



Is “Faith” Enough?

(This is a repost from my old blog. I’ll be reposting some of that content here over the next several days.)

Recently I was involved in a fairly acrimonious discussion with another blogger who professes to be a Christian. He is able to recite the fundamentals of the Lord’s plan of salvation and claims to believe them. However, he also believes and teaches some rather strange things for a person who professes the name of Christ.

I’m not going to give him a forum here. I’m not going to name him, although by writing this, assuming he comes back to this site and reads this posting, I’m sure he knows who he is. This isn’t a post about him, nor is it about the positions he holds to and supports in his writings.

No, the reason for this post is to ask, and hopefully to answer, the question “Is a profession of faith in Jesus sufficient for salvation?” My answer is that no, I don’t believe that it is. However, I’d like to qualify that answer by saying that a *sincere belief* and confession that Jesus is the Son of God, that he came in the flesh, lived a sinless life, died on the cross as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the world and was raised from the dead that those who believe on Him could have everlasting life is sufficient.

If you've read my more recent posts, you know that I don't believe in salvation by works. I believe in salvation by grace alone, through faith in Christ alone. No works that we can perform apart from God can please Him. The only work that is acceptable to Him is believing in Him and loving Him.

All men are born spiritually dead because of sin. Because of this, no one seeks God unless He first calls them. Oh sure, they may seek justification. They may fear death. They may even fear what comes after death and seek to change it, but they don't truly seek God. Instead, what they do is invent religions full of ritual and tradition to try to earn their way into a better afterlife.

Men are not the only creatures that sin. We know that many of the angels fell because they rebelled against God. The serpent in the garden of Eden deceived Eve, not as a test of her faith, but because he was in rebellion against God. We know that the devil has sinned from the beginning. A creature in rebellion against God surely cannot want to see God's plan for His creation fulfilled. This means that the devil will by his corrupt nature try to deceive mankind to prevent them from fulfilling God's purpose. He actively tries to hide the truth of God's mercy and grace.

We know that God is Love. But He is far more than that. He is the creator of the universe and all that is in it. Moreover, He is holy and just, and he hates sin. It is hard to seriously read the bible and be unable to find a passage where his holiness and hatred of sin are made evident.

And so, we return to my initial question, Is "faith" enough? Given that man's "righteousness" can never be enough to satisfy a holy and just God we know that works won't save. But I will tell you that a "profession of faith" is not enough either. Saying that you believe is not the same as actually believing.

But, let's be careful and honest here. I am not saying that you need "faith plus works" to be saved. None of the works of man can save, and corrupt works actually offend a holy God. Instead, what I am saying is that a true faith in the real Jesus is required.

First of all, we must recognize that we are dead in our sins. Being dead in our sin we are cut off from God's presence and nothing that we do can please him. The devil will tell you that charity and good works will allow you to buy your way into God's presence. That's a pernicious lie.

God doesn't waste His time and effort. He created everything for His purposes. While our sin separates us from those purposes He has provided a way that we can be redeemed and fit for His purposes again.

Sinning has a price and that price is death. Sinners cannot be redeemed unless the price is paid. Fortunately for us the son of God came and lived as a man and was executed on a

cross as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sin, and that of the whole world. Jesus took our sins upon himself and died in our place even though He was not deserving of death.

He has paid the price for our sin. All who truly believe this are washed free of their guilt and clothed in His righteousness. Not only this, but having died he was raised up again to life. His resurrection is a promise to us that believe that we too will have eternal life. Those who believe know that we were deserving of hell and that He has redeemed us from the penalty of our sin. He has given us new life in the Spirit.

It is a *new* life. We are born again of the Spirit to live for the glory of God. We aren't born again so that we can continue in sin. We are born again to live righteous lives to His glory, and to do truly good works through Him for his glory.

True faith in Christ that results in salvation comes at a high price. The blood of our Lord paid for our sins. One evidence of saving faith is true repentance from sin. No one who truly believes can continue in sin, and that also means that we cannot approve of sin. It means that we cannot teach that it's OK to sin. Anyone that does so demonstrates that their faith is not true.

Now, that is not to say that we who believe are completely freed from the effects of sin, but we *are* freed from slavery to it and from its penalty. We still live in fleshly bodies, and the Spirit quickens those bodies while we remain on this earth. Our flesh remains corrupt and we will continually war with sin in our bodies while we remain. We've been redeemed, justified, and sanctified but the battle is not over. Those that truly believe will rely upon God's grace and the power of His Holy Spirit to put sin to death constantly.

This is the *evidence* of our faith. The works that we do now demonstrate and perfect our faith. They glorify our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who continue in sin demonstrate that their faith is false. Those who advocate sin demonstrate that their faith is false. By their fruits you shall know them.