Serving in Faith – Works of Faith

Summary

If the Old Covenant's ceremonial law is gone, what replaced it? This article answers that question directly: not less obedience, but a different form of the same obedience — one now written on hearts and minds rather than carved in stone.

- The central claim: New Covenant "works of faith" replaced, rather than abolished, the Old Covenant's ceremonial "works of the law."
- Scriptural grounding in Romans, Hebrews, and 2 Timothy for obedience as inseparable from genuine faith.
- The pattern of graduated teaching: "milk" for new believers, more solid teaching for the established.
- The call to imitate Yah'shua's own patient, audience-suited teaching style.

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An introduction to our work.

When we look at what are typically referred to as the "works" of the law, purely from the standpoint of the works being evidence of our obedience, perhaps we might take a little different perspective than what is traditionally held by those that hold their faith purely on "grace".

Given that the Messiah has "redeemed" us, are we to assume that merely by believing, we have been saved, or are we yet bound to evidence our obedience to our faith, through our works? We suspect that as our Father states in His Word, "faith without works is dead", and that therefore, works, being evidence, or proof of our faith, brings life. Insofar as the "law" itself was/is concerned, we would not currently have a definition of sin without the existence of Yahweh's law. The ceremonial or ritualistic additions; commonly the "works of the law" were added to the Book of the Covenant (to the law) by Moses as reminders of the sin which was defined by the law. These additional "works of the law" were found to be ineffectual during the Old Covenant period, hence Yahweh found fault in that Covenant and instituted the New Covenant, wherein the works of the law were eliminated and replaced with the "works of our faith".

In short, the law of Yahweh has never changed, and it never will! The only change under the New Covenant, is rather than the law being written or carved in stone, it is now written in our hearts and minds. Formerly, obedience to the law written in stone was evidenced through and witnessed by the ceremonial "works of the law"; whereas now, our obedience to that same law which is now written in our hearts and minds, is evidenced through the "works of our faith" and witnessed by our own conscience, which either accuses us, or excuses us before Yahweh.

Works of faith therefore, includes all things that we do as a result of our faith. It is altogether more all-encompassing than merely the "works" of keeping Yahweh's Laws, which of course it includes, but it also includes keeping all of the "works of our faith". Our faith includes believing that the Messiah is our Redeemer; our Intercessor, and therefore our redemption is subject to our being obedient to our faith, inasmuch as we must ask Yahweh through Yah'shua the Messiah for forgiveness of our transgressions. In other words, simply "having faith", or 'believing" that Yahweh will forgive us, is only the first step. We must then DO something in obedience to what we believe in, which is the "work" of asking for His forgiveness. This "asking"; this "active doing", or this "work of faith", is the only true manner by which we may evidence our faith.

Further works of our faith are evident whenever we pray to the Father about any matter. Indeed our Saviour, our Messiah, prayed earnestly to Yahweh on many occasions, which of course, was also His

"work", or His "actions" that evidenced His faith. We are admonished to pray for spiritual understanding, which is another work that evidences our faith. Would anyone pray to Yahweh that did not first believe Yahweh? Would anyone do any other Godly act such as keep His commandments to love Him, or to love others as themselves, if they did not first believe Yahweh?

It is very well summed up in 2 Timothy 4:7, by Paul's words; "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith", or as in Hebrews 12:1; "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run the race with endurance that is set before us".

So we see that the "grace" that many traditional Christians cling to, did not bring about an abolishment of the law as they presume, rather it caused the "works of the law" to be replaced with the "works of our faith" that relates to that same law. Being "justified" or "reconciled to Yahweh" through our faith, does not mean the "justification" or "reconciliation" takes place because we simply "have faith" that Yah'shua died for us. Rather it means that we now have faith in the fact that Yahweh resurrected Him first - the firstborn of many sons, and thereby, Yah'shua did prove that we too, may be resurrected, if we also "keep the faith" and follow His example of "keeping the works of our faith".

This means keeping the commandments of Yahweh - which are still the laws that define sin, which may be evidenced and witnessed by our actions to love Yahweh with every aspect of our being and to love our neighbour as ourselves. These "works" of the law were never abolished by Yah'shua the Messiah, nor did He give permission to any man or group of men to attempt to imply such an illogical form of "grace" to His faithful.

It may be expressed much the same way as if a track and field competitor was disqualified from a race for infractions. As humans, we have been disqualified from the race to salvation by sin. The track and field competitor may pay a fine, or penalty and be re-entered into the race, but he does not necessarily win the race, until he "runs" the race. In like manner, Yah'shua did pay the "penalty" for our "infractions"; our sin, and reconciled, or justified our right to re-enter the race to salvation. This reconciliation is not the sole means to the end, rather it merely provides the opportunity for us to run the race, and to thereby "win" our inheritance as saints; our salvation through OBEDIENCE to our faith. This obedience may only be evidenced and witnessed by our "works", otherwise we have made Yahweh's Commandments - those Commandments that Yah'shua the Messiah re- affirmed - to love Yahweh and love your neighbour, of no effect!

Further, if we as Israelites, are to be as a "light to the world", we are obviously meant to "demonstrate our faith by our works" for the benefit of others in the world around us. Others may "see" our faith through our works, but they will never see our faith without its works. Without the works of our faith, we are like a lamp lit, and placed under a bushel basket where no one can see it! Such faith without its works of obedience cannot produce any fruit.

In terms of examining our responsibilities associated with these "works", let us start with the first basic premise - we were told in Yahweh's Word to "imitate us [the Apostles] even as we imitate Yah'shua the Messiah", which taken to its logical conclusion means we are imitating Yah'shua the Messiah when following these examples of behaviour, but there is one other important issue. Over the course of our individual lifetimes, we each have been blessed with our own spiritual growth and awareness according to Yahweh's good and perfect will; as in the words of our beloved Messiah: "no man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him".

How we respond to that inward call is indeed the essence of our spiritual growth. How we share this potential with others for the benefit of the others is the essence of our potential to do the good work for which we have been called - for we have not been called for our own benefit, rather we have been called for the benefit of our family; being all of Yahweh's children. The inward call is only profitable if we put that call to "work", else Yahweh's faithful would be of all people, the most selfish.

In all things there is a time; whether things of the material, or things of the spiritual.

Inasmuch as all true Israelites, in a manner after our Father's example, would that all men should come to the knowledge of His Spiritual truths, it behoves us to pursue the works of our faith premised upon those lessons that may be learned from our own humble experiences - as also this experience has been blessed upon us for this very reason.

When we were babes in search of truth, we were capable only of milk, and not the solid foods of even basic Biblical revelations, let alone the more advanced revelations coming forth from the indwelling Spirit. Like most on a spiritual journey, we were once aware that we were seeking truth, yet unaware that all truth resides within each of us! Thus there is a timing for the awareness of Yahweh's goodness to work within each of us, such as we know to be the case for all of Yahweh's children. Some sooner, some later, some faster, some slower, but all in accordance to His good and perfect will.

Therefore the admonition to imitate - to work the examples of Yah'shua the Messiah and His Apostles are for our sakes that have a modest understanding, but also to be worked by us for the sakes of those that are yet to understand. What we may witness from the perfect examples of Yah'shua the Messiah and His Apostles, is that these did not work beyond the capacity of their audience to appreciate their efforts. They worked rather through faith that Yahweh's implanted word was universally implanted in every man, and that by building on that universal foundation, they could cause spiritual growth from that foundation, thus progress could be achieved for each and every of Yahweh's children. Indeed, in many instances, Yah'shua the Messiah and the Apostles reasoned concerning spiritual truths to audiences that had less than any acknowledged faith in the one true God, yet they worked with enthusiasm because they knew they were building on Yahweh's (implanted) foundation.

Forasmuch as these Apostles understood spiritual things, they also understood and followed Yah'shua the Messiah's own example; "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance". Thus it must be

deduced that sinners are not evil in and of themselves, but rather they simply lack knowledge. For even being subject to weakness and sin is due to a lack of knowledge; that perfect knowledge called love, which casts out all fears; which fears are the root of all temptations leading to sin. How then do we help these people to find their way; to recognize the implanted word and begin their own spiritual journey? Are we simply meant to "have faith" and to leave them to their own devices? Certainly not! Else how is one meant to follow Yah'shua the Messiah and to "call sinners to repentance" as Yah'shua the Messiah stated He did?

We were clearly admonished to understand the difference between the "thin milk" of helping others find their own starting place; that place where they begin to appreciate the need for their own repentance, leading them to the more "solid food" of in-depth Bible study, and ultimately of course to the most solid of foods, being the spiritual revelations discerned from within. This is where our Father's Congregation is being built by His true followers, where membership is "registered in Heaven"!

So it is that we grow to appreciate the profitable application of the lessons learned from our own humble life experiences in the form of our offering of this thin milk. We do our best to share these revealed truths in a manner acceptable to both believers and to unbelievers. These actions are in obedience to the works of our faith.

As set out in Hebrews 10:24 by our Father's Word; "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment...which will devour the adversaries."

To have been blessed with the smallest morsel of the wonderful knowledge of Yahweh includes the inherent obligation to share that knowledge with others. Yah'shua the Messiah obviously had a certain knowledge of Yahweh, and our Messiah shared that knowledge at every opportunity, and he told us to imitate Him, not to be selfish with the knowledge, or puffed up and self- righteous merely because we had some small knowledge of our God.

Our Messiah certainly told us to do much more than to simply believe, or have faith that all would be well! He told us to have faith in the fact that He has paid the penalty for our sins, and through the Grace of Yahweh, we have been reconciled; re-entered into the race to salvation -that race which we must still run!

"Therefore...rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Yah'shua the Messiah; as obedient children... but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (1 Peter 1:12-16).

These then are the works of our faith! May you enjoy a most wonderfully blessed day!

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