



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#114)
Defective faith: Dead, lifeless faith. (1)

DEFECTIVE FAITH

⇒ Is this my FAITH?

- Genuine fact-based living FAITH is a saving faith.
- But what if my faith is...

<p>✓ Defective in its FACT foundation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ False (= deception) ✓ Rejected (= unbelief) ✓ Missing (= ignorance) 	<p>✓ Defective in its LIVING expression?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Small (= "little faith") ✓ Wavering (= doubt) ✓ Absent (= not there)
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TODAY (PT.1)

THE ABSENCE OF A LIVING FAITH.

When the **FACTS** are believed, but not lived.

JUST AS: A "faith" without a **TRUTH** foundation has no value.
... meaningless talk. (1 Timothy 1:6b (NIV))

For they mouth **empty**, boastful words ... (2 Peter 2:18a (NIV))

SO ALSO: A "faith" that is devoid of **LIFE** has no value.
... faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2:17b (NIV))

As the body without the spirit is dead, so **faith** without deeds is dead. (James 2:26 (NIV))

THIS INVOLVES PEOPLE CLAIMING TO HAVE "SAVING FAITH" ...

But it has no effect on their lives.

Jesus says:
You will recognize them by their fruit. (Matthew 7:16a (NET))

I **DEMAND** THAT YOU SAY I'M ALIVE!

THERE'S NOTHING BUT DEADNESS!

LET'S PRETEND AND SAY HE'S SAVED, SO WE WON'T HURT HIS FEELINGS!



When people are exposed to the living Word of God, the very breath of God...

For the word of God is **living** and active ... (Hebrews 4:12a (NET))

All Scripture is **God-breathed** ... (2 Timothy 3:16a (NIV))

something happens!

❖ But it first requires exposure to the Word!

And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? (Romans 10:14b (NET))

Without Scripture, people can know something about **God** and **judgment** (Romans 1:18-23; 2:12-15); but they cannot know about **salvation**.

WHEN PEOPLE DO HEAR, THERE ARE 4 TYPICAL RESPONSES, AS DESCRIBED IN:

The Parable of the Sower *

(Found in Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8)

"A farmer went out to sow some seed..."

* [SOWER = someone who plants (or "sows") seeds.]

★ THE SEED = God's Word ★
★ THE GROUND = the people ★



We ALL start out life NOT believing or living the truth. But we respond when we hear... in one of several ways. →

SOME PEOPLE CONTINUE TO HAVE NO FAITH.

The Parable

"Some of the seed fell on the path. The birds came and ate it up."

IF THE SEED HAD GOTTEN IN, THE BIRDS WOULDN'T HAVE EATEN IT!

GOOD SEED... BAD SOIL!

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The People

"When they have heard, the devil comes and takes away the word that was sown. *They do not believe* and become saved."

YOU CAN'T BLAME THE BIRDS!



NO FAITH.

SCRIPTURE DESCRIBES THEM AS...

- Blind, not hearing; spiritually dead.
- They see, but they're **blind**. They hear, but they **don't listen**. They don't even try to understand. (Matthew 13:13b (GW))
- Once you were **dead** because of your disobedience and your many sins. ... just like the rest of the world, ... (Ephesians 2:1, 2b (NLT))
- Suppressing the truth, delighting in wickedness. ... wicked people who **suppress the truth** by their wickedness. (Romans 1:18b (NLT))
- ... they **refused to love the truth** and so be saved. ... [they] have not believed the truth but have **delighted in wickedness**. (2 Thessalonians 2:10b, 12b (NIV))

They do not believe and become saved.

SOME PEOPLE HAVE A TEMPORARY FAITH.

The Parable

"Some fell among the rocks, where there was little soil. It quickly sprang up, but the sun scorched it, and it withered away."

IT LOOKED GOOD FOR A WHILE!

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The People

"They receive the word with joy. *They believe for a while*; but when trials come, they fall away."

THE SEED COULDN'T SURVIVE IN SUCH SHALLOWNESS!



TEMPORARY FAITH.

COMMON AMONG PEOPLE WHO:

- Base their salvation on emotion and spectacular events (rather than on the facts of Scripture).
- "Get saved" because of peer pressure or other false motivations.
- Are led to "make a decision" through manipulative tricks and techniques (instead of the life-changing Word of God).

EXAMPLE IN JESUS' MINISTRY:

AT FIRST → Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did ... many *began to trust* in him. (John 2:23 (NLT))

LATER → ... many of his disciples turned back and *no longer followed* him. (John 6:66b (NIV))

"FAKES" who leave the church: They receive the word with joy. They believe for a while...

SOME PEOPLE HAVE A LIFELESS FAITH. THEY KNOW FACTS, BUT THE FACTS HAVE NO EFFECT ON THEM.

The Parable

"Some fell among the weeds, which grew up and choked the plants."

WHAT A WASTE OF GOOD SEED!

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The People

"They hear the word; but the cares and pleasures of life choke the word. *They remain fruitless*."

THEY PREFERRED TO GROW OTHER THINGS!



LIFELESS FAITH.

"RELIGIOUS, BUT UNSAVED..."

- Just like the leaders of Jesus' day – religious but lacking the characteristics of genuine salvation. ... they don't practice what they preach. (Matthew 23:3b (GW))
- The *fruit (result) of salvation* is absent – things that are an expression of *love* for God and neighbor. (See also Jesus' warning in Matthew 7:21-23.)
- You will recognize them* by their fruit. (Matthew 7:16a (NET))

THESE ARE ABSENT: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23a (NLT))

"FAKES" who remain in the church: They remain fruitless.

SOME PEOPLE HAVE A LIVING, FACT-BASED FAITH.

The Parable

"Some fell on good ground, grew and became fruitful."

FINALLY! SOIL THAT WAS RECEPTIVE TO THE SEED!

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The People

"They hear the word; they accept it, live by it, and *have fruitful lives.*"

THE SEED ACCOMPLISHED ITS PURPOSE!

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LIVING, FACT-BASED FAITH.

THIS FOURTH RESPONSE is "SAVING FAITH."

- ✓ Unlike the **FIRST** response: They *pay attention to* the truth.
- ✓ Unlike the **SECOND** response: They *continue to accept* the truth.
- ✓ Unlike the **THIRD** response: They *live by* the truth.

If they do have a "relapse," it is **momentary: temporary and not final.**

The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. *Though they stumble, they will never fall,* for the LORD holds them by the hand.
Psalm 37:23-24 (NLT)

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FAKES can look "saved."

They may have a temporary appearance of "**GROWTH.**"

The problem occurs when WE assume that this is "good enough."

(Scripture says that *genuine* faith will *continue* to grow.)

WRONG! THE GROWING STOPPED; BUT AT LEAST THERE WAS SOME!

They may do many of the "**RELIGIOUS**" THINGS that saved people do.

The problem occurs when WE assume that such characteristics "prove" one's salvation.

(Scripture says that *unsaved* people can do such activities.)

WRONG! IT MAY BE WEEDS; BUT AT LEAST THERE'S SOMETHING!

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SCRIPTURE is clear on this matter.

WE are the problem.

WE don't want to accept what *Scripture* says, that **such people aren't saved.**

Especially if it includes:

- ✓ Our friends,
- ✓ Our family,
- ✓ Or maybe even ourselves.

But how does *pretension* help at the Day of Judgment? Will *pretending* they are saved keep them out of the lake of fire? Will they thank you for your *pretensions*?

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SCRIPTURE is clear.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. **If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.
1 John 2:15-17 (ESV)

But **seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, ...**
Matthew 6:33a (CSB)

Those who **love their life in this world** will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity.
John 12:25 (NLT)

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
Romans 12:2a (NIV)

For everyone who has been born of God **overcomes the world.**
1 John 5:4a (ESV)

Demas has deserted me because **he loves the things of this life...**
2 Timothy 4:10a (NLT)

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
Colossians 3:2 (CSB)

I chose you to **come out of the world ...**
John 15:19b (NLT)

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We are now focusing on the absence of a LIVING expression of faith – the soil that produces "weeds."

"They remain fruitless."

✓ FAITH, **defective** in its LIVING expression.

✓ Absent (= not there)

They may believe the "facts" about salvation; but the facts have no effect on their lives – what they think, say and do.

WEEDY SOIL

THEY PREFERRED TO GROW OTHER THINGS!

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Many churches are filled with this type of "soil."

✓ **JESUS WARNED US THAT IT WOULD BE SO. (SO DON'T BE SURPRISED!)**

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, **'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'**"

Matthew 7:21-23 (NIV)

✓ **THIS TYPE OF "FAITH DEFECT" IS NOT NEW... THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS OFTEN HAD TO OPPOSE IT.** (Isaiah 58 is just one example from among many.)

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In a different parable, Scripture describes such people as "weeds" in a wheat field.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who planted good seed in his field. ... his enemy planted **weeds** in the wheat field ..."

Matthew 13:24b, 25b (GW)

The "weeds" in this parable are darnel – which *looks like* wheat, but produces poisonous seeds.

IN OTHER WORDS, THESE PEOPLE ARE FAKES – COUNTERFEITS OF THE GENUINE.

The good seeds are those who belong to the kingdom. The weeds are those who belong to the evil one. The enemy who planted them is the devil.

Matthew 13:38b-39a (GW)

THE FINAL OUTCOME OF THESE FAKES:

Just as weeds are gathered and burned, so it will be at the end of time.

Matthew 13:40 (GW)

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When we examine what Scripture says about the "living" aspect of faith, we discover that there aren't many Scripture passages that use the word "faith" to describe it.

Nevertheless... Scripture does say a lot about this issue...

✓ Some passages do use the word "faith."

... **faith** without deeds is **dead**.
James 2:26b (NIV)

✓ **Most** passages use concepts that focus specifically on the "life" part of faith (the expression and application of the "fact" part).

➔ To get a full picture of the issue, we have to look at other words and concepts (in addition to the word "faith"). *We will find hundreds of passages that deal with this issue!*

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EXAMPLES of concepts that focus on the LIVING aspect of a "living fact-based faith."

✓ Obeying the truth – 1 Peter 1:22
 ✓ We cannot go on sinning – 1 John 1:7
 ✓ God's law embedded in our hearts – Hebrews 8:10; 10:16.
 ✓ The obedience of faith – Romans 1:5.
 ✓ "Hearing" AND "putting into practice" Jesus' words – Matthew 7:24-27.
 ✓ Following Jesus – Matthew 16:24.
 ✓ "Walking" ... in the light, ... as Jesus did, ... in the footsteps of faith, etc. – Galatians 5:22-23.
 ✓ The fruit of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22-23.
 ✓ "Holding" to Jesus' teachings – John 8:32+.
 ✓ Love for God and neighbor

THESE CONCEPTS FOCUS ON ACTION ("LIVING" THE FAITH), RATHER THAN ON KNOWLEDGE ("BELIEVING THE TRUTH).

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"FACT-BELIEVING-YET-DEAD FAITH" is probably the most common type of fake faith in the church.

Many church-goers live and die very religious... but very unsaved.

And once they die, the end results cannot be undone.

YOUR MISSION... Examine yourself while you can!

This type of "unbelief" is one of the most dangerous traps for people in the church.

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV)

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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