

THE REAL THING (SAVING FAITH)

Matthew 7:13, 14; 21, 22 13:3-8; 18-22

Introduction: Every pastor has a deep concern for church members whom he sees having dangerous and questionable patterns in their spiritual lives. There are so many on the church rolls that have all but disappeared. Some have moved away and never change membership, but most just become inactive and are seldom seen in worship attendance, much less Sunday School. Why are there many who are so faithful to their church and obedient to the Lord while there are so many more who are inactive, yet all church members would call themselves Christians if asked. What is wrong here? Are there two kinds of saving faith? Or is there only one and all other "faiths" are imitations?

I. IMITATION FAITH

1. Sadly, many consider themselves to be resting upon the Lord's promises, relying upon the Lord, leaning on the Lord, stayed upon the Lord, but do have the real thing.
2. Many are willing to let Christ be their Savior but refuse to submit to Him as their Lord or be at His command or governed by His will.
3. Many are willing to let Christ save them from hell, but not from Self. They want to be delivered from the wrath to come, but to keep their own way down here.
4. Many want Christ as Savior but don't want Him as their absolute Lord.
5. Many will allow Christ to Justify (make things right) them, but not willing for Him to Sanctify (set apart for God's use) them. They refuse to deny self and take up a cross daily.
6. Many are willing for Christ to be their Priest but don't want Him as their King.
7. Multitudes have what they call "faith" but refuse to obey, surrender and keep back a part of themselves from Christ. Thus their "faith" is but an imitation of the real thing.

II. THE REAL THING (SAVING FAITH)

1. The real thing is completely yielding one's self to the authority of God, submitting to His absolute rule.
2. The real thing is a sincere, genuine coming to Christ (something must be left to come to anything). Coming to Christ, abandoning every bit of confidence and forsaking all things that would compete with Christ. Self is given up.
3. The real thing is the complete surrender of one's entire being and life to the claims of Christ.
4. The real thing is believing ON Christ with the heart which is the source of love and obedience.

III. THE REAL THING IS NOT AN EASY FAITH

1. A rich, young man came to Jesus and wanted eternal life and when told to go sell what he had, he went away saddened. He didn't want to give up everything.
 - Jesus told of a great supper to which many had been invited, but many began to make excuses for not attending: family affairs, business matters, things just came up, etc.
2. The demands of Christ are just that - "demands." People will accept Christ on their own terms, but not on His.
3. To have the real thing is to come to Christ, believe on Him, turning the back upon the world, friends who love the world, identifying completely with Christ, surrendering to His will and His Lordship.
4. By nature people are unknowing of saving faith because self-love reigns in their lives, and there is the love for the world, and the fear of maybe being made fun of for being "one of those religious fanatics, and not wanting to humble one's self before God..all this is just too much trouble..and besides, who is Satan anyhow?
5. No one can turn to Christ until he/she turns from all else and nobody wants to give up or turn away from his/her present way of life.
6. People will take salvation and heaven but do not want to give up anything or acknowledge loyalty to anybody to have it.

IV. HOW DOES ONE KNOW IF HE/SHE HAS THE REAL THING (SAVING FAITH)?

1. When God gives new life and one has the real thing, there is a radical and real change:
 - The heart is changed, cleansed and becomes fixed on Christ and His will.
 - The heart becomes tender and humble, self is gone and an awesome awareness of sin comes in.
 - There is a "Christ" kind of love that takes over and motivates all that one does.
 - There is absolute obedience to all of Christ's commandments and life becomes a "walk" with God.
 - The world loses it's appeal and a desire to leave it and go on to be with Christ comes in.
2. The changes that happen are permanent! Spiritual growth continues.

CONCLUSION:

1. Multitudes profess to be Christians, filling the church rolls of thousands of churches but there is a marked difference in the lifestyles of many. Why don't they all act the same if they all have the same kind of faith, if they are all Christians?
2. ***"Do not be deceived, there is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12)***