

THE GOSPEL

2. FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION

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Ephesians 2. 8 -9 states that we are saved by grace through faith; salvation is not of self or works. It is the gift of God.”

You cannot save yourself. You have nothing to offer to God. All your good works and religious observances will not gain you eternal life in Heaven. You can do nothing to win His approval.

But you need faith.

We must remind ourselves how faith comes. Romans 10. 17 says that faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

It does not come from someone standing up and giving a testimony of what a rotter he had been and how God saved him.

Hebrews 11 at verse 1 states that faith is the evidence of things not seen and the substance of things hoped for. The NIV says that faith is being certain of what we do not see; being sure of something we hope for.

Hebrews 11. 6 goes a stage further when it reads, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Galatians 5.6 exclaims that faith works by love. Romans 4. 3 reminds us that the just shall live by faith.

To be just means having justification. Some have said that justification means just as if I had never sinned. It really means to pronounce righteous, being acquitted of guilt. All that was necessary for our justification was God’s provision of the Lord Jesus who died on the Cross to take away our sin and guilt.

Faith is the evidence of things not seen. It has been said that seeing is believing but that is not faith since believing is being sure without seeing. Hebrews 11. 27 speaks of Moses, who, endured as seeing Him who is invisible. The idea of evidence of things not seen seems absurd but that is where faith comes in. Faith lives in a spiritual environment not a physical one.

It cannot be proved mathematically or scientifically.

On the Cross, the Lord Jesus spoke of the Father who could have sent 12 legions of angels to rescue Him. The Lord did not ask for them. When we stop believing in unseen things in the spiritual realm, hope can only die and we give up.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, that is to say things that are not yet in our possession such as Heaven and eternal glory which will be the compensation for all the trials we have endured here; it is the completion of our salvation which completion can only be achieved in Heaven. These are the substance of things hoped for and it is all future. A deeper communion and contact with God with the opportunities to serve Him are possible today.

We are to have faith in the Lord Jesus. This is the faith that believes in Him and relies on Him. It is the trust of complete commitment.

Faith is cleaving to Him and there cannot be any cleaving without leaving. Leaving of doubt, for example.

You cannot depend on Christ if you are independent or if you rely on your own abilities. Faith begins by hearing the Word of God and believing in it, admitting it to be true leaving the sinful past committing yourself wholeheartedly to Him trusting and depending on Him.

Some say that faith means forsaking all others I take Christ.

Of course, from time to time, people have doubts... even Christians.

Trust Him when thy friends are many,
Trust Him when thy friends are few,
Trust Him when to simply trust Him,
Seems the hardest thing to do.

It has to be an active thing. It demands effort. It is not sitting back and assuming you have to do nothing and God will drop everything into your lap. To conquer Canaan the Israelites had to have faith. They had to put faith into action and go in and fight. Faith without works is dead (James 2.20) and that must mean faith without effort avails little, if anything.

Hebrews 11.6 says, "He that cometh unto Me must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him."

The act of faith results in the desire to come near to God. The life of faith is growing closer to Him .The victory of faith is eternal life with Him.

We must not come to God merely to speak to Him but to listen. One of the problems is that worship today is now so noisy and extrovert that God in His still small voice cannot be heard. (1 Kings 19.11ff.). So many meetings are entertainment based with emphasis on self.

The noisy and exuberant meetings do not acknowledge such verses as Isaiah 30.15, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength but ye would not."

Quietness! But ye would not! Churches would not and will not have quietness but that is where confidence and faith lies, along with strength and the power to be close to God.

God's still small voice is deafened in worship today.

Consider Hebrews 11 and all those people mentioned who exercised faith and to their spiritual advantage. Enoch did not die; Noah and his household were saved; Abraham was prepared to offer up Isaac; Moses choose to support his people and not remain as an Egyptian and by faith the walls of Jericho fell down.

David is mentioned here as a hero of faith and yet he was a regular sinner but God honoured him for his faith (Hebrews 11.32). These people received a good report because of their faith.

The Lord Jesus and salvation is a gift to be received by faith. His death on the Cross and what it achieves is the Gospel, the good news.

And there between us stands the Cross
Two arms outstretched to save,
Like a watchman set to guard the way
From that eternal grave.

Upon the Cross of Jesus
Mine eyes at times can see
The very dying form of One
That suffered there for me.

And from my smitten heart, with tears,
Two wonders I confess –
The wonder of His glorious love,
And my own worthlessness.

But God sees our worth. After all, He sent His Son to die for us so that we may have life everlasting.

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