

The Gospel According to Luke

PROOF OF FAITH

PART 2

Do you have faith?

READ 1 JOHN 1:9

INTRODUCTION

As we look at a Centurion who shows great faith and humility, it makes us take a closer look at what we believe and how we interact with that faith. Many times our faith is based on what we can see around us as proof or on what God does for us through prayer. This faith is not all-together bad but it can be a faith that is dependent on outside proof as opposed to a pure faith that trusts God implicitly. In 1 John, we see that God is faithful to us and we, in response, are to have faith that He is just and able to forgive us of those sins.

This is a difficult concept because we often think that we need to earn forgiveness. This is something that we learn from a very young age in our modern times. Do good things and you will be rewarded. Do bad things and you will be punished. While there is merit to this line of thinking (and most would say it is the correct thing to teach) with God, things are different. God shows us that while we were still enemies with Him, He sent His Son to die on a cross for the forgiveness of our sins. (Romans 5:6-11) This is not something that we can comprehend because we are trained to be a certain way and we will get certain things. This is where faith and works collide.

If we are not careful, our faith in Christ will turn into what we can do that will earn His favor as opposed to the free gift of salvation that He has given us regardless of our works. (Ephesians 2:8-9) Salvation comes through confession of sin, repentance of sin, and believing in Christ and following Him. That is what it takes to be saved and we get ourselves into a world of hurt when we try and add certain actions or “works” to that list because we feel better about doing something to earn the gift. It is a gift that, for some reason, Christ was willing to give and we, in response, give Him all the glory and serve Him for our lifetimes in hopes of Him being more honored through our lives.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Luke 7:1-10. How does this account of the Centurion relate to what is being said in 1 John? What encouragement can we take from these verses?
2. What is your faith based on? Do you find it easy to take it as a free gift or do you try to earn it? Why?
3. What kind of faith were you taught? Was it one of belief and trust or was it one of works? What is your faith based on now?
4. Read Romans 5:6-11. Why are these verses so important? What makes them significant in the conversation of works based faith?
5. What are some of the ways we can avoid a “works based faith”? How can we hold each other accountable to living a life completely in faith?

WRAP UP

There are certainly consequences to following Jesus. Some of these include a change of lifestyle or even a new living situation. We are made into something new when we follow Christ and that is a good thing. (Romans 12:1-2) That new creation is one that should desire to serve the Lord with all of our heart. That doesn't mean we are saved by those actions, just that we are proving that we have a life-changing faith.