

Rudgwick

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Dear Friends

What is the best gift you have ever been given? Perhaps a toy you had really, really wanted when you were a child; maybe the gift is special, not because of what it was but, because of the person who gave it to you or maybe it is the best present because it was such a surprise.

I think one of the most misunderstood things about the Christian faith is God's gift to us. I talk to people who think that following Jesus is about being good, that we can earn our way into Heaven. Of course, followers of Jesus should be well behaved, after Jesus told us to love God and to love our neighbour. However, it is not our actions, or 'works', that make us a Christian or save us. Rather, it is our actions that should demonstrate that we follow Jesus.

The message of Jesus is that none of us are without sin, none of us are good enough, we can never 'earn' our salvation. Rather, it is God's gift to us. The Apostle Paul writing to the Church meeting in Ephesus reminds them that "it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast."

A paraphrase of Paul's letter puts it like this: "Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing!"

The thing with a gift is, we have to accept it – will you accept what Jesus has done for you and will that be reflected in your actions?

Every blessing

Martin King