

Scriptures and Doctrine :: God's Faith and our faith!

God's Faith and our faith! - posted by ArtB (), on: 2012/6/20 17:20

It is true what the apostle James wrote: 'Faith without works is dead.' For works will flow naturally from those who have faith in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are drawn to the gospel by the Faith of Jesus, whose voice we have recognized because we are His sheep, who has called us into His fellowship with Him and through Him we have received the Holy Spirit that dwells in us, and we too are spirit. We are His ever maturing children, and God is continually working in us in order to bring us to full maturity in His perfect love. And we walk with God, binded by this mutual love.

1 John 4:15-21

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. NASU

Faith is simply believing God.

What the Apostle John wrote is from God and is of God. If you believe these words and embrace them, works will flow naturally from you. You need not try to do works, they will flow from you because God's words and WORD given to us is not sterile, and that is exactly the point the James did make.

Like Enoch, through Jesus we Christians now have a daily walk with God, and where ever we go we can take Him with us and talk with Him, and dwell and glory in His presence, and simply acknowledge and actuate His work that He is doing in us, and from His work in us will flow many good works out of us. As Jesus said, whomever abides in Him, He will abide in them. To abide in Jesus is no harder than abiding in a chair, you just have to acknowledge His presence.

But one work we should never pursue is to become sinless. Scripture makes clear that we will never be sinless in this lifetime, that our perfection is not achieved by us, Perfection is God's work in us. To make it our burden is a lack of faith in God's word:

1 John 1

"What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life — and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us — what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

"This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us." NASU

God is light, and we will always be in the light as we continually stay in fellowship with Him. It is clear from Apostle John's words that our fellowship with God does not require us to be sinless, God already knows we will continue to sin and He still wants our fellowship. But in order for this fellowship to continue, God tells us that He will help us with our sins:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

Our 'Faith' is simply to believe God, and not add to what He tells us. and why did John write these things to us Christians

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1 John 1:1-4

"What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— 2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete." NASU

The only alleged Biblical objection I have come across to the above truth comes from the Roman Catholic Church, by those who want to take away this joy is an often completely out of context quote of Phil 2: 12-13:

Phil 2:12-13

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. NASU

The greek word translated as 'work' in the phrase 'work out your salvation' is different than the greek word translated as 'work' in 'for God is at work in you.'

"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose". NASU

This is the verse I'm usually given by those who claim that any Christian can lose their salvation if they are not careful, and they often quote it by starting with "work out" and stop at "trembling". The phrase "fear and trembling" in the Greek is a poetic expression, *phobou kai tromou*, that Paul uses elsewhere to highlight the inner attitude one should have toward their master. We know from what is written before this in Philippians prior to these two verses that Paul is NOT telling them to be fearful, for Paul has emphasized that he wants their love for each other to abound.

When we read Philippians 2: 12-13, we should keep in mind that Paul wrote in his opening comments to the Philippian Christians in Phil 1:6 is of his confidence "that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." This is a factual Theological Statement. It is factual because anything that God is doing will get done, no ifs, ands, or buts. Now, it must be so that whatever Paul writes after this, it can not be in contradiction to this statement. If God had begun this good work in any of them, and then even one of them lost their salvation, God will have failed to have carried this good work through to completion.

Paul goes on to mention in Chapter 3 that there are those who God has not saved, and some of these have joined themselves to the Christian Church, but they are not saved for they are enemies of Christ. They did not lose their salvation, they never had it.

In Chapter 4 Paul tells the Christians in Philippi that they have peace with God, fellowship with God, and to open themselves to further transformation by God by dwelling on "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise." Then Paul praises their generosity and again tells them that God is working for them: "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever."

So what could Paul possibly mean by "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose"?

Taking the letter as a whole, Paul is praising the Philippians and assuring them of their salvation, of whom he is confident and wants them to be also, having pointed out that that God, who is working in them, will carry His work in them through to completion. They have always obeyed, even in Paul's absence. Paul makes it very clear that both he and God are very pleased with them. Paul can't possibly be saying that despite all this good stuff he wrote about them, that they better work out their salvation for they are in danger of still losing it. Such a conclusion would be an absurdity.

The Greek word "*katergazomai*", which has been translated "work out", has several possible meanings: To Finish off,

To Work, To Effect, To Achieve. Which one should be used? The 'work' God is doing is the Greek word 'energeo' meaning active and efficient work. This is where our modern word energy comes from.

e.g. It takes energy to do the work to make a Sword, Shield and Helmut. It takes "katargazomai" to become skilled in using the Sword, Shield and Helmut that you have been equipped with. It is not enough to simply have what God has given us, we need to put these into practice and use that benefit and fruit may be generated. From I John 1:9 quoted above, we know that when we confess our sins, 'God is faithful to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness'. This is one of many Bible verses that inform us that God is actively working in us. As He brings about changes in us, we respond by using and living out that changes that He made.

It is my view that, put into the context of the entire text of Philippians, God is performing an active and efficient work in all true Christians that guarantees our the spiritual growth, and that Paul in 2: 12-13 is exhorting the Phillipian Christians, and by extension all Christians, to put into effect the continual changes that God continually works (energeo) in us into use and practice (i.e. katargazomai - actualization). There is nothing written in Philippians about any possibility of any real Christian losing their salvation. IMV - The overall context clearly indicates that the letter by Paul declares the opposite, a view which happens also to be consistent with Paul's other letters in which He writes about salvation (e.g. Romans, Galatians, Hebrews).

In conclusion, when Clement of Rome wrote in 95 AD that "And we ... are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by ... faith." He means what he wrote, that we are justified by faith, and all those nice things God gives us are simply results that flow from this justification by faith. All of which are works of God so that no human may boast of what they accomplished.

i.e.

1 Cor 1:21-31

God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD." NASU

Re: God's Faith and our faith! - posted by Blayne, on: 2012/6/20 23:28

Hi! ArtB

I just wanted to say that I VERY much enjoyed reading your Thread here. EXCELLENT! I read it twice! Thanks!

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God's Faith and our faith!
by ArtB on 2012/6/20 14:20:48

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Re: - posted by ArtB (), on: 2012/6/22 15:21

by Blayne on 2012/6/20 20:28:00 wrote:

"Hi! ArtB

..... I read it twice!"

Twice? You actually read it twice. Well, It appears to me that you excel in the virtue of 'endurance'. ;)

Re: , on: 2012/6/30 4:18

Luk 18:6-8 "And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.

Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh,
shall he find faith on the earth?"

I think for the sake of this last line - it's a good thing to read anything that boosts one's faith -

and keeping a sense of humor as well - as a merry heart maketh good like a medicine and the Joy of The LORD 'is' our Strength!

Thanks for the article! Will download it and read it offline.