

— A Vision for Eternity—

Doing Good Works

Peter J. Scott . January 2022

Now in 2022 we can no longer say we are in the 20th century. We are in a new one, the 21st. This is a new world. God created both of them. But the gospel is for eternity, from eternity to eternity. It doesn't change. Isn't that wonderful? It doesn't matter what year you find yourself in; it is the same message. You are a little different however, a little older, a little wiser, a little more full of the Holy Spirit within you. That fire is burning bright and brighter.

I'd like to speak today about "Good Works." It is essential to know that good works have to be and *must* be born in the Spirit. That is because there are three kinds of works. There is **evil** work. (We would like to pass over that one.) There is **dead** work, which is work that is done and looks pretty good but it isn't born of the Spirit. And then there is **good** work which is born in the Spirit. We are created for, and to do good works, not evil work. It is hard for me to imagine some of us here wandering too far from the Lord. God loves us all the same. He doesn't love any of us more than another. He loves us *all passionately!*

We'll start in Micah. I like this word because it re-centers who we are in God.

*Micah 6:⁸ He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly, To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?*

He is showing all of us what is good. I sure would like that. What if a TV announcer came out with something like this? "*Let me tell you what is good. This is it, the final word.*"

So what does God require of us? What is this all about? What mystery? There is a country song, "*Life isn't but a funny, funny riddle,*" by John Denver. Remember that line? That is a crazy line. Life isn't a funny riddle, not a riddle at all. It is spelled out for us right here in this scripture. The Lord requires of us to act justly, love mercy and to walk humbly with our God. So we see there are three "dials," not switches but dials. That is because we are never quite there. If you have a switch we could say, "*I am acting justly. Switch, I love mercy and switch, I walk humbly.*" But in my experience in the Lord, it is more of a dial

than a switch. It goes all the way to the left for “off” and then all the way to the right for “on.”

“Lord, I love mercy!” And the Lord says to me, *“Your dial is still a little bit like this, because you like judgment more than mercy. You would really like to see that person pay for their sin, especially when they transgress you! So let’s dial that back a little bit more.”* And we become more like Jesus.

How about mercy? What about those things? Well I want to see that dial turned all the way up for mercy, for myself! But maybe not so much for you! I’m being honest here. All of us kind of fall into that trap. It is an Eastern religious trap that Karma is a real thing, that you deserve what you get by doing terrible things. Scripture says, *“We reap what we sow.”* However, there is something that stands in the way of that, which is the mercy of God, which He is putting into you. And again, to walk humbly before your God. Now that you may say is the most difficult one of all. *“I’m humble.”* *“Oh really?!”* Just ask the Lord to show you where you are not humble. I always want to put myself in a good light especially when I am talking to my boss, when he is evaluating me year after year. Now they have evaluation 360° which means everybody in the work place evaluates you. Well, forget this evaluation stuff. It is what is happening *inside of you* that makes you righteous. It is what is happening *inside of you* that makes you love mercy. It is what is happening *inside of you* that makes you humble. So you can put all kinds of things around you but it doesn’t make any difference to God.

Surround yourself. Go ahead, with all kinds of things but you do what is right. You love mercy. You walk humble before God. Is that it? It is. It is a message that is not temporal but is eternal. The difference is HUGE. Temporal things will fade away, die and disappear. Eternal things will last forever. Remember in 1 Corinthians 13:8, it says that all things temporal in life will pass away, knowledge, even “tongues,” etc. But there are some things that will not pass away that are not mentioned there. One of them is “friendship,” the love we have for one another. Think about that for a minute. We are going to love each other forever! Wow.

I might someday say, *“I haven’t seen Theresa in 10,000 years. Oh, there she is!”* Won’t that be a good coffee break? I don’t know what we will be doing in Heaven but I hope there is coffee; probably not. But what we are looking at is the thing that God wants inside of you, more important than what you do outside. What you do outside should only be a precipitation of what is going on inside of you, not the other way around. That’s what monks do . . . Let’s stop looking at the world all together. Turn out the lights. Turn them all down low. Just read the Word, etc. There are no temptations now . . .

That is not what it is all about at all. God wants us in the World to show the World His mercy, His love (especially that). There was a time when I was ministering down at the French Huguenot Church in New Paltz. Once a year they would call me down there; they only had one service a year. Anyone could

come but there were people actually devoted to being there even if once per year for whatever reasons, perhaps all different. But this particular Huguenot Church was built in 1717, before the War of Independence, before much was happening at all.

They worshiped there in that small building without a pastor. They didn't have one man in charge. Even the elders there were not "in charge." "*Who's in charge here?*" "*Jesus. He's the one in charge.*" The Huguenot church was born in Calvinism. It was born by the root of Christianity in the street, not in the organized Church. No longer did they have communion only inside the Church. They could have communion anywhere, fellowship anywhere. They could sing hymns in the street and that is what bothered Catholics the most. "*They cannot sing in the streets! What is going on here?!*"

That is the kind of people the Huguenots came from. They were not going to let any laws of denominationalism of the Church rule over them. Rather, it was going to be the Word of God or nothing. Granted they always were nit-picking at the little doctrines too much but it was okay. They knew the Lord and that is the important thing.

This is what they wrote on the plaque before that Church in New Paltz in 1717, why the gospel is eternal, "*Blessed be God (Amen) our Father who is in Heaven. Hallowed be They name. Blessed be God who has put in our hearts . . .*" What did He put in their hearts? First of all to build a house where He may be adored and served. So why did you come here today? To adore Him and worship and praise, to find out what He wants us to do, to serve Him however that might be. It just might be to do nothing except to share the Lord's blessing, testimony, encouragement in God!

Their devotion to Christ and their focus on Him was very obvious by that statement alone. And then they said this, "*And that by His grace in this year 1717 . . .*" There was an understanding that nothing could be done on this earth by them or by anyone else except by the grace of God, being born in the Holy Spirit or nothing. 1717, these statements were written; they had an understanding. Then they said this about the future, "*And God grant that His gospel be preached here.*" Not ours, but His gospel, His good news. See how touched they were with scripture, with the Word of God? They were really in touch with it! That HIS gospel would be preached here. . . from "*this one age to another; till the day of eternity . . .*" What? "*that His gospel would be preached here for eternity . . .*" I've got news for us; that Church building will not last forever. That building will not last forever but the Spirit of what they had said will. His gospel will not retreat on the face of this earth; it will continue to go forth and bless people. It will continue to heal their bodies. I started praying for a certain person a month ago who had a new pancreas and new liver and he wasn't doing well at all. The liver was failing though the pancreas was okay, but now he is stable! The miracles of God go beyond what medicine can do. Medicine can replace things but unless God is involved it won't happen. You need the prayers of the

Saints to go before you. Would you go into the hospital without prayer?! Would you trust a man before God? I wouldn't and I don't.

I take pills and I go to doctors and I've been in the hospital a few times, sometimes purposefully. However I trust God more than any of those things. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He will always be relevant. The eternal work of God is that He will always be relevant! Even more so today with metaverse, virtual reality, whatever technology is going to throw our way, it needs to be relevant to Jesus not the other way around. There is no substitute for these foundational truths. There is no substitute for devotion and compassion. Name one! Would you rather have "screen time?" See a good movie? No. You would much rather be in a relationship with devotion and compassion. Well, you have that whether married or whether you have friends or not, you still have the Lord Jesus to whom you are married.

These things that I am talking about will always define human excellence. These things that God brings to us, mercy, lovingkindness, justice, faithfulness, all these things are something that will define the best part of who we are as a people in the creation of God. Amen.

Keeping that in mind let us go to the prayer of Jabez. I've been thinking a lot about childbirth and fetal development. The first person to have recognized Jesus as the King of kings on the earth, besides the shepherds, was John the Baptist as he was a fetus. He couldn't reason that out in that stage of development; he just knew by the Holy Spirit. He kicked his poor mom. Jabez did more than just kick. Jabez means "pain." So here is a child that was born in childbirth's pain, an Old Testament curse.

1 Chronicles 4: ⁹ Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain."

Can you imagine. "What's your name?" Pain, suffering, whatever. Really! That wouldn't go down too well in Grade School. "Hey, Pain, come here!" But because of that name, Jabez purposed something in his heart. God turned something around in him creating him to do something much more than just be a pain in someone's body, pain in the neck or wherever. And you are not called to be that either. Although your name may be as bad or worse, it matters not to the Lord. You have been born for something much, much better.

¹⁰ And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.

Wow. It is not wrong for you to ask God to prosper you. "Be fruitful and multiply," was one of the first things God told to Adam and Eve. It is not wrong for you to enlarge the place of your tent. It just plain isn't. I thought about this as we have a lot of projects around our home we are involved in. I thought, "Why are we doing this?" The Lord said to me, "Because I made you like Me. I didn't

stop creating when it was all done after seven days. I am still creating even today!" In all of us! There is a creation going on and the fire of creation is still burning within you. When you feel like you must expand the place of your tent, it is because God created you to be like Him. Is He done?

Do you know there stars being born in the middle of our galaxy. Hubble actually says there are lots of them, pretty chaotic. New stars! There is a lot more that God calls us to be than the simplicity of what I just said. The book of James goes into it a lot more. He also brings us into a balance; thought-balance isn't really a good word for this. Being in the Holy Spirit is not opposite of what I am talking about. James speaks of being annealed with, coming together with, folded together with, being inseparable from the Holy Spirit . . . So when we talk about good works verses dead or evil works, we are talking about the annealing, the coming together and intertwining of the Holy Spirit and who God made you and what God has given to you to do on this earth. In the instance of a nurse, for example, this is very clear.

If you come here or watch on Zoom, just listening and not doing anything, you are missing what I am talking about; you are missing what the Holy Spirit is all about. The Church was born on the day of Pentecost with the Holy Spirit but born with the purpose of bringing forth the gospel upon the earth in its fullness. Jesus could only speak with the voice of one man, physically. However with the Church He could speak with many voices. As those in leadership it is really important for us to be in plurality so we can hear God from different voices, from different persons. That is also how we learn about who we are in our home group meetings, who we are in and amongst a people that we know and love and who love the Lord.

James 1:²¹ Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. ²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵ But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty . . .

Where do you really find liberty? Not in the Law but in the Holy Spirit.

. . . and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

So we see that this is Jabez all over again only in the New Testament.

²⁶ If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue . . .

So how do we do it? We STOP saying some things that are not really good. Take that dial and turn it. How many times did you say the wrong things to people you know and love even yesterday? Maybe it wasn't quite right. Turn down the dial and walk away.

... not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. ²⁷ *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

Here it is; James is going to spell it out for us. Well I don't know if I personally have those dials turned up very far. I see those who are having trouble getting around and now I help them. I'll stay at the door and wait for them and open the door. If they are having trouble finding a seat, I'll find a seat for them. But I also need to turn that dial up and PRAY more for them also. Our offense and defense is prayer! The Lord has been dealing with me on that. How about you? Those dials may be mostly on one side or the other but they still need to be adjusted.

How about "*being unspotted from the world.*"? That's pretty hard to do with the advertising we are subjected to. No matter what we do, the artificial intelligence on the Net knows what we are doing and then adjusts the advertising just to suit you personally. If I'm looking at lawnmowers it suddenly knows what I'm interested in! That's scary. If artificial intelligence can do that, you can be sure the enemy's real intelligence can do that also. He will set traps for you but his ways and means are not new. He's always using old tricks, nothing new! Amen.

*Isaiah 1:*¹⁶ *"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;*

Who does it for you? You. *You* have to initiate this! In the end it is the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ but after you have accepted that, take some of the sin of this world and *throw it away!* Put away evil. Just stop it!

... Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil,

You might say, "*I don't know; it is too hard.*" Well throw the switch. "*I am not doing that any more.*" If you have trouble with drinking; stop drinking. If you have trouble with getting angry; stop getting angry. As soon as you see yourself do it, throw the switch. "*I am not doing this!*" Whatever it takes, stop doing it. It is not that hard. My wife said this is the hardest thing to do. Maybe so in the natural, but in the Lord it is not. **He will give you the ability to do it.** That is what the waters of baptism does. It gives you the *power* to overcome the old nature! The old Adam is not in charge of you any more. Wow. Put away evil things.

¹⁷ *Learn to do good;*

How do you do that? How? Reading the scripture, being in fellowship with one another. You might find somebody who is doing really good and right, in the Lord and say, "*I want to be more like him.*" You might even see people in the world that are pretty nice people and say, "*Well whatever that is that God created in that person, I want more of that.*" I have to say that about John Madden. I don't even know if he is saved. Interestingly none of the articles I've read

even mention if he was religious or not. However, everybody mentioned that he was kind, considerate and a caring person. I thought, “*Well in the Lord I’d like to have some of that.*” Wouldn’t you? Yes, because we should be that kind of person.

... *Seek justice,*

You have to *seek*; it isn’t that easy to get true justice. True justice needs to be overcome with mercy. But seeking a real, righteous justice is different.

... *Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.*

These are things that Isaiah knows are true about righteous men. Now some people get on their high-horse when they see someone at work being oppressed. They will defend that person to “the teeth.” They may not have any relationship with Jesus at all. Some people adopt children and have no relationship with Jesus or even a partner to help. Some people plead for the widow and think they are righteous. All of these things, God has called us, the Christians, to do. The reason other people have taken it up is because the Church has failed to do it! That’s a judgment against the Bride but I am going to be careful about this. I don’t want to speak ill of the Bride of Christ, *ever*. That is because I know what He is doing in the heart of the Bride, the Church today. He is turning those dials. He is saying, “*No longer are you going to be able to walk away from seeing an abortion. No longer are you going to be able to walk away from those in foster care. No longer are you going to be able to say it is not your problem.*”

Job also knew what it was like to be righteous. He brags a lot here. However at the end of the bragging the Lord says, “*Who are you anyway, Job? Where were you when I made the foundations of the deep?*” But Job says, trying to be as much of a man as he can be:

Job 29: ¹¹ When the ear heard, then it blessed me, And when the eye saw, then it approved me; ¹² Because I delivered the poor who cried out, The fatherless and the one who had no helper. ¹³ The blessing of a perishing man came upon me,

Can you imagine saying these things!?! I don’t know if I could even say that about myself today even though I know what God has done in my life. But I wouldn’t bring it upon myself as my righteousness; It would be the Lord’s.

*¹³ The blessing of a perishing man came upon me, And I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy. ¹⁴ I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice was like a robe and a turban. ¹⁵ I was eyes to the blind, And I was feet to the lame. ¹⁶ I was a father to the poor, And I searched out the case that I did not know. ¹⁷ **I broke the fangs of the wicked, And plucked the victim from his teeth.***

He searched out things that needed to be changed! Wow. I don’t know actually how righteous Job was when he said these words. I almost don’t care be-

cause I know that when people came up for prayer during the “Toronto blessing,” many of those things happened. Some came up right in the teeth of the enemy and the Christians prayed for them. So do you claim it as your own righteousness or the Lord’s?

After Job finished his self proclamation, I thought how really good things they were. But as I looked at all of these things I thought, “*I don’t know how one can even begin to do these outside of the Lord Jesus, or outside of the Holy Spirit. Where do I begin?*” You cannot just walk into a hospital and do all of this. Some people have tried but it doesn’t work out that well. These things are eternal that God is calling us to. It isn’t the works themselves. It is what is expressed IN them from the inside of you. God put that in you, His righteousness, His lovingkindness, His mercy, His grace. Then those dials start going further than you ever thought they could go. You might say, “*How did I get here?!*” Well, incrementally you kept turning the dial up and you became more and more like your Savior, your King

However it is still a long way, still a dial that needs to keep going up. We cannot do any of these things without the supernatural leading of the Holy Spirit. Our righteousness is filthy rags and trash. Eternal works must be born in Christ. No one is worthy. We sing, “*Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole? Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll.*” That comes right from the book of Revelation. None can be opened without the Lord Jesus.

This new year, 2022, cannot be opened either without Him in you. You might want to contemplate dead work and good work but also do not forget *evil work*. Think back in your life when you did an evil work. Think about how evil that was and how did it make you feel then. How does it make you feel now? Amazingly, God doesn’t even remember those after you’ve repented and been saved! He created you a new creature in Christ.

Hebrews 6:¹ Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works . . .

Ready for this; we are now going to get the full course. This is something we can fall into time after time, again and again. We want to go away from dead work. We want to be committed to seek out the Holy Spirit and what He wants to do in our life, just like the Huguenots did in 1717.

. . . not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Faith in God not faith in faith.

² *of the doctrine of baptisms,*

Wow, the baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit. Some believe a baptism into the Church fellowship. Whichever.

. . . of laying on of hands,

It is important to touch. As much as we don't want to in the "Covid world", the scripture really has a lot of things to say about how we lay hands on one another, to bring healing not death and destruction. Why do you think the enemy is involved in this whole Covid thing? He wants to isolate each one of us. But we cannot be isolated even if we maintain our six foot distance. Even if we keep our mask on, the enemy cannot isolate us from one another. Isn't that wonderful?! Wow. He cannot do it because of what is in our hearts; what is on the inside that is making the difference. I may not get within twelve feet of my brother today but he knows I love him. Honestly I know he loves me too. So awesome.

. . . of resurrection of the dead,

That's an important thing. I used to think, "*Well, who cares? When it happens it happens*" I had such an infant mind when I first came to the Lord. I didn't think some doctrines made any difference. But the resurrection is very important! Jesus' resurrection is extremely important after His death on the cross. We sing about it all the time. But when He calls us to Himself it is going to be a wonderful, wonderful day. Remember what He said to Martha, "*Martha, what is going on here?*" At one point she said, "*I know. I believe in the resurrection.*" Obviously Jesus had taught the disciples of this. It was something they all believed in. They didn't walk away and say it was for another dimension of Church history. You can hear that thought across the seminaries across our country and the whole world at the moment. They have deserted the application of the resurrection in our Christian faith. Well, I am not going to do that. I'm looking for a glorified body.

Lastly:

. . . and of eternal judgment.

That is really the first thing we start with when witnessing to someone. "*Do you want to go to Heaven or hell?*" But that comes as the last thing as Jesus is talking here. It is more important for Him to talk about a foundation of repentance from dead works as *number one* than to talk about eternal judgment. If we are all about judgment, turn that part of the dial down. It is more about mercy! Kindness! Someone is going to turn the dial and talk about judgment but it isn't going to be you. It will be God Himself, our Father in Heaven.

⁴ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,

This is an interesting scripture. For once you have tasted the Heavenly gift, the Holy Spirit and are partakers of Him, once that has happened, something changes in you forever.

⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

The power of the age to come is in you!!! Not in nuclear weapons, etc.

⁶ . . . if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

No, there is only one gospel. There is only one New Covenant. There will never be another! There will never be another Cross that Jesus has to go to! He has done it all for us today, now for eternity. And, it is for us then to become more like Him and do the good works on earth just like it is done in Heaven. Your will be done here on earth just like it is in Heaven by you and me! Led by the Holy Spirit. What an awesome charge to the church. You would think the Bride would shrink back and say, “*Aaaah. I don't think I can do this!*” The answer is that she cannot do it. Going back to the sermon on the mount in Matthew, you can see it. How can we do this?! How is anybody able to do this? If you even look at a woman with desire for her, you are already guilty. If you have already called your brother a fool, you are already guilty of murder before the court. How can anyone possibly live up to these standards?! The answer is that no one can. Who can open the scroll? Who can open the seal? No one can but Jesus that is why ***we need Him***. We don't need another person. We need our Lord Jesus, King of all kings, Lord of the universe and everything that has been made is upheld by the Word of His power.

Nothing exists except by His Word. Nothing! Without Him there would just be emptiness in Space or worse. Because He spoke into this world, because He said, “*I am that I am,*” doing this to reveal who He was and is and was from the very beginning all the way to end of eternity, to reveal that He is a God of Mercy and Lovingkindness. He said that to Moses, not forsaking justice, He is going to be the God of Mercy and He is a God of Mercy, a God of good work, a God to the widow, to the orphan, to those in need, those who don't have a place to stand in the jaws of the enemy. Let's just snatch them from the teeth in the jaws of the enemy. Let's snatch them away! Amen! In fact, why don't you find somebody you know who is in the jaws of the enemy. In your meditation ask yourself, “*Who is it that I know that is in the enemy's jaws?*” I know a few that are dying right now. As I was praying for a friend this morning; it is the third time he has been in the hospital this week with A-fib, etc. The Lord can rescue him and bring him back out of that hospital, out of the jaws of the enemy. Let's pray together that way now.

Father, we come against the schemes of the enemy to snatch away those who's time is not yet come. When it isn't their time as yet, the enemy has no place for those who are in God, for those who are in Christ. We pray for those having transplants and all those kinds of things and we ask You, Lord God, to deliver us and them, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well I believe that what God is going to do in the Church, is the same He did for Jabez, as we mentioned earlier. God honored his prayer to not be known for the word Pain. “*Enlarge my territory, Oh Lord.*” And we will see the Church prevail against the gates of hell and darkness WILL NOT PREVAIL. Amen.