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**A Summary Workbook on
"The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel"
by Dr. C.F.W. Walther**

Point 14

The tenth way that people mix up the Law and the Gospel is when the preacher makes faith itself a good work that is necessary to be saved. God does not save us BECAUSE OF our faith, as though that makes us better than people who don't believe. The truth is that God saves us only because of Jesus, and that this grace comes to us THROUGH faith, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible clearly says that a person is justified before God by faith alone: "For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law." (Romans 3:28)

This does NOT mean that a person is saved by something he does. He is saved only by trusting in what JESUS has done for him when he died for the sins of all the world.

There are many modern preachers and teachers who insist that there are two kinds of work that must happen for a person to be saved. They say that first there is something that God must do for men. This first part, the hardest part, was done when God redeemed the world through the death of his son. But then they add a second kind of work. The part that man has to do is something very great – he must BELIEVE. This way of talking about faith is false, and it ruins the true Gospel.

If believing were something that God required of us as a good work, it would not be a gift. That would not be grace, because God's grace is always a free gift. Paul says that we "are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:24)

What comfort we enjoy, to know that God requires nothing of us, but gives us both the gift of his Son and the faith to believe in him! Paul says that both things are freely given to us, without any requirement:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The only thing that comes from us that we can offer to God is our sins, and nothing else. But that makes us just the kind of people that Jesus is seeking: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10)

So we see that, when God urges people to believe, this is not a commandment for us to fulfill as a good work. Instead, it is a gracious invitation to receive his gift, free of charge!

QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between these two teachings? A) God saves us BECAUSE of our faith, and B) God saves us THROUGH faith?
2. Who is the one who does the work of bringing a person to faith?
3. When Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-9 that "this is not of your own doing," what is talking about with the word "this"?
4. When the Bible says "repent and believe the Gospel," was this a commandment or an invitation? Explain your answer.