

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Reformation Sunday – October 26, 2025

“For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.”

- Romans 3:28 -

Working Ourselves to Death

Have you ever thought about how our culture lifts up and praises workaholism? We may say that we don't, but in fact, we demand so much from one another that in a subtle, covert way, we are indeed encouraging each other to work, work, work. It's no wonder that when it comes to basking in the grace of God, enjoying much needed sabbath, and simply allowing ourselves “to be,” many of us have a very difficult time.

St. Paul urged the Romans to recognize the source of their salvation — that we are saved by grace, apart from the law. There's nothing we can do to save ourselves, and yet we continue to try by our efforts to work, work, work ourselves into God's grace. The truth is that we don't want to give up power! Just like workaholism is a soul-destroying obsession, so too are our attempts to work ourselves into God's good graces. Instead of sinking into God's loving and forgiving arms, we work ourselves to death trying to be good enough for God.

There's the paradox we wrestle with — am I good enough for God? Can I be better for Jesus? What can I do to make his sacrifice “worth it”? The answers are, “No, you aren't good on your own, and you can do ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!” But here is the grace (so don't despair): Jesus Christ came to this earth and took on our human form so that we would know that God knows what it's like to be fully human. And Jesus experienced all of human life — joyful emotions, friendships, family relationships, work, persecution, betrayal, and death. There is no part of our human experience that Jesus did not experience fully and completely. The inevitable sacrifice on the cross of Calvary and subsequent resurrection and ascension all point to his great love for us. He did all of this not because we are “worthy,” but because of his never-ending love for us.

This means that we do not have to work ourselves to death in an effort to win Christ's affection. We already have his love, and it is shown to us daily! The law brings death, but Christ put an end to the power of death so that we might live, and live fully, in the kingdom of God, here and now, and forever.