

I Gotta' Have Faith, Faith, Faith

1.31.21

So I'm stuck in Ephesians. You see we have this mini community that meets down here at Reunion every Wednesday night at 6:00 pm. I Love getting here early and opening the classrooms that soon will be filled with our most precious commodities – our little DNA replications. Seeing the first families arrive in the parking lot with sounds of laughter and joy. It warms my heart to see Ben and Nikki wheeling up a wagon full of food – with twin sources of pure energy dominating the landscape before them. And in roll the Ellington's – with Hadley rocking some fierce outfits and Corbin a goofball grin. And the baptisms besties – the Woodards and Grosekempers / they arrive with an odd mixture all together (teenagers and a gluten free array of food – not sure which is stranger). The Greens show up with the promise of Bear Grylls adventures and the source of pure joy – a baby that I get to steal and snuggle. And we've got the regulars – Billie and the Kubels, myself with Amy and Emmy, and of course – last but not least, my mother and Father. And the food... oh the food. Thanksgiving feasts, breakfast for dinner, Italian night, grilled cheese BTL's – yes please.

And we seek Truth together. We follow a lesson plan every other week, and when not on the lesson plan, someone chooses to research and teach on a topic of their choice. We learn, we discuss, we laugh, and we cry. And I would not change it for the world – actually it changes me for the world. Funny how that happens. It creates in me the hope for new outcomes not yet seen and the confidence to always boldly continue you on in my beliefs, and their pursuits.

With all that being said, we have begun a new series in the book of Ephesians. So I started reading Ephesians – and now for three weeks, I've been reading only Ephesians.

Here's a simplified outline of Ephesians:

Outline

- Greetings (1:1-2)
- The Divine Purpose: The Glory and Headship of Christ (1:3-14)
- Prayer That Christians May Realize God's Purpose and Power (1:15-23)
- Steps Toward the Fulfillment of God's Purpose (chs. 2-3)
 - Salvation of Individuals by Grace (2:1-10)
 - Reconciliation of Jew and Gentile through the Cross (2:11-18)
 - Uniting of Jew and Gentile in One Household (2:19-22)
 - Revelation of God's Wisdom through the Church (3:1-13)
 - Prayer for Deeper Experience of God's Fullness (3:14-21)
- Practical Ways to Fulfill God's Purpose in the Church (4:1;6:20)
 - Unity (4:1-6)
 - Maturity (4:7-16)
 - Renewal of Personal Life (4:17;5:20)
 - Deference in Personal Relationships (5:21;6:9)
 1. Principle (5:21)
 2. Husbands and wives (5:22-33)
 3. Children and parents (6:1-4)
 4. Slaves and masters (6:5-9)

- Strength in the Spiritual Conflict (6:10-20)
- Conclusion, Final Greetings and Benediction (6:21-24)

Now Paul typically includes some form of instruction on heresy, but here he does not. Ephesians is aimed at the reconciliation of two key elements – the Gospel story and Our story. At this intersection I came to discover and encounter faith.

Strong's Concordance

pistis: faith, faithfulness

Original Word: πίστις, εως, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: pistis

Phonetic Spelling: (pis'-tis)

Definition: faith, faithfulness

Usage: faith, belief, trust, confidence; fidelity, faithfulness.

Strong's Concordance

peithó: to persuade, to have confidence

Original Word: πείθω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: peithó

Phonetic Spelling: (pi'-tho)

Definition: to persuade, to have confidence

Usage: I persuade, urge.

Just what is faith? It's a word we sure use a lot. "Have faith in yourself. Have faith in your abilities. Just have faith in her. Have faith in God." Who often finds themselves saying things just like this? What do we mean by 'HAVE FAITH'?

Examples:

Allow me to ask you this question. Is faith something that we can increase on our own? What is faith – or better yet, where does faith come from?

Ephesians 2:8-10

8For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

So obviously from these words, faith is the gift of God – not a result of works so that no one could brag about it.

1 John 5:1-4

1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. 2By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 3For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. 4For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

So obviously faith is us following the commandments of Jesus and is the victory that has overcome the world.

You see, faith is something that is known as divine persuasion. Persuading you to believe – God literally and figuratively persuades us to believe – this is faith.

Matthew 14:12-21

12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that

the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

If Jesus is in God as God is in Jesus

And I am in Jesus as Jesus is in me

Then I am in God as God is in me

Faith is the acceptance of the reality that God is our creator –

Omnipotent

Omniscient

Onmipresent

God created the heavens and the earth – and included in this creation is us. Let me get an assist from Jesus again here.

Matthew 13:31-32

31He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. 32It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

Luke 17:6

5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" 6And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

How does a mustard seed have faith? It accomplishes what it was created for. There is no fight to the acceptance to burst forth in power and excellence and full embrace of growth and life – and death and rebirth – and faith.

Hebrews 11:1-3

1Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2For by it the people of old received their commendation. 3By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

The invisible qualities of a very visible reality. Living together in community. Building upon our knowledge of our Heavenly Father and asking Him for the gift of Faith – THE gift – divine persuasion – full acceptance of Who and What God is.

2 Peter 1:2

2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 4

1I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

8Therefore it says,

**“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
and he gave gifts to men.”**

9(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

17Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19They have

become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20But that is not the way you learned Christ!— 21assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

25Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27and give no opportunity to the devil. 28Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.