

The Importance and Meaning of Faith

Introduction

- A. Faith is one of the most important products or activities in the life of the Christian. Only love is given a higher place in the Bible, I Cor 13:13. Without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb 11:6
- B. Biblical or saving faith is not shared by all members of the human race. Only the Christian has entrusted his life and future to Jesus Christ in faith. The non-Christian may believe in God, the need to come to God and other related subjects, but is without that essential, inner, wholehearted surrender to the person of Jesus Christ that issues in repentance and belief.

I. The Biblical Instruction Regarding Faith.

- A. Faith is a gift of God in salvation.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not by works, so that no one can boast. Eph 2:8,9

Comment: One of the terrible effects of the Fall is seen in our natural inability to respond to God in saving faith. No one can come to God unaided by divine grace. John 6:44,65 In our salvation we were given the ability to respond to God. Faith is an ability, a function whereby we can choose to take God at His Word and put it into practice. While it is true the word "gift" in Eph 2:8 does not related directly to the word "faith" in the original Greek -- it does relate to "grace" and the passage teaches that faith is included in the grace God has given to us.

- B. Faith is given a basis in Scripture.

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. Rom 10:17

Comment: The Bible not only gives us the content of our faith (what we are to believe), it not only serves as a blueprint as to how we are to believe (repent, obey, choose), it not only presents the motivation to believe God (love), it also gives us many promises to claim regarding our daily life (Matt 7:7; Phil 4:6-9,19; John 5:14). God expects us to respond to Him on that basis.

- C. Faith is explained in the Bible as a decision.

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did (those who came out of Egypt); but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Heb 4:1,2

Comment: This is one of the most important passages in the Bible regarding faith. It is a commentary on Israel's failure to enter Canaan. Num 13,14 Here we are taught that faith is a decision to take God at His

Word, no matter how difficult the circumstances may be, and practice His Word by trust. To please God we must learn to do that.

II. Two Illustrations Regarding the Meaning of Faith.

A. The passage in Matt 8:5-10

1. The principle that faith is **belief in a person**, V6.
2. The principle that faith is belief in a person, **based on their character**, Vs 6,8,9.
3. The principle that faith is belief in a person, **based on their word**, V7.
4. The principle that faith is a **decision to act on that word**, V8.
5. The principle that faith is a **practice of that word in trust**, Vs 8,9.

B. The passage in Heb 11:24-29

1. True faith believes God and His will **over honor**, V24.
2. True faith believes God and His will **over pleasure**, V25.
3. True faith believes God and His will **over riches**, V26.
4. True faith believes God and His will **over security**, V27.
5. True faith believes God and his will **over reason**, V28.
6. True faith believes God and His will **over safety**, V29.

Conclusion: Important Truths to Keep in Mind.

- A. We must make sure we have Biblical warrant for believing what we do.
- B. We must keep in mind that faith is not a feeling but a decision. We do not need emotional support in order to truly believe God. We are not to put our faith in our (feeling of) faith.
- C. We must choose to believe God in spite of circumstances. Note Rom 4:17-21
- D. We must learn to combine (mix) faith with the Word of God.
- E. We must learn to practice the Word of God by trust.

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