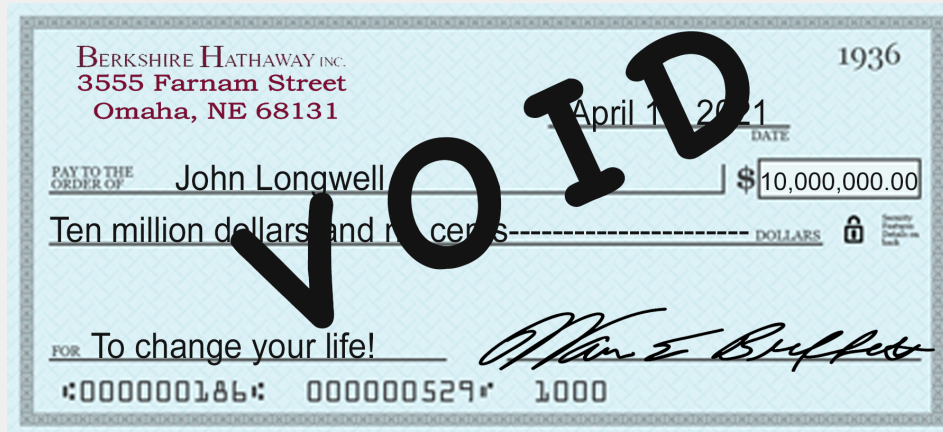


Void Not! (Galatians 2:21)



Berkshire Hathaway Check

- (Oracle of Omaha) Warren Buffet a financial superhero.
 - 6th richest person worth \$99.6 billion
 - Owns 6% of Coca-Cola Company with 400 million shares
 - Collected bottle caps, sold most popular sodas door to door
- I'll come back to the check amount...

Easter is Super Bowl Sunday for Christians

- When NFL starts it's anyone's season
 - Except for the Cleveland Browns.
 - Might as well be from Nazareth.

John 1:45-46 (ESV) 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Nathan answered and said, "See I told you, he's even wearing a Cleveland Browns jersey!" (added for effect).

- Super Bowl Sunday like Easter - someone is going to triumph.
 - The day everything changed!
 - Dividing line between the Before and the After.
- For early Jews
 - Before - atonement (sacrifice lamb & blood)
 - After salvation through faith - finished work of Christ's death/resurrection

- For Us
 - Before - unaware of sin & need for redemption
 - After - Holy Spirit's work of salvation (our easter morning)

What if early Jews remained in the Before?

- Continue following the Law
- Raise a lamb to sacrifice
- Insane! Treats Christ's death as non-event

Galatians 2:21 (CEB) I don't ignore the grace of God, because if we become righteous through the Law, then Christ died for no purpose.

What if we remained in the Before?

Galatians 2:21 (CJB) I do not reject God's gracious gift; for if the way in which one attains righteousness is through legalism, then the Messiah's death was pointless.

1. Following Legalism

- Strictly following rites & rituals of religion.
- I'll earn my way to heaven

Galatians 5:1-3 (ESV) For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision (a former requirement of the law), Christ will be of no advantage to you. 3 I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. (Score 100, be perfect).

James 2:10 (ESV) For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point is guilty of all of it.

- If keeping score, you must score a 100 and be perfect or you fail.
- Dedication & attendance is fine as an outflow of our connection to Christ or it's worthless!

2. Being ruled by Guilt & Shame

- We cannot accept we are forgiven.
- Live under shadow of shame
- Maybe in fear of sins we will commit
 - Set up safeguards (find an accountability partner)
 - Avoid areas of vulnerability (where you may be tempted)

3. Disregard Christ's death by comparing ourselves to others

- We're not as bad as some and probably better than most.
- I'll get into heaven (like God grades on a curve)
- Getting into heaven is not like surviving a bear attack by being the fastest one in the group.

Romans 3:23 (ESV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

4. We remain in the Before by ignoring our need for salvation.

William Booth (founder of the Salvation Army) said the dangers confronting Christians today are:

Religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, Forgiveness without repentance, Politics without God, Heaven without Hell

- We live in a world with no absolutes
- Taught to be independent & self-reliant
- I'm fine just as I am

Revelation 3:15-17 (ESV) I know your works (not your heart): you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

Isaiah 64:6 (NKJV) We are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;

- Question: was your salvation experience genuine?
 - Do you still seek repentance?
 - Are you still utterly dependent upon Christ?

In 2010, Bill Gates & Warren Buffet set a challenge to give 50% of their wealth to charity.

This year I decided to stop playing the lottery

- Before few bucks a week
- "If I don't play, I can't win."
- God told me "putting your hope in this leaves me no place to bless you"

My check is \$10,000,000.00.

- Could significantly change my life.
- Pay off my mortgage
- Set aside enough money to retire now.

However, if I choose to live in the before...

- Be like writing word VOID across this check
- Making it worth nothing.

Galatians 2:21 (ASV) I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought (nothing).

When the significance of Easter ceases...

- We void the grace of God and
- Christ's death & resurrection of no value.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 (ESV) 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

We live in the After by embracing the ministry of reconciliation

- Consider those we deem the most unworthy
- Those that rub us wrong may be God's salvation targets
- You have to pray just to be around them, pray them into the kingdom

Prayer: Lord help us not to remain in the Before where we retain our useless practices of works, living under guilt & shame, comparing ourselves to others or simply being self-reliant. Let us not make void your grace and render Christ's death and resurrection meaningless. Instead may we continue to be impacted more and more each day by the power of Christ's life in us. Help us embrace Your ministry of reconciliation and be open to whomever you would bring to us. Amen.