

Faith and works

Saved by grace. Both sides say it. So why the fight?

In short. Catholics agree with Paul: justification is a free gift of grace that nobody earns.^{1,2} The disagreement is about living faith: Catholics read Paul and James together, faith working through love.^{3,4}

Key points

- Justification comes from God's free, undeserved grace.¹
- No one can merit the initial grace of justification.²
- Merit is itself the fruit of God's grace.⁵

Try this, this week

- Read Ephesians 2:8–10. Don't stop at verse 9.
- Read James 2:14–26. Ask what James is afraid of.
- Read Galatians 5:6. Faith, working, through love.

“for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast.”

Ephesians 2:8–9, World English Bible

Common questions

Remember: Not grace versus effort: grace, and then grace at work.

Sources

- CCC 1996
- CCC 2010
- Galatians 5:6 (World English Bible)
- CCC 1815
- CCC 2008

Quotation above: Ephesians 2:8–9, World English Bible. Catechism: official text on vatican.va.

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