

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“THE FAITH”

By David Dann

The apostle Paul writes, *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”* (Eph. 4:4-6, NKJV).

While the term *“faith”* is often used in Scripture to refer to personal belief or conviction that something is true, *“faith”* is also used in another sense. When Paul speaks of the *“one faith”* he is referring to the gospel of Christ which is the one body of instruction given by God through which sinners may be saved.

What does the Bible say about *“the faith”*? According to the Lord’s inspired spokesmen, the faith:

1. Must be preached. Paul informed the churches of Galatia concerning the events following his conversion, saying, *“And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. But they were hearing only, ‘He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy’”* (Gal. 1:23). Paul had gone from being intent on eradicating the gospel to becoming one of the most fervent promoters of the gospel. *“The faith”* is a system of teaching that must be preached so that people can hear and believe the message of salvation in Christ (cf. Rom. 1:16; 10:17).

2. Must be obeyed. With regard to the early preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, the Bible says, *“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith”* (Acts 6:7). While *“the faith”* is to be heard and accepted as true, it also contains instruction that is to be obeyed. Those who believe *“the faith”* must also repent of their sins and be baptized into Christ in order to receive forgiveness and salvation (cf. 2:37-38, 41). *“The faith”* will never save anyone by faith alone. Sinners must render *“obedience to the faith”* in order to have eternal life (Rom. 1:5; 16:26).

3. Must be defended. Jude wrote to his fellow Christians, saying, *“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”* (Jude 3). The gospel of Christ is constantly under attack by those who reject His lordship, refuse to believe in His resurrection, or dislike the boundaries of His moral instruction. There are those who *“depart from the faith”* (1 Tim. 4:1), those who have *“denied the faith”* (5:8), and those who have *“strayed from the faith”* (6:10). Faithful followers of Christ must be ready and willing to defend the faith against the attacks of those who are ungodly and unbelieving.

If you have believed the gospel, have repented of your sins, and have been baptized into Christ then you are assured of eternal salvation *“if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard”* (Col. 1:23). Don’t allow yourself to be numbered among those who *“concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck”* (1 Tim. 1:19). Instead, *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith”* (2 Cor. 13:5) and, *“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong”* (1 Cor. 16:13). Eternal life will be the outcome for all who have *“kept the faith”* (2 Tim. 4:7). ■

WE NEED JESUS!

By David Dann

What is our greatest need? Jesus said, *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins”* (Jn. 8:24, NKJV). The Lord also said, *“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly”* (Jn. 10:10b). Without Christ, we would remain condemned

in our sins and our greatest and deepest needs would go unfulfilled.

Please consider the following reasons why we need Jesus:

1. We need guidance. Jesus said, ***“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep”*** (Jn. 10:11) and ***“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own”*** (v. 14). Prior to His miracle of feeding the five thousand, the Bible says, ***“And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things”*** (Mk. 6:34). Like sheep, human beings are prone to error and in need of direction (cf. Prov. 14:12; Jer. 10:23). How should we live, worship, and treat others? When it comes to moral and spiritual matters, every person is in darkness and confusion without Christ. The teaching and example of Jesus provide the guidance we so desperately need.

2. We need hope. After informing Martha that her recently deceased brother would rise again, ***“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’”*** (Jn. 11:25-26). In spite of the endless efforts that are constantly put forth in order to elude its cold grasp, human beings remain powerless when it comes to avoiding physical death. Christ, the perfect sacrifice, is the only solution to the problem. Paul instructed the Christians in Colosse, saying, ***“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory”*** (Col. 3:2-4). Those who remain in sin remain shackled to a bleak and fearful future beyond this life. The sacrifice of Jesus provides the hope we so desperately need.

3. We need purpose. Jesus spoke to His disciples, saying, ***“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”*** (Jn. 15:4-5). In spite of what one may accomplish in worldly terms, man’s true purpose will never be achieved apart from Christ. Since this is true, Paul reminded the saints in Corinth, saying, ***“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s”*** (1 Cor. 6:20). So many wander aimlessly and end up living wasted lives. The gospel of Jesus provides the God-glorifying purpose in life that we so desperately need.

Conclusion

Jesus said, ***“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”*** (Jn. 14:6). More than anything in the world, each individual needs a relationship with God through Christ. Never forget that, above all else, you need Jesus. ■

Just Do It

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

Genuine Christianity is not so much subscribing to a philosophy as it is submitting to authority – specifically, the authority of Jesus Christ. Once convinced by the evidence that Jesus is the Christ, that He has all authority in heaven and earth (Matt.28:18), and that His authority is expressed in the New Testament (cf. 1 Cor. 14:37; Eph.3:1-5), there only remains one thing to do – submit to that authority. It is not really a question of whether or not it appeals to us philosophically. It is a question of whether or not it is the Lord’s will. He has all authority. If He says do it – just do it. If He says not to do it – just don’t do it. If it is within the scope of His authority, feel good about doing it, if it is not, then leave it alone. That may seem a bit simplistic to those enamored with the wisdom of this world – but that is basically the way it is.

Once we have become disciples of Christ by submitting to His authority, are baptized by that authority and are committed to ***“observe all things (He) has commanded (us)”*** (Matt. 28:18-20), we need nothing more than His word to motivate us. If He says do it – we just do it. If He says do not do it – we just don’t do it. – ***Collegvue church of Christ Bulletin***, July 12, 2020. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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