

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Where Standeth Your Faith?

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2: 1-5).

In our text, the very words in verse 5 indicate that every accountable being’s faith is based on one of two things – Man’s “wisdom” or God’s power.

I ask then, on what basis does your faith stand? Is it based on God’s truth, on man’s think-so’s and doctrines, or even on your own thinking?

The fact that the apostle Paul mentioned the location or basis of one’s faith makes this an important subject. He further stated where our faith should stand. If your faith is in man’s wisdom or your own thinking, this is not Bible faith, but a pseudo faith, a faith that promises and assures nothing. The Hebrew writer said, *“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised”* (Heb. 10:23).

Hence, we can rely on God’s promises to all – the promise of reward to the believing and punishment to the unbelieving (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

Faith Defined

But what is faith? The word faith is from the Greek word *pistis*. W. E. Vine, in his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, defined it as: *“firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing... used in the New Testament always of faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual”* (p. 411).

Vine went on to say that the word *pistis* (faith) is used of trust, and he cited our text (1 Cor. 2:5). Hence, faith is trust in God’s word, just as the apostle Paul declared when he wrote, *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17)

Man Needs Divine Direction

The Bible explicitly teaches that man cannot direct himself, and that he needs direction. Who better than God, our Creator, can give man direction. The wisdom writer said, *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them”* (Eccl. 12:1).

The prophet Jeremiah declared man’s need for God’s direction when he wrote, *“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”* (Jer. 10:23). Isaiah declared, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”* (Isa. 55:8, 9),

Therefore, man’s need for Divine direction is most evidently affirmed in the Scriptures) cf. Psa. 22:19; 25:9; 31:3; 32:8; 73:24; 119:105,130; Rom. 15:4; 1 Tim. 4:12-16; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-11).

What Does Bible Faith Require?

Bible faith requires several things. We have already mentioned one requirement – *hearing*: *“So then faith cometh*

by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

When the Jews on Pentecost heard the Gospel preached by Peter and the apostles (Acts 2:22-38), they were pricked in their hearts and asked, ***“what shall we do?”*** (vs. 37). The Samaritans believed and obeyed the Gospel after giving, ***“heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did”*** (Acts 8:6). The Eunuch heard Phillip preach Christ (Acts 8:26-39). Cornelius and his house gathered before God, ***“to hear all things that are commanded thee of God”*** (Acts 10:33). When the men at Ephesus, ***“heard this (the Gospel of Christ), they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus”*** (Acts 19:5).

Therefore, the need to *hear* is clearly established and commanded, ***“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”*** (Rom. 10:14).

Bible faith requires diligent study. ***“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”*** (2 Tim. 2:15).

Bible faith requires action. ***“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was”*** (Jas. 1:22-24). One cannot honestly claim to have Bible faith without being a ***“doer of the word.”***

Bible faith requires reading and understanding what was divinely written: ***“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ”*** (Eph. 3:3); cf. Acts 8:30; Eph. 5:17).

Bible faith requires desire. ***“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled”*** (Matthew 5:6; cf. 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18). In order to properly grow and maintain faith in Christ, one must develop a healthy appetite for spiritual food.

Bible faith requires Godly works. ***“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only...For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also”*** (Jas. 2:24, 26; cf. Matt. 7:21-23; Titus 3:8; Phil. 2:12).

Bible faith requires trust. ***“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding”*** (Prov. 3:5); cf. 1 Tim. 4:10; 6:17; Heb. 2:13).

Bible faith requires a proper walk. ***“For we walk by faith, not by sight”*** (2 Cor. 5:7; cf. Eph. 4:1; 5:1-16). We must walk ***“in the light”*** in fellowship with Christ and other faithful saints (1 Jn. 1:7).

What Does Man’s “Wisdom” Bring?

Paul denounced the world’s wisdom when he wrote, ***“Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”*** (1 Cor. 1:20, 21). The wisdom of this world says:

- Adultery and fornication are ***“no big deal.”***
- Distribution of “safe sex” item in public schools is needed.
- The right to choose to murder an unborn child must be granted.
- Homosexuality and same-sex marriage must be accepted and tolerated.
- Gambling is needed to fund public schools and Indian communities.
- Drugs and alcohol can bring lasting pleasure.
- Prayer in schools is not to be tolerated.
- There is no absolute truth.

These are just a few examples of the failures of man’s “wisdom.” I submit that these bring untold misery, agony, wasted lives, broken homes, shame, dishonor and loss of one’s good name, aids, unwanted pregnancies, loss of innocent lives, and eternal loss of souls. There is no end to the destruction. Just notice the riots, looting and mayhem

in our country at the present time.

Where does man's wisdom lead? Please observe a "wise" claim from a denominational preacher who said: *"We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul. All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not put his soul in any more danger. The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul... The way I live has nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of my soul."* (***Do A Christian's Sins Damn His Soul?***, Sam Morris, First Baptist church, Stamford, Texas)

Such denominational doctrine, when compared with Bible truth, is gross foolishness! Many people believe this damnable error because their faith is based on men's wisdom and not on God's word. If we compare Divine revelation with men's doctrines, those who have **"honest and good hearts"** will not be lead astray. When weighed on a just balance (God's word), the truth written by the apostle Paul and the teachings of denominational error are not equal. Paul wrote, **"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God"** (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Consequently, men's doctrines lead to spiritual destruction (Matt. 15:9).

Some well-known, highly educated, and influential brethren have displayed a lack of faith in God's word by affirming and teaching that the days of Genesis 1 cannot be literal 24-hour solar days. They claim that the creation days were eons or ages of time. If the days in Genesis 1 are not literal, how can we depend on anything else written in the Bible? What then is the meaning of Exodus 20:11 wherein is written, **"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it"**? To satisfy these brethren, Exodus 20:11 will have to be reworded to say, "For in six 'ages' the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh 'age;' wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath 'age,' and hallowed it." Who with steadfast faith in God's word will accept this?

Let us always place our faith in God's word and not in men's wisdom. Our faith must be **"grounded and settled"** in **"that which is written"** (Col. 1:23; 1 Cor. 4:6), not in man's foolishness! – **tgmc** ■

Address Fear with Faith in God

By Joe R. Price

"1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, my enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell. 3 Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; Though war may rise against me, in this I will be confident" (Psa. 27:1-3).

Fear has gripped many. Fear of disease, civil unrest, enemies, the future, and more has settled into countless hearts, filling souls with uncertainty, anxiety, and doubt. The psalmist David turned to the Lord in moments of fear and dread. We can and must do the same. With eyes of faith, David saw the Lord God as his light, his salvation, and the strength of his life (vs. 1). David put his confidence in the Lord in the face of wicked enemies. While darkness drives many to be uncertain and fearful of life's path, Jesus Christ continues to be the light of the world (Jn. 8:12). As many trust wealth, political parties, and even violence as a means of deliverance, true salvation from evil is only found in Jesus Christ (Lk. 19:10; Acts 4:12). Pride leads us to trust in our strength and power, even when experience shows us trusting in the flesh ultimately fails (Jer. 17:5-10). God gives power to the weak who live by faith (Isa. 40:29-31; 2 Cor. 12:9-10). Whatever evil forces arise in your life, the answer to enduring them and being victorious over them is in the Lord. Put your faith in God, love Him, and keep His commandments (1 Jn. 5:3-5). ■

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

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