

EVERY COIN HAS TWO SIDES *A Second Look At This Thing Called "Faith"*

THE OBVIOUS QUESTION:

Why has Paul been hammering on the worthlessness of Jewish religious ceremonies and OT laws?

The Story Behind The Story
Acts 15:1-11

THE PASSAGE

Romans 2:17-3:8

A Second Look At Abraham's Faith:
Exploring Both Sides of the Coin
Romans 4:16-25 James 2:20-24

THREE THINGS TO TAKE HOME

(1) Faith is a **TWO-SIDED COIN**
Hebrews 11:6 Romans 1:5 Romans 4:16-20 & James 2:20-24

(2) Some things are **TRUE** but **INCOMPREHENSIBLE**
Isaiah 55:8-9

(3) Never explain away the parts of the Bible you don't
LIKE or **UNDERSTAND**
Isaiah 55:8-9 1 Corinthians 11:17-19

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 19, 2017

QUICK REVIEW

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

MY STORY

1. Larry talked this weekend about our response to the things in the Bible that don't seem to make sense to us. What are some things in the Bible that are hard for you to understand or believe?

2. Can you think of a time in your life when you wrestled with being obedient to a Bible passage you didn't like? If so, explain.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. This weekend's teaching highlighted the fact that faith is measured less by our inward belief and more by our obedience. In keeping with biblical faith being an action word, how do the following verses challenge us to show people our faith in ways so counter-cultural, it's hard for them to not notice the difference?

Matthew 5:43-48 *New International Version (NIV)*

Love for Enemies

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor^[a] and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?⁴⁷ And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 7:12 *New International Version (NIV)*

¹² So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Luke 6:35-36 *New International Version (NIV)*

³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Which of the actions mentioned in these passages is the most challenging for you to consistently live out? Which is the easiest?

2. One of Abraham's most significant experiences happened when God asked him to take his son up a mountain to sacrifice him (see Genesis 22 for the full story). Abraham's example of

trusting God with the life of his son can leave us wondering, “How could I ever have that kind of faith and trust God that much?” How might the following passages help you answer this question?

Mark 9:14-29 *New International Version (NIV)*

Jesus Heals a Boy Possessed by an Impure Spirit

¹⁴ When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. ¹⁵ As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

¹⁶ “What are you arguing with them about?” he asked.

¹⁷ A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. ¹⁸ Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”

¹⁹ “You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

²⁰ So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

²¹ Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?”

“From childhood,” he answered. ²² “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”

²³ “If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.”

²⁴ Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

²⁵ When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”

²⁶ The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

²⁸ After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

²⁹ He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”

John 4:46-53 *New International Version (NIV)*

⁴⁶ Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

⁴⁸ “Unless you people see signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

⁴⁹ The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

⁵⁰ “Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.”

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. ⁵¹ While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. ⁵² When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, “Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him.”

⁵³ Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and his whole household believed.

Hebrews 12:1-3 *New International Version (NIV)*

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Is there anything in your life right now you’re having difficulty trusting God for?

3. Larry talked about how the early church experienced a lot of confusion over whether Gentiles who became Christians had to be circumcised and follow the Old Testament Jewish laws. In Galatians 2:11-16, we read about Paul defending the Gentile Christians’ freedom from these requirements. After reading the story, answer the questions below.

What surprises you or confuses you in this story?

What do you think Paul, Cephas (Peter) and Barnabas were feeling before and after Paul spoke up?

What was happening that was so important that Paul felt compelled to speak up?

If you had to explain the significance of this incident to a fellow believer, what would you say?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Faith can be defined simply as “trusting God enough to do what he says.” Is there any area in your life where you’re struggling to trust God to do what he says that you’d like prayer for?

2. 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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Weekend of Service is a little over two months away. On April 29-30 we'll be closing our church doors for the weekend to go out into the community to be the hands and feet of Jesus. It will be our biggest Weekend of Service ever and we need everyone to get involved! Stay tuned in the coming weeks for more information and ways to participate!