

## **The Wednesday Word, Sept. 12, 2012: Faith Needed--But Not as Our Foundation**

We need faith, but faith is not the foundation of our salvation, instead it brings us to the true foundation and keeps us there “grounded and settled” (Colossians 1:23). Even though the gospel is an accomplished fact, it is easy for the best of us to be moved away from its hope. It is not that we go about believing in false gospels, but we invariably want to throw a little bit of our own performance into the mix. The gospel centred believer knows that, by nature, he is a subjectivist who easily strays from the Finished Work. That’s why he delights to continually hear the pure gospel for it alone stops him from gravitating to his default mode of Law and moralistic thinking.

Though faith is not the gospel, it is an essential gift in that it receives the gospel as the heart of God's eternal truth. Faith considers Calvary and assures us that the wrath which should have justly consumed us has fallen upon our Substitute (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Faith in Christ alone, therefore, rescues us from the bondage of having to perform to gain God’s pleasure. In Christ alone, faith sees the smile of the Father upon us.

Though faith is not our righteousness it fastens us to the righteousness of Christ and sees, as old Solomon Stoddard saw, that Christ’s righteousness makes it safe for us to appear in heaven. Indeed, the only safe way to heaven is to trust in the doing, dying and rising again of Christ. Faith fully grasps that our acceptance before God is in Christ alone and not in our faith. Faith in faith saves no one. Gospel faith knows this!

Furthermore, faith grasps that our eternal standing in the ages to come depends, not upon anything in us, but upon the unchanging righteousness of Christ alone. When we are not grounded and established in the gospel, we easily make the mistake of looking within ourselves to determine whether or not we have certain feelings. Unfortunately, if we find the correct feelings, we then content ourselves that our faith is strong and that we are thus eternity bound. Conversely, alarm bells ring when we can’t find those feelings because we then assume that our destiny is in doubt. When we live like this, we are unsettled and confused. We have not yet understood that anything subjective, whether it is the work of the Spirit in us or our feelings and experiences, can ever qualify as the object of our faith. They are not the gospel! Acquittal before God comes only through the person and work of the Lord Jesus. He alone is the sinner’s plea for, “He that believeth on him is not condemned” (John 3:18).

It is essential to be established in the gospel for many reasons, not least of which is to defend ourselves against the spiritual attacks of Satan. Have you ever had one of those? Have you ever heard that accusing voice say, “You are not righteous enough”? --- what answer do you give? Here’s the answer of the gospel focused believer. He says to the enemy, “You are right, I am not righteous enough in myself, but Jesus Himself is my righteousness, and I can’t improve on that.”

Then the enemy says, “But you are not holy enough,” The gospel believer says, “You are right again on that one, but Christ alone is my sanctification, and I can’t improve on that!”

When the enemy says, “You don’t qualify for blessings on your life for your life doesn’t deserve any,” the gospel rooted believer says, “ You are also right again, but Jesus is my qualification for

blessings. He has lived and died in my place, and I can't improve on that!"

This is how, by faith, we wage the good fight (Ephesians 6:16). Faith always takes us outside of ourselves, plants us firmly in the Finished Work and causes us to see life through gospel lenses.

And that's the Gospel Truth!