

The Word of Faith

Optional points are marked with "◊". Supplemental Scriptures are in parentheses ().

Introduction

- Before the study, clarify how well your friend knows the Bible and how your friend defines faith
- The purpose of this study is to define true, saving faith according to God's Word
- Faith is exciting! How great it is to live with confidence! Hebrews 11:1
 - Faith is being certain of our hopes, even when we cannot see the outcome
- Faith is not an option. It takes faith to please God. Hebrews 11:6

Differing Views of Faith

Two views on a saving faith are in strong conflict:

Ritual Based Views

- Ritual based faith describes the oldest forms of Christianity
- A ritual based view puts a saving faith in certain actions, rituals or traditions *over* knowing the Bible
- We should not *ritualize* our faith..... Matthew 15:1-9
- ***We must know and follow the Bible over having faith in traditions or creeds***
- Worship by traditions that supersede the Word of God is worship in vain

Belief Based Views

- Belief based Christianity arose out of the Protestant Reformation. As a protest to ritual based Christianity, it took the extreme opposite view of a saving faith
- A belief based view is that only belief and no action saves you
- We should not *reduce* our faith to only belief John 8:31-32
- ***All must hold on to and follow the teachings of Jesus to be a true disciple***
- Intellectual belief is not enough, nor can we go by our feelings
- Sincerity does not equal truth. A sincere faith is not a saving faith. Religious people can be wrong in their understanding, though admirable in their sincerity

Elements of a True, Saving Faith

The question debated for centuries is which is it, action or belief?

- The Bible defines a saving faith as having elements of *both* James 2:17-19
- Again, belief is not enough. Even demons believe in God
- Belief completed by action is the saving faith that justifies us James 2:22-24
- Salvation comes when we humbly **accept** and **obey** the Word..... (James 1:21-25)

In summary, we are saved by faith when we:

- Hear the Message/Know the Bible correctly Romans 10:17
- Believe confidently Romans 10:9-10
 - In the Message and that Christ was raised from the dead
- Obey or act to complete saving faith
(for example: confessing with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord")

Hear the Bible *correctly*

- Faith comes from hearing the word of Christ through the Bible.....(Romans 10:17)
- But we must be *taught* the Word correctly. Why? 1 Timothy 4:16
- The Bible is our doctrine. Correct teaching of the Bible saves those who hear
- We are saved only if we watch our doctrine closely: know the Bible correctly
- Were you taught that you must personally invest in studying the Bible to be saved?
- ***If you have not studied the Bible much, can you say you have a saving faith?***
- Also, life and doctrine must match to be saved, so obedience is equally important
 - For salvation, living by the Bible is just as important as knowing the Bible
 - Life and doctrine are equally important. A plane with one wing cannot fly

Believe in the Bible *confidently*

- Believing in God's Word is essential, because the Bible teaches us about Jesus (Romans 10:9-10). What do we need to believe about the Word?
- Believe all Scripture is inspired by God 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - Do you believe the *entire* Bible is the *only* Word of God?
- Believe the Bible is useful and applicable to our lives
 - Are you willing to be taught, corrected, and rebuked by the Word of God?
- Believe the Bible is useful for our hearts..... Hebrews 4:12-13
 - The Word cuts like a scalpel that removes the "cancer" (sin) out
 - Are you willing to allow your heart to be cut by the Word?
- Believe the Word will judge us, not our traditions or feelings (also in John 12:48)
- Believe in the Bible as written 2 Peter 1: 20-21
 - The Holy Spirit inspired the men who wrote the Bible
 - There is no private interpretation of the Bible
 - Confidently trust that God's ways and views supersede our own opinions

Obey to *complete* saving faith..... (Romans 10:9-10)

- Saying, "Jesus is Lord" is not enough..... Matthew 7:21-23
 - We must truly make him Lord by doing God's will, obeying the Word
- God makes his expectations clear. If we learn and obey the Word, we can be sure of our salvation! ***Do you have a saving faith, if you are not obeying the Word?***
- The next studies will teach how we should obey God in order to find saving faith. Ultimately, God wants our ***faith to express itself through love***.....(Galatians 5:6)

Study the Bible Every Day

- The Word is the *daily* fuel for our *faith* Matthew 4:4
- The challenge: Read and study the Bible every day! Acts 17:10-12
 - The Bereans were examples of people who *daily* checked what religious leaders said
- How eager are you to be taught the Bible in order to be sure of your salvation?
- How willing are you to do your own *daily*, personal Bible study?
- How willing are you to live by the Bible over all else? When can we study next?