



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#116)
In pursuit of genuine faith.

DEFECTIVE FAITH

⇒ Is this my FAITH?

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

✓ Defective in... FACT for... expression?

✓ Faith... (= "little faith")

✓ Wavering (= doubt)

✓ Absent (= not there)

IN PURSUIT OF GENUINE FAITH!

RECOGNIZING DEFECTIVE vs. GENUINE FAITH isn't some type of ambiguous, subjective, opinion-oriented activity.

→ We have seen many Scripture passages that explain the differences between defective vs. genuine faith, and shows us how we should respond to them.

RECOGNIZING FALSE vs. FAITHFUL TEACHERS isn't some type of ambiguous, subjective, opinion-oriented activity.

→ Jesus said "you can recognize them."
 • The apostles showed us how to recognize them.
 • Some of the apostles even demonstrated it, by recognizing them... and pointing them out by name.

BUT THE ISSUE IS THIS:
 All this "recognizing" has got to be by Scripture's criteria, not by personal opinion/prejudice/fault-finding.

GOD HAS ALREADY DEFINED THE ISSUES related to salvation.

WE CAN'T CHANGE THE ISSUES and get away with it!

OUR JOB is to


SEARCH the Scriptures to know what God says, and


RECOGNIZE the issues for what they are – the difference between genuine and fake!

They **searched** the Scriptures day after day...
Acts 17:11b (NLT)

You'll **recognize** them by their fruit.
Matthew 7:16a (CSB)

SEARCH and RECOGNIZE

NOT JUST WITH THE FAKE...

 DEFECTIVE FAITH
 FALSE TEACHERS

BUT ALSO WITH THE GENUINE...

 LIVING, FACT-BASED FAITH
 FAITHFUL TEACHERS

We have done these things – search and recognize – with the concept of FAITH (and related matters).

AND FOR GOOD REASON!

- "Faith" (and what opposes it) is a serious matter and is often mentioned in Scripture – approximately 600 times in the New Testament alone.
- It's what God says (not personal opinion).
- In many churches, the concept has become so distorted, that people think they are "saved" even though their lives DENY everything that Scripture says about faith and salvation.

WE'VE SEARCHED AND RECOGNIZED!



LIVING, FACT-BASED FAITH

FAKE FAITH:

- It tends to be dissociated from Scripture facts and their application to life. It may even be left undefined.
- It downplays the fact that Scripture says specific things must be believed, and that specific life-changes must occur.

✦ **Hopefully by now, you can recognize this fakeness for what it is!** ✦

AS PAUL SAID: ["GOSPEL" = "GOOD NEWS"]

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.
Galatians 1:8-9 (ESV)

"FAITH" is not a "private" matter that can be modified according to one's own liking. Rather, it's a "public" matter that can be seen and recognized by others.

SPECIFIC CONCEPT

GENUINE FAITH:

- ✓ This concept refers to one specific action in the whole "process of salvation."
- ✓ When faith is genuine, certain other things also occur – such as: *accepting the truth, repentance, living according to the truth, etc.*

↳ Since these various concepts all work together...

GENERAL CONCEPT

- ✓ The "faith concept" is sometimes used to represent EVERYTHING that is a part of becoming saved – example: "He believed." (Other concepts are sometimes used this way – example: "He repented.")
- ❖ When it is used in this way, it is **NEVER** a denial of the other elements that are a part of "becoming saved"

FAITH AND THE "PROCESS OF SALVATION:"

IT OCCURS IN A SPECIFIC PLACE,
 ✦ BUT IT'S RELATED TO THE WHOLE PROCESS. ✦

God's actions ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ What God does in salvation. **HERE**

#1 Conviction ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ The foundation that makes it possible.

#2 Change ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ Faith and the things WE do just before and after it.

#3 Consequences ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ What comes afterwards.

FAITH & God's actions

Never forget that GOD is involved!

- ✓ Scripture says that certain things are a part of salvation. God guarantees that these things will occur...
 - ❖ So pretensions about salvation don't work.
- ✓ Scripture shows us (repeatedly) that in no way does God's involvement go against or contradict our responsibility...
 - ❖ So we can't blame GOD for our choices!

JESUS AND THE APOSTLES WERE ALL WILLING TO TALK ABOUT GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY... EVEN WHEN TALKING ABOUT HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY... AND THE CHOICES OF UNSAVED PEOPLE.

- ✓ It's sometimes mentioned when describing their actions.
 - ... they still refused to **believe** in him, so that the word of Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled.

John 12:37b-38a (NET)
- ✓ It's sometimes mentioned to the unsaved people themselves.
 - AFTER THEY REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE TRUTH.** But you don't **believe** because you are not of my sheep.

John 10:26 (CSB)
 - "Be careful, or what the prophets said may happen to you.

'Look, you mockers! Be amazed and die! I am going to do something in your days that you would not **believe** even if it were reported to you! "

Acts 13:40-41 (GW)

A WARNING, BEFORE THEY MAKE THEIR RESPONSE.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY... AND THE CHOICES OF SAVED PEOPLE.

(Most references to "sovereignty + choice" belong in this category.)

SOME OF THE REASONS IT IS MENTIONED:

- To show us the greatness of our God.
- To keep us from boasting about our salvation.
- As an encouragement; to give us hope.

❖ Sovereignty gives meaning and value to our choices!

If we are willing to trust God (with genuine faith), God's sovereignty guarantees our success!
 The devil can't stop us!

The main focus of the Good News is on OUR RESPONSIBILITY: WE MUST CHOOSE, AND OUR FUTURE JUDGMENT WILL BE BASED ON OUR CHOICE. **BUT SOVEREIGNTY ISN'T EXCLUDED.**

DIFFERENT RESPONSES TO SOVEREIGNTY.

- ✓ The **UNSAVED** tend to make excuses for their willful CHOICES. They may talk as though sovereignty works against human responsibility... so their CHOICE is "not their fault."
 - "Why does God blame people for not responding? Haven't they simply done what he makes them do?"

Romans 9:19b (NLT)
- ✓ The **SAVED** tend to admit the truth that nobody deserves to be saved. They CHOOSE to trust God; and they praise God that he saved them.
 - ... he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

Titus 3:5a (NIV)
 - He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

2 Timothy 1:9 (NIV)

"Called to a holy life" = the "living" aspect of genuine faith!

GOD IS ALSO INVOLVED IN "NON-SOVEREIGNTY" WAYS!

In addition to Jesus' death, burial and resurrection...

→ JESUS, as a human, while he was still on earth
PRAYED FOR US!

- Jesus prayed for his disciples!

... I have prayed for you, Simon, that your **faith** may not fail.
Luke 22:32a (NET)

- He also prayed for **us!**

"I pray not only for these, but also for those who
believe in me through their word."
John 17:20 (CSB)

★ In the end, God's people will be asking, "Why me?
Why did God save me... **because I never deserved it!**" ★

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FAITH & #1 Conviction

WE must be willing to pay attention to the Good News,
and to respond to it favorably (= faith/trust in what God says).
Normally, **OTHER PEOPLE** are also involved in this process.

WHAT OTHERS MUST DO.

1. **God's people need to speak the truth** – to share the good news.
(We've noted this fact in the past – example: Romans 10:14.)
2. **They need to oppose false teaching, false teachers and sin.**
 - Those who mislead must be rebuked.

For there are many rebellious people, idle talkers, and deceivers, ...
who must be silenced because they mislead whole families ... For this
reason rebuke them sharply that they may be healthy in the **faith**...

Titus 1:10a, 11a, 13b (NET)

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- They need to do this because it is an expression of **love** (even though others may criticize and oppose them for doing so).

As I urged you ... instruct certain people not to spread false teachings, nor to occupy themselves with myths and interminable genealogies. Such things promote useless speculations rather than God's redemptive plan that operates by **faith**. But **the aim of our instruction is love** that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere **faith**. Some have strayed from these and turned away to empty discussion. They ... do not understand what they are saying or the things they insist on so confidently.

1 Timothy 1:3-7 (NET)

- **God** opposes those who encourage sin... so should we!

"If anyone causes one of these little ones who **believe** in me to sin, it would be better for him if a large millstone were hung around his neck and he were drowned at the bottom of the sea.

... how terrible it will be for that person who causes someone to sin!"

Matthew 18:6-7 (ISV)

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FAITH & OTHER ASPECTS OF #2 Change

WE must choose to follow Jesus – repent, trust, etc.
Here are some attitudes that will help us as we make this change:

SOME THINGS TO DO, AS WE PURSUE THESE CHANGES.

1. Pursue **genuine faith** – fact-based and alive – and oppose defective faith in its various forms.

... if you have **faith** and do not doubt, ...
[= a prerequisite for answered prayer – v. 22].

Matthew 21:21b (NET)

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our **faith**!" And the Lord said, "If you had **faith** like a grain of mustard seed, ..."

Luke 17:5-6a (ESV)

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2. Pursue the right priorities.

- We must value a **living fact-based faith** more than we value religious activities. (This will result in a focus on more important matters.)

"Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You give a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, yet you neglect what is more important in the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness! You should have done these things without neglecting the others."

Matthew 23:23 (NET)

3. Cling to moral integrity (so your faith won't be destroyed).

- Moral integrity results in a good conscience – which influences the outcome of your faith.

Cling to your **faith** in Christ, and keep your conscience clear.
For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their **faith** has been shipwrecked.

1 Timothy 1:19 (NLT)

4. Pursue the **visible** aspects of this saving **Change**.

- (We will look at this issue next time.)

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FAITH & #3 Consequences

Salvation comes with many wonderful consequences – but only for those who are willing to make the necessary changes.

These things don't happen to those who want the "consequences" without the "changes."

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE **Changes** THAT RESULT IN SALVATION?

1. What **GOD** does. (**He** does it; we are **passive** in this matter.)

- He saves us.

[We are] those who have **faith** and are saved.

Hebrews 10:39b (CSB)



- There are many other things... we will look at them later. (We already saw some as we examined the "faith" issue.)

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2. What WE do. (We are active in this matter.)

(We already saw some of these things as we looked at the "faith" issue.)

- ✓ There are things we will do, if our salvation is genuine. Our willingness to do such things is a good indicator of whether or not our salvation is genuine.
- ✓ We need to take this matter seriously (rather than ignore it), because God said it will be this way. *And his sovereignty guarantees it.*

 OUR "OLD LIFE IN SIN" may be fighting to express itself (and will sometimes succeed); but OUR "NEW LIFE IN CHRIST" will be expressing itself in increasing ways, as we grow in the grace of "following Jesus." 

- We will pursue godly conduct... because God teaches us to do so.

[God's grace] teaches us ... (The full verse = quoted on the next page.)
Titus 2:12a (NIV)

- We will want to learn God's ways; and God will make sure we succeed!

[God's sovereignty guarantees that these things will occur. *But in no way does it diminish the fact that we will willingly CHOOSE to do them.*]

[God's grace] teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age ...

Titus 2:12 (NIV)

I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds, ...
Hebrews 10:16b (CSB)

3. Faith and consequences are connected.

1. If we have pursued the "changes" related to genuine faith, we can be assured that the "consequences" that come from it WILL OCCUR.
2. As we grow in our knowledge of Scripture, we will learn about things we aren't doing, but **NEED** to do...



... we will **WANT** to change, because God is at work in ALL who have genuine salvation!

It is God who produces in you the desires and actions that please him.
Philippians 2:13 (GW)

Many church-going people have no clue what genuine faith is. Yet God has said so much about it in Scripture, that nobody has a legitimate excuse.

Hopefully, having looked at this issue... we are different!



Praise the Lord for "faith" and all that it implies!

["Faith" may be a "simple" word; but it is so rich in meaning and significance!]

Credits

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