

NOT ALL FAITH IS SAVING FAITH

James 2:14-26

Introduction: Today's definition of "faith" by some is far from what is required in order to be saved. Many believe that once they are accepted by Jesus that they can stay the way they always were and walk away and live as they please, leaving God out as much as they did before they "believed." There is a false message about faith that is being spread around today and that is that all you have to do to be saved is to believe the facts of the Gospel. The theme is that their sins won't be brought up by Christ, therefore many respond to such untruths. Neither do they have a sense of the severity of their guilt before God and therefore they have no desire to be freed from their sins. This false faith is based on intellectual acceptance of certain facts but it is NOT saving faith.

I. ETERNAL LIFE DOES NOT COME FROM JUST ANY KIND OF FAITH

1. Not all faith is saving faith! *James 2:14-26*
 - Faith in facts only is not saving faith.
 - Faith without works does not save either.
2. What is being believed today about faith is that it is a momentary act of the mind. It is a "response," a decision to believe the facts told about the Gospel.
3. Today's definition of faith is that repentance is not necessary.
 - It removes the moral elements of believing.
 - It blocks out God's work in the heart.
 - It gives options to one's life of trust in the Lord.
4. It is not saving faith when one has it at the moment of salvation and never need it again. Momentary faith is NOT saving faith.
5. *2 Timothy 2:12*. Enduring faith is a characteristic of TRUE believers while unfaithfulness and disloyalty reveal a heart of unbelief.

II. FAITH AS THE BIBLE DESCRIBES IT

1. *Ephesians 2:8-9*. Saving faith is a GIFT from God.
 - It is not worked up by the mind but is given by God as a gift.
2. *John 6:44*. God's gift of faith is essential in understanding and approaching the Lord Jesus.
 - *Matthew 16:17*
3. Since it is a divine gift from God, faith is permanent and powerful. It is not a momentary act of believing but a lifelong trust in God.
 - It will never disappear nor wear out.

4. God's gift of faith involves:
 - the intellect, understanding the truth.
 - the emotions, conviction and affirmation of truth.
 - the will, the determination to obey the truth.
 - Obedience is the ONLY possible evidence of saving faith.
5. The desire to do the will of God will ever be present with saving faith in true believers.
6. **Titus 1:15-16.** Actions deny God more loudly than words that profess Him.
 - Faith alone brings salvation but faith that brings salvation is never alone.
 - Obedience is the inevitable manifestation of true, saving faith.
7. True, saving faith produces the DESIRE to obey. Disobedience comes from no faith.

III. FAITH AS JESUS TAUGHT IT

1. **Matthew 5:3-12.** Qualities found in the true believer are revealed in the Beatitudes Jesus gave.
 - Saving faith sees sin and knows only God's mercy can help, bringing mourning and sadness and thus true repentance which brings a hunger and thirst.
2. Saving faith starts with humility and works its way to obedience.
3. **Matthew 5:48.** God's standard and salvation are impossible for us to reach on our own.
 - Saving faith recognizes that and leads to obedience and total trust in the Lord.
4. **John 10:27-28.** Who are true sheep? Those who follow, and those who follow have eternal life.

CONCLUSION:

1. Saving Faith obeys! Unbelief rebels. How a person lives his/her life reveals whether he/she is a true believer or not. There is no middle ground.
2. Simply knowing biblical facts and agreeing them apart from obedience to their truths is not saving faith.
3. Those who look back at a one-time decision of faith and lack evidence that faith has continued and has brought obedience in their lives need to take heed of Jesus' warning:

"He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
John 3:36
4. So, now, what kind of faith do you have? Does it cause you to want to obey the Lord Jesus?
 - Has it enabled you to obey Him?