

What Kind Of Faith Saves Us?

An Illustration From A National Hero:

Genesis 11-17

Faith is not **ignoring** the **facts**,
but **trusting** God in spite of the **facts**.

The Type Of Faith God Looks For:

Romans 4, 10:9-13 Ephesians 2:8-9 James 2:18-26 Matthew 7:22-23

v. 1-8 If salvation is something we **work for**,
then it is something God **owes us**.

- ▶ *Works* is about **earning** and **deserving**.
- ▶ *Grace* is about **believing** and **receiving**.

v. 9-11 This faith is necessary for **all people**.

v. 13-15 The law shows us what we have **done wrong**,
our faith is what makes **us right** with God.

v. 16-25 This faith is a **relationship** of **trust** and **reliance**.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 12, 2017

QUICK OVERVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that you heard for the first time, caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

MY STORY

1. This week we heard we have all been offered a free gift from God worth more than any of us could imagine and that none of us deserve. Have you ever been given a gift that was difficult to receive? If so, explain.

2. Our salvation cannot be earned. But a genuine commitment always results in action. Our commitment to Jesus is powered by the grace we have been given and demonstrated by works we put into action. What might it look like if someone focused too much on grace at the expense of works? ... focus on works at the expense of grace?

Can you think of any examples in your life when you focused too much on one, while excluding the other?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. This week we heard how Israel's national hero, Abraham, was saved by faith and not his works just as we are today! Yet, looking closer at Abraham's story, we also find that he heard nothing from God for 13 years (Genesis 11-17). This kind of patience and faithfulness can be no small challenge for any of us. How do the following verses help us remain faithful and patient even when God seems to be silent?

Psalm 37:7-9 *New International Version (NIV)*

⁷ Be still before the LORD

and wait patiently for him;

do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.

⁸ Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret—it leads only to evil.

⁹ For those who are evil will be destroyed,
but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.

James 5:7-11 *New International Version (NIV)*

Patience in Suffering

⁷ Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸ You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹ Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰ Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Which verse above encourages you the most when it comes to being patient and faithful?

2. The Pharisees in the New Testament were arguably the most religious people of their time and the ultimate example of having a “religious faith” rather than a “saving faith.” How does Jesus’ response to the Pharisees in Matthew 23 further illustrate how they thought they could “earn” their faith but missed the mark on having a “saving faith”?

Matthew 23:1-7 *New International Version (NIV)*

A Warning Against Hypocrisy

¹ Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ²“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³ So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ⁴ They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

⁵ “Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries^[a] wide and the tassels on their garments long; ⁶ they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷ they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by others.

Matthew 23:15 *New International Version (NIV)*

¹⁵ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.

Matthew 23:23 *New International Version (NIV)*

²³ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Matthew 23:25-26 *New International Version (NIV)*

²⁵ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

3. It is incredible news that there is nothing we can do to “earn” our salvation and that it is a free gift offered to all. Yet, it is also true that an authentic “saving faith” cannot remain dormant, hidden or silent. Jesus gave us nine beatitudes that demonstrate an authentic faith in action, which is also a natural outflow of God’s spirit changing us from the inside out. As you read through Matthew 5:1-11, jot down each beatitude, and then answer the following questions.

Matthew 5:1-11 *New International Version (NIV)*

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

¹ Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

He said:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,

- for they will inherit the earth.
- ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
- ⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
- ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
- ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
- ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

How can you explain each beatitude to someone who asks what it looks like for a follower of Jesus to put into action? (Note – you may want to refer to “The Message” Bible to add further explanation of each beatitude.)

Which beatitude catches your attention the most or is more challenging for you to live out in your own life?

How might the beatitudes relate to being “salt and light” in Matthew 5:13-16?

TAKING IT HOME

Looking back over this week’s sermon and homework, what’s the most important thing for you to remember?

Praise/Prayer Requests:

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