

CALL to PRAYER - Thank God for the gift of faith. Ask God to grant that gift to someone

Romans 1:16-17 – Faith is the Only Vehicle

INTRO - How did you get to church this morning? I am sure a variety of vehicles were used – cars, trucks, SUV's, van, motorcycle.... A combination of walking and riding were employed. How do you get to God? What vehicle can usher you into His presence so you can embrace all that He is and receive all that He gives? That is the all-important question we are dealing with today. This question is debated and divides Christendom (*Catholics/Protestants*). This question has sparked revival and reformation in the past and the correct answer still brings salvation in the present. Faith is the only vehicle that will get you to God. And that faith must be alone, it must be unmixed and unhitched from anything else. By faith alone we approach God, embrace God, are accepted by God and receive salvation from God. Today we are going to touch on the DEBATE OF FAITH try to DISSECT FAITH and ask, DO YOU HAVE FAITH?

THE DEBATE ON FAITH

- The last few weeks we've talked about significant events in church history-Reformation
 - Corruption in church distortion of gospel (constant vigilance against)
 - General debate over the issue of AUTHORITY scripture as the only rule
 - Specific debate was over FAITH.
- There is agreement over the disagreement. All parties agreed *justification by faith alone* was the main issue. Are sinners declared righteous by faith + works, or, by faith alone?
 - M. Luther - the article by which the church stands or falls
 - Council of Trent (catholic) – "...if anyone says that works are merely the fruits and sign of justification obtained, but not the cause...let them be anathema"
 - Rome said that *Faith Alone* was the vain confidence of the Protestants
- Both sides said faith was important but only one side faith was independent and alone
 - Roman view - *faith + religious works and rituals = righteousness*
 - if you believe right & behave right then you will be declared right
 - Protestant view- *faith = righteousness* If you believe right, then declared right
 - The necessary result/effect is that you will behave right
 - Good works are the effect of salvation not the cause of salvation
- Rom. 1:16-17 - Gospel declares that sinners can have the righteousness of God by faith
 - Phil. 3:9 Gen. 15:6
 - The vehicle of faith does not have a hitch on it- it doesn't carry/drag along our: works, religiosity, rituals.... Faith comes alone - unmixed and unhitched
 - By faith alone we: get to God approach God are accepted by God embrace God, receive salvation from God, and are declared righteous by God
 - Faith does not technically save us...it gets us to Christ who is salvation
 - Faith is the vehicle that gets us there. The journey is too difficult, the chasm is too great, the distance is too long for any other vehicle but FAITH ALONE

DISSECTING FAITH

- What is faith? Heb. 11:1
 - Faith is taking God at His Word & trusting in, and believing in, His promises
 - Noah - Heb. 11:7 Abraham - Gen 15:6
 - Unbelief is calling God a liar 1 John 5:10
 - Belief is certifying that God is true John 3:33
- 3 elements of saving faith 2 Tim. 1:12 (hymn 344)
 - **Knowledge** "I know whom I have believed..." basic information/facts
 - How can they believe in Him whom they have not heard? Rom. 10:14
 - But knowing facts alone is not faith
 - **Persuasion** "...and am persuaded..." being convinced that the facts are true
 - Believing the Bible is a fairy tale is not faith & is the wrong belief-unbelief
 - **Commitment** - "...which I have committed..." trust/reliance/commitment
 - True faith is all-in with nowhere else to go John 6:67-68
- God will only accept us, and receive us, when we come in faith
 - Heb. 11:6
 - faith is the only vehicle because all other options are impossible
 - God only extends the golden scepter to those who approach in faith
 - Romans 14:23c
 - This all-encompassing statement should expand our definition of sin
 - We should walk by faith, talk by faith and live by faith because if it is not from faith, then it is sin. If it is not done in faith then it is done in sin.
- Faith is all important and essential. It is the only vehicle by which can get to God, approach God, be accepted by God, embrace God and receive salvation from God

DO YOU HAVE FAITH?

- The historical and doctrinal are important but don't leave out the practical and personal
 - Do you have faith? Have you taken God at His word and received His promises or are you calling Him a liar? He has given His testimony (1 John 5:10-12)
- Bad news - we are sinners separated from God and under condemnation
 - Do you believe you are as bad as God says you are?
- Good news - sinners can have the very righteousness of God given to them
 - By faith you can have all that Jesus is and He will take all that you are
- Jesus Christ is the most significant Person in history bc He is the only sinless Person
 - He is the Son of God. Born of a virgin lived perfect
 - His miraculous life, substitutionary death, glorious resurrection testify to identity
 - Born like no other, lived like no other, spoke like no other, died...rose...ascended
- By faith you can have all that Jesus is and He will take all that you are
 - You can have the righteousness of Christ by faith Can you believe that that? You can have His life for your life his death for your death (#380)
 - Can you believe that the life He live He lived for you and the death He died He died for you?....rose for you? Great and precious promises to be believed