

“Faith” — A Word of Action!



The Bible characters Samson, David, and Benaiah all have one thing in common— what was it?

One of the most absurd statements ever declared is this: “Faith is the only thing that a person can do without doing anything.” A clear case of contradiction! The following examples will reveal that genuine faith is not a mere attitude; rather, it is a word of action!

Jesus was teaching. The crowds pressed around Him. Four men brought a lame friend, climbed to the rooftop and lowered him through the ceiling. Significantly, the inspired writer comments: “And Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5). What did Christ see? He literally saw the action of these men (including the sick man who endorsed the activity). But the action is called faith! A word of action!

John 3:16 is perhaps the best-known verse in the Bible; but it is one of the most misunderstood: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Does the “belief” of this passage include obedience, or exclude it? A comparison of this verse with Hebrews 5:9 reveals the significance. In John 3:16, believing results in eternal life. In Hebrews 5:9, eternal salvation is said to issue from obedience to Christ. It should be clear that the belief that saves is one that manifests itself in obeying the Son of God. True faith is not just a mental process. A word of action!

Jesus declared: “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeys not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36, ASV). The Greek term is *apeitheo*, which literally means “to disobey.” In this passage “believing” is set in contrast to “disobedience.” The person who obeys the Son is promised life, but the person who disobeys will not receive life. A word of action!

Observe a similar usage in Acts 14:1-2: A “great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed. But the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren.” We are told that God was displeased with many rebellious Israelites who died in the wilderness. They were condemned because they were “disobedient”—yes, they were not allowed to enter the promised land due to their “unbelief” (3:18-19). Continuing that analogy, it will be those who have “believed” who will enter the final rest (4:3), but those who are “disobedient” will not (4:6). The Bible knows nothing of true faith that is divorced from obedience. Faith must be active to be faith!

When a jailor in the city of Philippi feared for his life during an earthquake that rocked the prison, he pled with Paul and Silas: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” God’s messengers proclaimed to him the gospel. Evinced repentance (for having beaten his prisoners), the jailor washed their stripes. Subsequently, he and his family were immersed (Acts 16:31-33). Significantly, this entire process is summed up in this fashion: “And he ... rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God” (v. 34). It is clear that, “having believed,” includes the jailor’s repentance and his baptism. A word of action!

The “faith” system of the New Testament is not merely a mental phenomenon. Read Galatians 3:26-27. There Paul declares: “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.” Immersion was and is an integral part of active faith. Later, to the same people, the apostle affirmed that the faith that avails is that which is “working through love” (Galatians 5:6). The fact of the matter is, believing itself is a work (cf. John 6:27-29; cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:3).

Luke records that when Christ was preached, “a great number that believed turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:21). The construction of the original language indicates that the “believing” was prior to the “turning,” hence, “turning to the Lord” involved something in addition to their faith.

Do you understand what it is? ACTIVE FAITH!

To our valued visitors: *Please feel free to participate!*

You should expect to hear singing with voices only, a few “family” announcements, prayers spoken, and see the Lord’s Supper offered, then free-willed giving, and gospel preaching from the Bible. Any response is up to you and will be kindly received. We are glad you decided to worship God with us on this first day of the week!

Birthday/Anniversary Lunch: Second Sunday of the month... (11/11)
NMCCH: Spray & Wash and Bar Bath Soap (pick up in **April 6, 2019**)
Friday Bible Study: 7 to 8 PM, yes, every Friday ... Lord willing!