

IS MY FAITH THE REAL DEAL?

Our faith is real if it...

I. ...causes us to realize our state.

- A. You and I have a problem, along with all the accountable people in the world - the problem of sin.
- B. We become sinners when we choose to break God's law by committing some transgression of it.
- C. It is a sad fact that many don't ever come to this realization.
 - 1. They feel they are good people.
 - 2. God will save them simply because they are good.
- D. You and I, if we have a real faith in God, must come to realize our state and that we need God in our lives in order to be saved (Matthew 5:3).
 - 1. We have got to hit the spiritual rock bottom.
 - 2. We must lose a sense of self and gain a reliance on God.
- E. Without this, there is no faith in God because God's word shows us what we are outside of His will and that we must be obedient to Him in order to be saved.

II. ...causes us to recognize Christ as Lord.

- A. Jesus told a group of Jews that unless they believed in Him they would die in their sins (John 8:24).
- B. On another occasion, Jesus said that the person who believes and is baptized would be saved, but the person that does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:16).
- C. A realization of our state leads to a recognition of a need of a Savior.
 - 1. We come to a realization that we are lost and cannot save ourselves.
 - 2. We need someone or something to save us because we can't do it on our own.
- D. Jesus is that Savior (1 John 4:14).
- E. He is the only Savior offered by God (Acts 5:31).
- F. The world offers a lot of saviors that are false - Mohammed, Buddha, man himself.
- G. There is only one Savior from God and that is Jesus Christ.

III. ...causes us to respond properly to God's will.

- A. Remember that faith in God involves seeking Him.
- B. Once we realize our state, of being a sinner, and recognized Jesus as Lord, we have to respond properly to His will in order to have our sin removed.
- C. Regrettably, it is at this point that many show their lack of faith.
 - 1. By this I mean, they don't respond properly to God's will once they have this realization and this recognition.
 - 2. They begin to seek removal of their sins by some other plan than that of God.
 - 3. They turn to some other means of salvation than Jesus and His blood.

- D. True faith, biblical faith, will not allow a person to do anything other than what God has said to do in matters of salvation.
- E. If we truly recognize Jesus as Lord, we will understand that His will is sovereign and not to be trifled with.
- F. We will do what He has said to do to be saved and faith is involved in each step.
 - 1. Repentance has been called the decision of faith because one has decided to change his life for good.
 - 2. Confession has been called the declaration of faith because with the mouth and life a person is declaring to the world that Jesus is His Master.
 - 3. Baptism has been called the demonstration of faith because that person submits to a burial in water to have his sins washed away by the blood of Christ.
- G. No other plan is a proper response to God's will.

IV. **...causes us to resolve to follow the pattern.**

- A. Once we respond properly to God's will, we must then be faithful to His plan for the lives of His children.
- B. God's word is the pattern we must follow (Romans 6:17; 1 Timothy 1:16).
 - 1. This is the standard by which you and I are going to be judged (John 12:48).
 - 2. Many don't like the idea of a pattern theology, but God has always laid out His plan for man in the form of a pattern to follow.
 - a. The very first family fight we see was because Cain did not follow the pattern laid out by God.
 - b. We know there was a pattern because Abel offered His gift by faith (Hebrews 11:4) and faith comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17).
 - 3. We can follow other people but only wherein they follow Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:1).
- C. Christians are commanded to be faithful (Revelation 2:10).
 - 1. Faith will not allow one to deviate from God's word because it is formed out of God's word.
 - 2. Faith can't play an instrument in worship.
 - 3. Faith can't partake of the Lord's Supper on any other day than the first day of the week.
 - 4. Faith can't indulge in sins of the flesh.
 - 5. Faith can't drink alcoholic beverages.
 - 6. Faith can't use drugs.
 - 7. Faith can't wear immodest clothing in public.
 - 8. Faith can't commit adultery.
- D. The reason faith can't do these things is because it is based on God's word and the one with faith in God will be faithful to God and His will.
- E. The one who faithfully responded properly to God's will understands he/she made a commitment when baptized.
 - 1. We really need to make sure our young people understand before

they are baptized about this.

2. We don't get baptized because that is what we do in the church of Christ, or because our friends did it.
3. We do it because we want to show our faithfulness to the one who can save us.
4. If we aren't ready to make that commitment or understand it, we don't need to be baptized.

V. ...causes us to react well to suffering and persecution.

- A. All that live godly in Christ Jesus are going to suffer.
- B. How do we react to that suffering and persecution?
 1. Faith causes us to be anchored to Christ.
 2. Faith understands that it is through tribulation we will enter heaven (Acts 14:22).
- C. Persecution is a blessing (Matthew 5:10-12).
- D. Sorrows of this life should cause us to cling more closely to Christ and long more deeply for heaven to rid ourselves of these things that hurt us in this life.
- E. Sadly, through the ages, some of God's people fell away when problems and trials arose (Hebrews 6:4-6).
- F. Others pressed on, relying on God in faith, continuing to do God's will even when it cost them their lives (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

VI. If our faith is real it will cause us to receive the crown of life.

- A. Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:8.
 1. We show that we love His appearing by being faithful to His word.
 2. We can say with John, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."
- B. The unbelieving will be lost (Revelation 21:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
- C. The faithful will gain heaven (Matthew 25:21).