Saved by Grace, Not “After All We Can Do”

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Many Latter-day Saints sincerely love Jesus and talk often about His grace. Yet many also feel a quiet weight: am I doing enough? Have I kept enough commandments to be worthy? If you have ever felt that weight, this paper is written for you, with love. The Bible offers something far better than trying harder.

What the Book of Mormon says

> **2 Nephi 25:23** “for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.”

> **Moroni 10:32** “if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you”

In these verses grace comes after our effort, and is sufficient only if we first deny ourselves of all ungodliness. The manual *Gospel Principles*, chapter 47, lists what is required for exaltation: baptism, confirmation, the Melchizedek Priesthood for men, the temple endowment, eternal marriage, and then commandments such as keeping the commandments, doing family history for the dead, attending church meetings, and daily prayer. Who can honestly say they have done all they can do?

1. Grace is a gift, not a reward

> **Ephesians 2:8 and 9** “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

Paul does not say “by grace, after all you can do.” He says “not of works.” A gift that must be earned is not a gift. It is a wage.

2. Grace and works cannot be mixed

> **Romans 11:6** “And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.”

The moment we add our works as a condition for salvation, grace stops being grace. Salvation is either the free gift of God or the payment for our effort. It cannot be both.

3. God saves the ungodly who trust Him

> **Romans 4:5** “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.”

Moroni 10:32 says grace is sufficient once we deny ourselves of all ungodliness. Romans 4:5 says God justifies the ungodly. That is wonderful news, because the ungodly is exactly who we are.

> **Titus 3:5** “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

> **Galatians 2:16** “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”

4. Our best is not good enough

> **James 2:10** “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”

> **Isaiah 64:6** “But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.”

God’s standard is perfection (Matthew 5:48). One sin makes us guilty. Have you ever lied, stolen, used God’s name in vain, or looked with lust (Matthew 5:28)? Then by the standard of the law we stand guilty, and no future obedience can erase past sin, just as good driving does not cancel a speeding ticket.

5. Jesus finished the work

On the cross Jesus cried, “It is finished!” (John 19:30). He did not say it was started and that we must complete it. He paid the full debt for sin. That is why believers can know, today, that they have eternal life:

> **1 John 5:13** “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.”

6. Then where do good works fit?

> **Ephesians 2:10** “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Good works matter greatly, but they are the fruit of salvation, not the root. We do not obey in order to be saved. We obey because we have been saved and made new. That frees a believer to serve God out of love and gratitude instead of fear.

For Christians talking with Latter-day Saints: A kind and honest question is, “Have you done all you can do?” Most sincere members will admit they have not. Then read Ephesians 2:8 and 9 and Romans 4:5 together. Walter Martin’s *The Kingdom of the Cults* and Watchman Fellowship are helpful for further study.

Rest in Christ

Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). You do not have to wonder whether you have done enough. You never could. Admit that you are a sinner, turn from your sin, and put your trust in Jesus Christ alone, who died for your sins and rose again. “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Receive the gift today.