

THE FAITH THAT SAVES

Acts 20:21; James 2:14-20

As Paul made his way toward Jerusalem at the close of the third missionary journey, he sent word for the leaders of the church at Ephesus to meet with him one last time.

As he counseled with these leaders, he reminded them of the message that he had preached while he was among them. He focused attention on the human response that should be made to the gospel. He reminded the Ephesian leaders that he had not hesitated in preaching the full Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. Paul had preached the need for *“repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

In speaking of the need for people to repent, Paul was affirming the absolute necessity of an inward change of the mind and will toward God, toward sin, toward self, and toward others.

Let us face the question of what kind of faith a person must have to experience salvation.

Repeatedly the Bible speaks of the place that a person's faith has in receiving salvation through Jesus Christ. For example:

- John 1:12 - *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*
- John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world, that he gave . . .*
- Acts 10:43 - *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*
- Gal 2:16 - *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified*

The faith referred to in these verses is more than intellectual knowledge or affirmation of God. James 2:19 says, *“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”*

- Faith is not just saying we believe the Bible
- The Bible gives many examples of those who “appeared” to be believers, but were not – e.g., Judas, Demas
- James asks a rhetorical question concerning the value of a faith that produces no fruits: *James 2:14 (KJV)*

¹⁴What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith, but does not have not works? can faith save him?

- Do you have the faith that saves?

- What does “Saving Faith” look like?

I. SAVING FAITH IS FAITH THAT RESPONDS TO THE GOSPEL

1. The Gospel is more than good advice
2. It is the good news of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:1-4)

¹ Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

3. Paul says that the Gospel is the truth that:
 - a. *“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures”* (v. 3)
 - 1) Jesus came to die
 - 2) He lived to die
 - 3) He is the “Paschal Lamb” – unblemished, holy, pure, righteous
 - b. *“he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”* (v. 4)
 - 1) He conquered death and the grave
 - 2) He arose triumphant and revealed the truth of life after life
 - 3) He and He alone is the Living Savior
 - c. Faith that saves is faith that receives the Good News of God's love revealed in and through the life and work of His Son, Jesus Christ

II. SAVING FAITH SURRENDERS TO THE WILL OF GOD

1. On the Damascus Road, Saul of Tarsus encountered the resurrected exalted Christ
2. In his personal testimony of what happened Paul tells us that he asked, *“Lord, what do you want me to do?”* (Acts 9:6 KJV; Acts 22:10; Acts 26:14)
3. This question implies surrender to Jesus as Sovereign Lord
4. Later in the book of Romans, Paul would write (Rom 10:9-10)

⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

5. The faith that saves is the faith that surrenders to the will of God

III. SAVING FAITH CHANGES THE WAY WE LIVE

1. Sin is powerful and destructive
2. But in Christ sin no longer reigns over us
3. Rom 6:1-14
4. Jesus doesn't save us so that we can remain the same
5. 2 Cor 5:17

IV. SAVING FAITH IS FAITH THAT SERVES

1. James emphasizes a faith that is active –
2. A working faith is a faith that works –
3. Saving faith is revealed in action (Js 2:26)
²⁶For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.
4. Jesus said that we would be able to tell the true disciple from the false (Matt 7:20)
²⁰By their fruits you will know them.
5. Paul says that we are created anew by God for “good works” (Eph 2:10)
¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.
6. A primary implication of saving faith is that faith that saves changes us
7. If your faith does not motivate you to service, you need to reexamine what type of faith you have

V. SAVING FAITH IS FAITH THAT SATISFIES

1. Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10)
2. “abundant” means “to overflowing” - without measure – exceeding
3. The Psalmist said, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want . . . my cup runneth over” (Ps 23:5)
4. Phil 4:19
¹⁹But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

5. Speaking to the woman of Samaria, Jesus said – (John 4:10-14)

¹⁰ . . . “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” ¹¹The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹²Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” ¹³Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

CONCLUSION

1. To be a Christian means more than just believing there is a God
2. It is more than having a high moral standard and good ethics
3. It is more than following rituals and regulations
4. It is living in relationship with Jesus Christ
5. Do you have the faith that saves?
 1. Responds
 2. Surrenders
 3. Changes your life
 4. Serves
6. Eph 2:8-9