

GOSPEL TRUTH – APPROPRIATED BY FAITH

In order to be saved, people must come to know certain gospel truths. God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). But, it is not enough just to know gospel truth intellectually; in order to be saved, a person must appropriate them by FAITH from the heart (cf. Rom. 10:9-10).

2 Timothy 3:15 (NKJV)

15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Note that in this verse, Paul brings together what is “known” (“the knowledge of the truth”) and faith. Observe that it says, “**through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**” It is not enough just to be wise to the knowledge of it – we must appropriate the truth of it by faith.

Defining Faith: Faith in the Bible is taking God at His Word. Abraham is the premier example of saving faith referenced in both the OT and the NT.

Genesis 15:6 (NKJV)

6 And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Now, we must understand that revelation was progressive (cf. Heb. 11). The OT saints did not understand about Jesus like we do. As time went along, they had hints of a coming Messiah; but yet, it was all very fuzzy. If you need proof of that, look at the disciples, who never really got it until after the resurrection. They were saved in the OT sense of the word (Judas excepted – cf. Jn. 13:10-11), and made the necessary transition to NT faith after the resurrection.

After the resurrection, God commands repentance and the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith in order to be saved (cf. Acts. 17:30-31). However, the NATURE of saving faith is consistent in every age (cf. Heb. 11). In this, Abraham is the great example of faith.

Justification before God is on the basis of FAITH ALONE (cf. Rom. 1:16, 5:1, 1 Tim. 1:16, 2 Tim. 3:15). **Saving faith** is a matter of the heart (cf. Lk. 8:15, Rom. 10:9-10, Heb. 4:1-2, 6:4-6, 10:26-27). A key chapter on the nature of saving faith is Romans 4, with a form of the word **faith/believe** being found 16 times.

1. Abraham, a primary example of saving faith, was justified by believing and not by works (cf. Rom. 4:1-3).
2. Works and grace are mutually exclusive (cf. Rom. 4:4).
3. Righteousness is accounted on the basis of faith, apart from works (cf. Rom. 4:5).
4. Faith is not a work, but rather is in accordance with grace (cf. Rom. 4:16).

Romans 4:5 (NKJV)

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

The Jews generally did not have the knowledge that God's righteousness is attained on the basis of FAITH (cf. Phil. 3:1-9). They thought it was acquired on the basis of works, by keeping the law. Therefore, they were not saved (cf. Rom. 10:1).

Romans 10:2-4 (NKJV)

2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The Gospel of John is called "***The Gospel of Belief***", with the word "***believe***" being found 98 times in the book. John, in conclusion, tells us (cf. Jn. 20:31) that his **purpose** in writing is so that the reader might **BELIEVE** and that believing, one "***may have life in His [Christ's] name.***" John writes so people will know the message concerning Christ to the end they may BELIEVE. To have life, people must believe in Christ (cf. Jn. 3:16, Acts 16:30-31).

John 3:18 (NKJV)

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

1 John is a book on assurance. Appropriately, John follows up his "Gospel of Belief" with a book on assurance. In chapter five, John summarizes the testimony that God has given of His Son and then says:

1 John 5:10 (NKJV)

He who **believes** in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does **not believe** God has made Him a liar, **because he has not believed** the testimony that God has given of His Son.

The critical issue here is **BELIEVING** (cf. 1 Jn. 5:1). People are accountable to believe the TESTIMONY of God concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Those believing have the Son and therefore, have life (cf. 5:12-13).

Which one of the following describes what a person must trust in to get to heaven?

- A. Works
- B. Christ plus Works
- C. Christ

The RIGHT ANSWER is C - CHRIST ALONE!

In order to be saved, there is a certain body of truth that people must know. They must know the gospel message and respond in faith (cf. 1 Cor. 15:34, 2 Cor. 2:14, 2 Tim. 2:24-26, 3:7). They must know about sin; they must know about Who Jesus is; they must know what He has done for them; and they must know that He must be received as Lord and Savior by faith alone.

And, let me add that to truly believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior is a heart-changing/life-changing reality (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17-18).

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also **effectively works in you who believe.**

A faith that bears no fruit is evidence that the person doesn't really believe in a saving way (cf. 1 Jn. 2:3-4). A well-known Christian maxim is this: ***"Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves does not remain alone."*** A saving faith is a LIVING FAITH that is real in the HEART, which then demonstrates itself in the life.

John 3:16 is sometimes called "The gospel in miniature".

John 3:16 (NKJV)

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The Gospel in Miniature

“God” -The greatest Lover
“so loved”- The greatest Degree
“the world”- The greatest Number
“that He gave” - The greatest Act
“His only begotten Son” - The greatest Gift
“that whoever” - The greatest Invitation
“believes” - The greatest Simplicity
“in Him” - The greatest Person
“should not perish” - The greatest Promise
“but” - The greatest Difference
“have” - The greatest Certainty
“everlasting life” - The greatest Possession

God desires all people to come to the knowledge of this truth and be saved!
This is the GREATEST NEWS ever told, but it is only effectual if it is
believed. God help us all to believe it and to share it!