

The Wednesday Word, June 12, 2024: Are We Saved by Faith?

Are we saved by faith? What a great question. Before we answer it, however, we should establish the meaning of the word FAITH.

First, we need to state that faith has nothing to do with what we feel about God, but rather it is believing what God feels about us.

Horatius Bonar, the 19th century gospel preacher, helps us understand what it is to have faith. He boldly says that,

“To have faith means to be accepted despite being unacceptable. Faith believes that we have absolutely no righteousness before God but Jesus Christ. By Faith we confess that the only thing about us which is good is that God has pronounced us righteous out of sheer mercy and for the sake of Jesus Christ. Faith acknowledges the complete absence of all goodness in us and saves, because it owns the complete salvation of Christ.” (H. Bonar, Everlasting Righteousness).

God has declared Himself in the person and finished work of the Lord Jesus (John 1:18). What is faith, gospel faith? It is that which causes us to cease working to earn God’s favour. Faith sees that we do nothing other than rest on the fact that all has been already done on behalf of the believer.

Faith, however, neither augments nor completes our salvation; rather it embraces that salvation has already been accomplished. Faith embraces the fact that Jesus Christ alone has paid for us and has rescued us in His doing and dying. Faith sees that this work has been successfully finished (Matthew 1:21; John 19:30).

Again, we must stress that salvation is not a matter of Christ plus faith (Acts 4:12). We must continually emphasize this truth because it is on this very point that so many depart from the gospel. Such people are sincere, they call themselves Christians, but they are not in the gospel. They believe their faith makes them acceptable to God. It’s a common error. Nevertheless, to believe in Christ plus faith for acceptance in heaven is to belittle the finished work.

So, let’s say it again, although we are saved through faith, faith is not our Saviour. Our Saviour is Jesus Christ plus nothing! (John 14:6) He is the object of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2). He alone is our rescuer. What faith does is to take hold of Jesus and His accomplishments and makes them our own.

Faith grasps that our saving righteousness is not in us, but outside of us in Christ Jesus. Faith does not bring salvation into existence, nor does it produce the righteousness by which God justifies us. What faith does, however, is to take something that is already in existence and enables us to reckon it as being our own!

Spurgeon tells us,

“I never had a better idea of believing in Jesus than I once had from a poor countryman. I may have mentioned this before; but it struck me very forcibly at the time, and I cannot help repeating it. Speaking about faith, he said, "The old enemy has been troubling me very much lately; but I told him that he must not say anything to me about my sins; he must go to my Master, for I had transferred the whole concern to Him, bad debts and all."

“That is believing in Jesus; believing is giving up all we have to Christ and taking all that Christ has to ourselves. It is changing houses with Christ, changing clothes with Christ, changing our unrighteousness for His righteousness, changing our sins for His merits.”

Spurgeon. Sermon 3254. ‘The Curse Removed.’

And that’s the Gospel Truth!