

EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH – March 2025

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THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

If you want to know about the PERSON of Christ, study the gospel of John. If you want to KNOW about the WORK of Christ, study Hebrews. If you want to know HOW the righteousness of God is acquired, then study ROMANS. Of course, there is OVERLAP as all three subjects are covered in all three books. However, the MAJOR theme in Romans is “The Righteousness of God” and specifically HOW it is acquired by faith and then lived out in the life by faith (Rom. 1:16-17).

Romans 1:16–17 (NKJV)

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

“*From faith*’ points to the initial act; *to faith*’ to the life of faith which issues from it.” - **W.E. Vine**

Paul begins and ends the letter of Romans with the very same emphasis, namely the “**obedience of faith**” (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). Paul’s apostolic calling was “*for the obedience of faith among all Gentiles*” (Rom. 1:5). The gospel was evangelistically made known to the Gentiles for “*obedience to the faith*” (Rom. 16:25-26).

The proper response to the gospel is faith, as Paul has stressed throughout his letter, but it is a faith which itself is obedient and which issues in a life of obedience. – **John Stott**

There are MANY who miss the obvious emphasis that FAITH itself is a response of obedience. Many want to say that “*obedience of faith*” is the fruit that issues from faith, but the text plainly makes FAITH itself a matter of obedience. We are not saved by the obedience of works, but we are saved by the obedience of faith. Faith is a non-meritorious (non-works) response of obedience from the heart (cf. Rom. 4:16, 10:9-10; Eph. 2:8-9). Jesus will one day come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those “**who do not obey the gospel**” (2 Thess. 1:8). The issue is always the “*obedience of faith*” (cf. Jn. 3:18, 36). This is certainly the emphasis in Romans.

Rom. 1:5 “...for obedience to the faith among all nations...”

Rom. 6:17 “...you obeyed from the heart...”

Rom. 10:16 “...not all obeyed the gospel...”

Rom. 15:18 “...to make the Gentiles obedient...”

Rom. 16:26 “...for obedience to the faith...”

The hallmark emphasis in Romans is that the righteousness of God is acquired by faith alone, but it must be the right kind of faith! Saving faith is shown to be from the heart (Rom. 10:9-10) involving a response of obedience! This and this alone is shown to be saving faith! Christ must be believed on as Savior (cf. Rom. 3:22-26), and He must be believed on as Lord (Rom. 1:3; 4:24; 5:1, 11, 21; 6:11, 23; 7:25; 8:39; 10:9, 12, 13; 12:11; 14:6-14; 15:6; 16:18, 20, 24). We are commanded to believe in Jesus for WHO He is, that is IN HIS NAME (Jn. 1:12; 1 Jn. 3:23). Whenever a person believes in Jesus for Who He is as Lord and Savior, that is a response of obedience. It is a response of the heart involving the will.

This reality that we are saved by the “*obedience of faith*,” destroys the idea that human response and human responsibility are not involved in saving faith. Admittedly, there is MYSTERY here, for apart from the sovereign working of God, none would come to faith (cf. Rom. 3:11). Yet, at the same time, we are not merely robots. The idea of “*obedience*,” as in the “*obedience of faith*,” involves human response, which cannot be divorced from saving faith. A true “Biblicist” holds to the mystery tension between God’s sovereignty and human responsibility as reflected in the Scriptures themselves. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, but the nature of saving faith involves a response of obedience.

Thot: *It is biblical to speak of faith as a response of obedience.*

Earnestly Contending, Pastor Dwight J. Oswald