

## THE RIGHT KIND OF FAITH (**BACKGROUND DOCTRINAL CLARIFICATIONS**)

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). God is looking for TRUE worshipers (Jn. 4:23) but this involves having the RIGHT KIND of faith. On judgment day MANY will say to Jesus, "Lord, Lord" but sadly it will be revealed that they had a BOGUS faith that was not sincere at all!

When it comes to THE FAITH we are to earnestly contend for (Jude 3) there are some basic doctrines that are foundational.

1. Salvation is by grace (God's unearned, undeserved, unmerited favor), which is to say it is a free gift that is personally received by faith and faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:24; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 1:6-7, 2:8-9).
2. Works, self-effort, or any merit system (in contrast to grace through faith), have nothing to do with receiving eternal life. Jesus through His blood sacrifice paid it all, all to Him we owe. As such it was a one-time, finished, completed work (2 Tim. 1:9; Gal. 1:6-9, 2:16; Jn.19:30; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 10:10-14).
3. A vital element in saving faith is repentance. Repentance is not additional to faith but is in fact inherent in the act of genuine saving faith (2 Pet. 3:9; Acts 17:30; Matt. 12:41; Jonah 3:5-10).
4. Salvation is by faith in both the O.T. and the N.T., under pre-law, law, and post-law dispensations (cf. Romans 4; Hebrews 11).
5. Salvation does not exclude immaturity, carnality, or a constant struggle with sin. Rather, it involves a process of becoming more and more Christ-like which may include spiritual setbacks and periods of little or no growth (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:13; 1 Cor. 3; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 12:10).
6. There is such a thing as spurious faith which in fact is not real or genuine. This is in contrast to real genuine saving faith (cf. 2 Tim. 1:5; Heb. 10:38-39; 2 Cor. 11:26).
7. Saving faith involves the will, includes repentance, and is in the PERSON as well as the WORK of the LORD JESUS CHRIST (cf. Josh. 24:15; Lk. 13:3; Jn. 20:28-31; Acts 4:12; Rev. 22:17; Rom. 3:25).

8. Election and predestination are divinely revealed truths as is also the reality of human responsibility which presents a great paradox that is beyond human comprehension. The Bible holds all these truths in tension and by faith so must we (Eph. 1:4-5, 11; Rom. 9-11; 11:33).

9. While recognizing that even faith itself is the result of a work of God's grace in our hearts, the EMPHASIS IN THIS STUDY PRIMARILY INVOLVES THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH FROM THE ANGLE OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY. In the final analysis, it's all of grace, and yet there is human accountability/responsibility in the mix, hence the paradox (cf. Jn. 6:29, 44; Acts 16:30-31; Rom. 11:6).

10. All legitimate believers (Bible-believing, born-again Christians) hold to salvation by grace through faith and not of works. However, it is also to be recognized that saving faith is expected to produce spiritual fruit to some degree in the life of every born-again believer (Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:6; Heb. 12:7-11).

In John 8 Jesus explained that He is the eternal "I AM" and His unique relationship to the Father (cf. Jn. 8:24-29). And then in John 8:30 it says, "As He spoke these words, many believed in Him." That normally would be cause for rejoicing. But Jesus then said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed." (John 8:31)

That is an all-important qualifier! Jesus was not content to just leave it with a shallow form of "believe". Rather, He demanded that TRUE disciples ("disciples indeed") be those who abide in His Word. This is the TEST of who is true and who is not! And then Jesus said those with a truly abiding faith would "know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jn. 8:36).

Suddenly, these "believing" Jews had a PROBLEM with these qualifiers that Jesus put in place. They could NOT "abide" this truth! Instead, they claimed to be Abraham's descendants who were NEVER in bondage at all (Jn 8:33). After a little more interaction Jesus said, "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you." (Jn. 8:37). They very quickly went from "believing" to wanting to kill Jesus! We can live without that kind of faith (pun intended).

This escalated quickly with these “believing” Jews continuing to take strong issue with what Jesus was saying and Jesus in response telling them, “You are of your father the devil” (Jn. 8:44). Wow! How is that for being a “believer”. Obviously, whatever type of faith they had it wasn’t a saving faith.

A true saving faith believes in Jesus for WHO He is as the eternal I AM (God – Jn. 8:24). A true saving faith believes in Jesus’ Word that we are in bondage to sin and that only His truth can set us free – that only He as the Savior can make us free indeed (Jn. 8:32, 36). A true saving faith abides (remains) in this truth (Jn. 8:31). True believers take the Word of Christ seriously. A true faith sees Jesus as Lord and His Word as authoritative in all matters of faith and practice.

A kind of faith that refuses to abide in Christ’s Word is shown to be bogus! In the words of Christ Himself, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.” (Jn. 8:31).

“If you do not love the Bible, you certainly do not love the God Who gave it to us.” – Charles Spurgeon

It is impossible to separate what you think of a person from what you think of their word. To truly believe in Jesus is to believe in His Word! And the true followers of Christ abide in His Word!

This separates the genuine from the bogus! Be genuine!