that a person can work their way into heaven?***

Answer: No! As a matter of fact the Church actually condemns this proposition.

During the Sixth Session of the Council of Trent held on 13 January, 1547, the council stated: “*If anyone says that man can be justified before God by his own works, whether done by his own natural powers or through the teaching of the law, without divine grace through Jesus Christ, let him be anathema*” (apart from us).

**Can we lose our salvation?**

In Romans 6:23: “*The wages of sin [what we earn] is death, the free gift of God [what we do not earn] is eternal life.*” And several times in St. Paul, e.g., in 1 Cor. 6:10, we see that we “*inherit*” the kingdom. Now when we inherit from our parents we do not say we earned the inheritance, though, on the other hand, by being bad enough, long enough we could lose it. So, as to salvation, “*you can't earn it, but you can lose it.*”

So we become justified (made right with God), without any merit at all. Through baptism we are made sons and daughters of the Father, and brothers and sisters of Jesus - as such we have a claim to inherit the kingdom of heaven. We cannot earn heaven, but we can refuse it by committing serious sin and dying unrepentant.

**There are other scriptural passages that tell us that we can forfeit our salvation. For example:**

*blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever.’ This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.”*

**We must hold out to the end.**

2 Tim. 2:11-13, “*The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful-- for he cannot deny himself.*”

Mark 13:13, “*You will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved.*”

1 Cor. 10:12, “*Therefore whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care lest he fall.*”

1 Cor. 10:27, Saint Paul writes, “*No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.*”

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**Pamphlet 045**

James 2:14-26, “*What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has no works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But some one will say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder. Do you want to be shown, you shallow man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by works, and the scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness”; and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead.”*

Phil 2:12, “*So then, my beloved, obedient as you have always been, not only when I am present but all the more now when I am absent, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*”

**We must eat His body and drink His blood.**

John 6:53-59, “*So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my*

In 1 Cor. 6:9-10, St. Paul gives a list of the chief great sins and sinners: *“Can you not realize that the unholy will not fall heir to the kingdom of God? Do not deceive yourselves: no fornicators, idolaters, or adulterers, no sexual perverts, thieves, misers, or drunkards, no slanderers or robbers will inherit God's kingdom.”*

Also, in Gal. 5:19-21: *“It is obvious what proceeds from the flesh: lewd conduct, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, bickering, jealousy, outbursts of rage, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I have warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!”* Please keep in mind that St. Paul is writing to Christians.

Many Christians believe that when Jesus died on the Cross he paid the ultimate price for all of man's sins and therefore nothing is required of us except making a “personal commitment to a personal savior.” Let's take a more in-depth look at what the Scriptures teach on this subject.

Rom. 10:9, *“because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

Certainly, belief is necessary, but what else does the Word of God teach?

### **We must do God's will.**

Matt 7:21, *“Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”*

### **We must obey God.**

John 3:36, *“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him.”*

### **Baptism is necessary for salvation.**

John 3:5, *“Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’”* (Note: Every Biblical commentator prior to the sixteenth century Protestant Revolt understood this passage as referring to baptism, not simply the acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior.)

Mark 16:16, *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”*

Titus 3:5-8, *“He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life. The saying is sure.”*

1 Peter 3:21-22, *“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.”*

### **We must also love God completely and our neighbor as ourselves.**

Luke 10: 25-28, *“And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what*

*shall I do to inherit eternal life?’” He said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read?” And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have answered right; do this, and you will live.”*

### **We must keep the Commandments.**

John 14:15, *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”*

Matt. 19:16-17, *“And behold, one came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?” And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.”*

### **Good works are necessary for salvation.**

Romans 2:2-8, *“We know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who do such things. Do you suppose, O man, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume upon the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. For he will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury.”*

