

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Are You Worthy?

(Jerry Fite)

Thinking of God’s grace as “unmerited” favor, we might respond to the above question by saying, “No”. I am not worthy, for I have sinned. As one who has transgressed God’s law, I do not deserve God’s favor. I have done nothing to merit salvation. No, I am certainly not worthy.

We usually think of being worthy as meriting or deserving something. And when it comes to our relationship with God we can easily think we could never live a life worthy of Him. How does this thought about being “worthy” work when we come to scripture that demands we “walk worthily of the Lord” (*Colossians 1:10*)? God commands us to “let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” (*Philippians 1:27*); and Paul hopes “God will count” the Thessalonians worthy of the kingdom of God (*2 Thess. 1:5*).

We are unable to be worthy? Wait! Earning God’s favor while we have all fallen short of His glory is one thing. However, do not God and his chosen apostles demand that we walk worthily of the Lord, living a life worthy of the Gospel and be counted by God

as worthy of the kingdom of God? Is God setting a standard that we cannot meet? These are not mere lofty and unachievable goals, but are demands and attainable goals for all of us.

There were some saints in Sardis who the Lord himself says “are worthy”. Because they are worthy, Jesus says they “shall walk with me in white” (*Revelation 3:4*). They are worthy in the sense they “did not defile their garments”, thus living up to God’s demands of purity.

We are to live lives “worthy of repentance”. John preached, “Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance” (*Matthew 3:8*). Do we think of worthy here as deserving, meriting or earning “repentance”? No. We think of our lives as “fruit”, and must realize that it must be connected some way with the tree, “repentance”. The connection is that the character of our lives is “fitting” fruit for repentance. A changed mind regarding sin, leading one to turn from sin is rising up to meet God’s demand of repentance. Such living is worthy because it demonstrates the character of true repentance.

The demand to walk worthily of the Lord necessitates placing a “value” on our choices. Jesus said, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me” (*Matthew 10:37-38*). To be worthy of the Lord, we must value Him above our loved ones. It is not that we are to stop loving our fathers, mothers, sons and daughters; but we are to value the Lord above them, putting His will above theirs. We must value His way of the Christian life, taking up our cross, above other less demanding ways, or we cannot be worthy of Him.

There is a godly humility when trying to fathom the glory of the Lord, to say like the centurion and John said, “I am not worthy...” (*Luke 7:6, John 1:27*). We are not of equal weight to the glorious Lord. But this does not mean we cannot live lives worthily of the Lord. We can, like some of the Christians in Sardis, be worthy as we keep our garments or ourselves unspotted by the world around us (*cf. James 1:27*). We can! We must be worthy!