

It ain't about works

By [Steve Pankey](#)

March 13, 2012

There must have been some Lutherans sitting in that conference room when the Revised Common Lectionary was birthed. That is the only explanation that I can come up with for Ephesians 2:1-10 having a role on the [Fourth Sunday in Lent](#), Year B.

I mean, obviously there is a connection between Ephesians 2:8 and John 3:21:

- For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God- not the result of works, so that no one may boast.
- But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.

But even that smacks of Reformation politics, and a begrudging Lutheran agreeing to take part in Lent, so long as somewhere in the middle we get a strong reminder that works righteousness is bogus. Well, dear Lutheran, you got your wish. To the detriment of the story of Nicodemus, we hear only the end of Jesus' exchange so that the tie in with Ephesians couldn't be more clear.

It ain't about works.

It is all gift. All grace. Sola fide.

All of the stuff we do; the good works, the social justice, the evangelism, the tithing, etc., is rightfully seen through the lens of faith. These activities don't buy us a ticket into heaven, they don't make God love us more, they don't (or shouldn't), despite years of church politics to the contrary, even get you a better seat in the nave or more visits from the rector. They are the right and faithful response of those who have been redeemed by God's amazing grace. They are the secondary activity that follows the primary activity of God. It is probably a good reminder, as we pass the halfway point in Lent and pat ourselves on the back for having gone thus far without sweets, that "by grace you have been saved through faith."

Originally posted at [Draughting Theology](#)