

The Wednesday Word, May 31, 2017: What Does That Mean? (Part 3) - Faith Alone

Romans 3:21-22, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 10:3

Faith Alone (Sola Fide) was the battle cry of the Reformation. It's a radical truth that will deliver us from self-absorption and legalism.

It is a vital truth, therefore, we must get it straight. We receive our salvation by faith + nothing. Neither ceremonies nor rituals need apply for the job. Faith alone grasps that all which is necessary for our acceptance with God has already been done by God Himself in His great redemptive act in Jesus Christ.

To paraphrase the Australian Forum, "Faith receives that the God/Man, Jesus Christ, in our name and our behalf, met all our obligations before the bar of eternal justice."

Faith understands that our salvation was secured by a complete and perfect work. Faith alone apprehends that we cannot add or contribute anything to Christ's accomplishments.

This, however, does not mean that faith is our Saviour. Faith was not led as a lamb to the slaughter. Nevertheless, faith causes us to look to our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, as our only hope. Faith never looks at itself. It provides no foundation of safety for the believer. Gospel faith is the opposite of having a vague faith in some God out there. Having a general sort of faith is not saving faith.

Some people may actually believe that for every drop of rain that falls, a flower grows! But, that's not saving faith.

Someone says, "I believe that everything will turn out for good in the end." Good for you, but that is not saving faith.

Others say, "It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you believe sincerely." That's not saving faith, and besides, it is nonsense. It's like saying, "It doesn't matter what medicine I take, as long as I'm sincere." Welcome to the funeral parlour.

Faith, Gospel Faith, on the other hand, grasps that God's saving work has been done completely outside of our own experience. Indeed, gospel faith comprehends that the Finished Work was in no way accomplished inside the believer. As John Bunyan pertinently says, "....., this is one of the greatest mysteries in the world; namely, that a righteousness that resides in heaven should justify me, a sinner on earth!" (Bunyan: Justified by and Imputed Righteousness)

Faith embraces that God is righteous, holy, just, and loving. Faith recognizes that we have sinned against this same God. Faith perceives that, outside of grace, we stand guilty and condemned. But, faith also embraces that Jesus is God clothed in a human body. Faith sees Him and His perfection as the substitute for sinners.

Gospel Faith sees that all our sins have been paid for. Not one of them has been left to damn us.

Faith receives this and makes it our own.

Faith sees that our sins are not put away by confession.

Faith sees that our sins are not put away by fasting.
Faith sees that our sins are not put away by prayer.
Faith sees that our sins are not put away by popes, prelates or priests.

Faith, however, sees that, at the cross,
Sin was condemned,
Justice was satisfied,
The Law was magnified,
God was glorified,
The sinner was saved and our adversary, Satan, was utterly confounded!

And that's the Gospel Truth!