

The Breath of Life



Witnessing Window

Saved by Faith Alone?

Many Mormons suggest that if people were saved by faith alone, then they would be free to be as wicked as they wanted and have no motivation to follow God's Word. While the Bible teaches we are saved by faith alone, this does not mean those who are saved do not strive to obey God's commands, do not do great works. Much the opposite, those who truly believe and are not hypocrites will perform many works of faith. See **Romans 6:1-2**

Romans 6:1-2 (NIV) What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ²By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

Romans 6:1-2 (KJV) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? ²God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Lazarus is brought to Life

A parallel can be drawn with believers' natural response to the gift of their saving faith using the story of Jesus bringing Lazarus back to life. We can use this parallel to show Mormons that saving faith is never alone. Read **John 11:43-44**:

John 11:43-44 (NIV) When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

John 11:43-44 (KJV) And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. ⁴⁴And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Jesus commands Lazarus to rise from his grave. Lazarus gets up and walks out of his grave. Jesus has brought Lazarus back to physical life through the power of his word. When Lazarus was dead, he was not breathing. Now that he is once again living, he breathes.

Man is brought to Life

Christ not only has the power to give people physical life, he also gives people spiritual life. {**John 5:21**}



John 5:21 (NIV) For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

John 5:21 (KJV) For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

This happens through hearing his word. {**Romans 10:17**}

Romans 10:17 (NIV) Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Romans 10:17 (KJV) So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God

Lazarus heard Jesus' word and crossed over from physical death to physical life. An unbeliever is brought to spiritual life through hearing God's Word. {**1 Peter 1:23**}

1 Peter 1:23 (NIV) For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Peter 1:23 (KJV) Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Such unbelievers cross over from spiritual death to spiritual life. {**John 5:24**}

John 5:24 (NIV) "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

John 5:24 (KJV) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Spiritual Breath

Those given the gift of faith now have Christ living in them. Their new life will burst out in the form of praise, glory, and honor to God. It will burst out in works of faith, action that demonstrates their trust in Christ's words. Just as Lazarus could not prevent himself from breathing when Jesus brought him back to life physically, a believer cannot prevent his or her self from letting Christ burst out in the form of works. Christ works in us and through us to perform works of faith. {**Philippians 2:13** & **Colossians 1:29**} Someone coined the phrase "We are saved by faith alone, but faith is never alone". Indeed, faithful action always accompanies true faith!

Philippians 2:13 (NIV) for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Philippians 2:13 (KJV) For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Colossians 1:29 (NIV) To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Colossians 1:29 (KJV) Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Mormon Misunderstanding

Faith without works is dead. Where there is no breath there can be no life. James uses a similar analogy of a body without the spirit being dead in proving that faith without works is dead. {**James 2:26**}

James 2:26 (NIV) As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

James 2:26 (KJV) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.



If someone said true faith can exist in complete absence of faithful action, a Christian would protest mightily. This is the same reaction Mormons have when a Christian says he or she is saved by faith alone; because Mormons misunderstand the Christian's words.

When a Christian says "I am saved by faith alone", a Mormon will think "Christians believe a person can have saving faith without doing any works". They do not recognize that that would be just as silly, just as futile, as a person trying not to breathe. They conclude that Christians believe a person can have saving faith and do whatever they want, willfully disobeying God and never trying to follow his will.

Mormons do not make the connection that when Christians say they are saved by faith alone they mean simply that it is their faith and not their works which saves them. When Christians **say** they do not need works to be saved, Mormons **hear** that Christians are people who perform no works. This inaccurate depiction serves to poison Mormons against Christians who witness to them. Such a misconception acts as an obstacle, a land mine, to our witnessing efforts. Often it is necessary to take the time to 'defuse' such misconceptions before we can continue with our ever present goal of witnessing the basic truths of God's Word. We need to check in on our audience to ensure they hear exactly what we are saying. This makes conveying the picture of "The Breath of Life" an important step in witnessing to most Mormons.

Once a Mormon understands that Christians believe the natural response to true faith is faithful action following God's will, then we can deliver the message that we are not saved **by** our works, but **to do** works. **{Ephesians 2:10}** This message is discussed in detail in the Witnessing Window "All Glory to God".

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV) For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.	Ephesians 2:10 (KJV) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.
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