

"Sir, we wish to see Jesus" — John 12:21

How Faith Behaves

by Dee Bowman

Faith is the foundation on which the Christian system rests. Without faith, there is no Christianity, no Jesus Christ, no salvation for man. "Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). It's a passage with which nearly every Christian is familiar and to which every Christian subscribes. Faith is necessary, we all know that.

But the passage doesn't stop at that point: it doesn't quit when it says "without faith it is impossible to please him." Nor does it stop when it says, "for he that cometh to God must believe that he is." It goes on to say, "and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Now, that part gets left out most of the time. And yet, it's just as much a part of the verse as is the first part.

What that says is that belief, by itself, is not sufficient. There's just more to faith than mental assent. There must be some action to demonstrate that faith, some activity that supports the contention that God is and that He rewards the faithful. Faith must behave itself.

Well, how does faith behave?

First, it behaves obediently. True faith does not question God. It does, without question, what God says to do. And it does not do what He prohibits. True faith has such abiding confidence in Who and What God is that there is never any question about what He requires. For instance, if He says we should be baptized for the remission of sins (Mk. 16:15-16), there is no hesitation about that: we just say, "here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized" (Acts 8:36). If He says "forsaking not the assembling of yourselves together" (Heb. 10:25), we don't hesitate about that or ask why, we just go do assemble with the saints. When He says that the "disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread" (Acts 20:7), the true believer doesn't question why that is required, he just comes together with the saints every first day of the week to observe the Lord's supper. Real faith obeys.

Secondly, faith behaves consistently. That is, it doesn't vacillate; it stays steady all the time. There is no such thing as a part-time faith, one you put on and take off when it's convenient. You either have faith full-time or you don't. And to just say you have it is not tantamount to having it, either. Faith is not something that you put on and put off, it's something you embrace for the duration. "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed," we are told (Jas. 1:6). Faith is firm. Faith is fixed. Faith is secure. Faith is consistent, enduring, established and uncompromising. That doesn't mean that faith is mean-spirited; but it does mean that you can't bend it to fit the society or change it to accommodate the masses.

Faith behaves with hope. In fact, faith and hope are just about inseparable. Faith, for instance, believes all that God has said on a matter; and it puts its confidence in that so firmly that hope is the result. For instance, when the Hebrew writer gives us a characteristic definition of faith he says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hope, you see, rests on a man's faith.

Wear Masks

Today's Schedule

The Lord's Day

8:30 - Assembly
Building

9:30 - Assembly
Building

10:30 - Assembly
Building

Without faith, there isn't any real hope. Faith firms hope; hope is supported by faith. Both the desire and expectation of heaven are the product of an abiding faith (1 Pet. 1:3). And when there is a coupling of faith and hope, based on the assurances and promises of God, it becomes "a lively hope," one that includes "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," for those who are "kept by the power of God through faith..." (1 Pet. 1:4-5). Just as surely as those verses are connected contextually, so is the faith and hope of which they so eloquently speak.

Finally, true faith is not misplaced. Faith in God is stronger than anything man can imagine. Look at the ancients described in Hebrews 11. By it "the elders obtained a good report." Enoch's faith pleased God and because of it, he was "translated." Noah believed God and saved the people. Abraham went out "not knowing where he went," but knowing that by doing so, he was pleasing God. Sarah, Moses, Joseph, Gideon, and a host of lesser lights, pleased God by their faith and all "obtained a good report by faith" (Heb. 11:39). Faith caused all of them to receive the blessings of God. The fact is—faith works. And it is the same for us. Believe Him, do what He says, and be blessed. It's as simple—and yet as difficult—as that.

What about your faith? Is it there? Is it active? Is it real or imagined faith? Only you and God know for sure. Remember, "faith without works is dead, being alone" (Jas. 2:17). So, "be ye doers of the word and not hearers only..." (Jas. 1:23).

Here Comes The Judge

by Bubba Garner

The Scriptures speak of it in many different ways—the day of the Lord, the day of God, the second coming of Christ, the day of wrath, the day of eternal glory. What all those descriptions, as well as over 300 reference in the New Testament alone, have in common is the fact that "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (Heb. 9:27). It is inescapable. It is appointed.

In light of the certainty of His arrival, one that will be unannounced and for some, unexpected, how ought we to live? What can we do to make sure that we're ready for the moment when the trumpet of God sounds and the Lord Himself descends from heaven?

Wake up. "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the

day would overtake you like a thief... so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert" (1 Thess. 5:4-6). We need to be reminded of the reality of the judgment and that we must be ready at all times to meet the Lord. To be alert means to be watchful, to be on guard. Otherwise, we are liable to shirk our duty and end up being surprised by something we were supposed to be looking for. To those who are fully awake and aware, it shouldn't matter whether He comes today, tomorrow, or next year. "For we do not sleep as others do."

Get serious. Paul says not only to be alert but to be "sober" (1 Thess. 5:6,8). Those are the same two words Peter puts together when he talks about our battles with the devil (1 Pet. 5:8). You can't be watchful without being sober. If you're sober, that means you're free from distractions, exercising self-control, constantly arming yourself for battle. The sober-minded person never loses sight of the truth that works of the world will be burned up and what really matters is the treasures that are laid up in heaven. That's serious business.

Stay focused. The devil's going to try to get you off track. Mockers are going to come with their mockings. But none of that changes the promise of God that "the day of the Lord will come" (1 Thess. 5:2). And Paul doesn't use that as a scare tactic but as a source of encouragement (1 Thess. 4:18, 1 Thess. 5:11). This is good news. The Lord Himself is coming to deliver His people from this sin-sick world and take them home to glory. We should be able to pray with confidence, "Lord Jesus, come quickly." If we can't, we're too focused on fear.

What would you like for Jesus to find you doing when He returns? Whatever it is, I suggest you start doing it right now.



Read your Bible daily