

What Kind Of Faith?

Joe Slater

Far be it from me to minimize faith! *“Without faith it is impossible to please”* God (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus included faith with justice and mercy as *“weightier matters of the law”* (Matthew 23:23). Never underestimate the importance of faith!

In more than 200 times that “faith” is mentioned in the New Testament we find references to great faith, little faith, dead faith, faith unto the saving of the soul, and others. Not every reference to faith/belief denotes exactly the same thing.

Jesus’ words, *“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,”* were spoken *“to those Jews who **believed** Him”* (John 8:31-32). Yet they promptly argued with Him, and Jesus said they even sought to kill Him (vv. 33-40). He further said that God wasn’t their father, but they were of their father the devil (vv. 41-44). They “believed,” but their faith was superficial and shallow. They neither trusted nor obeyed.

Such deficient faith appears also in John 2:23-25 where Jesus didn’t commit Himself to those who “believed” only because they were “wowed” by His miracles. Nicodemus began with that same shallow faith based solely on miracles (John 3:2); fortunately, his faith grew as he learned more.

Even some who confess Jesus as Lord lack saving faith. Jesus said, *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven”* (Matthew 7:21).

Faith isn’t merely intellectual or emotional. Biblical faith is trusting obedience. What kind of faith do you have?

He Healed Them All

Today, I went to the doctor with my parents who are now in their eighties. I was to meet them at the entrance of the clinic at the appointed time and we would go up to the 3rd floor office together.

When I arrived at the clinic, I was taken aback by the number of cars in the parking lot. The place was packed! I had arrived just before my parents, so I waited by the main entrance. A steady stream of people was coming and going, some on crutches, others in wheelchairs. Some of the folks were visibly ill or injured. Literally hundreds of sick and injured were converging on the clinic, seeking healing from the medical staff. I wondered, could I be witnessing anything like the multitudes who came to Jesus to be healed by Him? I think so, but only a fraction of how many He saw!

The Bible says, *“Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them”* (Matthew 4:24). Can you imagine the parade of humanity that must have come to the “Healing Man”? People who had no hope of a healthy, functional, and self-supporting life now found hope in this Jesus of Nazareth. But Jesus was not there only to make well the physically sick, but to save them and the world from the sickness of sin.

Sadly, many of the people I saw today will not recover from their illnesses. I can’t help but wonder how many of those seeking wellness from the doctors and caregivers have sought to be spiritually healed by the Lord? Yes, Jesus Christ was and is, as the old song says, the Great Physician; and He is able to heal all of our soul’s diseases.

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX)

How Much Does It Cost?

With rising inflation, we are interested in getting good value for our dollar. How much an item costs is often the determining factor in whether or not we make the purchase. In the spiritual realm, salvation is offered to everyone without cost. We cannot purchase our redemption. It is enjoyed solely on the basis of Calvary’s sacrifice on our behalf.

We should hasten to add that there is a vast difference between trying to purchase or merit salvation and accepting God’s grace through faith (Ephesians 2:10). Faith is the means whereby we accept God’s grace. Paul tells us that faith is our introduction *“into this grace in which we stand”* (Romans 5:12). Faith provides access into the grace of God. Keep in mind that biblical faith is active, obedient trust. James warns us that *“faith without works is dead”* (James 2:26). How can we tell the difference between works of faith and works that are an attempt to purchase or earn salvation? Works of faith are in accordance to God’s word. Faith “comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). No matter how sincere one might be, if what is done is not in compliance with the word of God, it cannot be rendered as an act of faith. Works of faith are also measured by what takes place in the heart. Galatians 5:6 reveals that the kind of faith which pleases the Lord is *“faith working through love.”*

What does it cost to be a Christian? It costs nothing at all. On the other hand, it costs everything. We cannot purchase salvation on the basis of our own righteous deeds. However, following Jesus costs us everything. Salvation cost the Father the life of His only begotten Son (John 3:16; Romans 5:7-8). Our salvation is not cheap. It cost Jesus His life. Yet, he gave His life willingly because of His great love for us. We should keep this in mind when asked what we are willing to give for Him.

--Glen Elliot (Greenbrier, AR)