

Our Faith Is Not Blind!

Joe Slater

Skeptics of various types routinely mock Christians for having “blind faith.” Unfortunately, many professing Christians have fed that myth by basing their faith (if you can even call it that) on their feelings. Ask them why they believe as they do, and their answer is, “I feel it right here in my heart!” Even some of the songs we sing betray this notion. One quick example: *I Serve a Risen Savior* has this line at the end of the chorus: “You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart!”

Does Jesus live within your heart? Assuredly so! But is that **how you know** He lives? Certainly not! You would know nothing of His death, burial, and resurrection but for the fact that God has revealed it in His word! Because His word has been revealed, confirmed, and recorded, our faith rests on solid evidence; it is definitely not blind! And when we put our confident trust in Jesus and obey His will, we ought to feel good about it! But let’s keep things in order: first come the facts (as revealed in the Bible, John 17:17); then comes faith, which is based on the facts (Rom. 1:16); finally come good feelings (Acts 8:39).

Facts, faith, and feelings, in that order. When feelings are the basis for faith, we’re on dangerous ground! Saul of Tarsus felt like he was doing right by persecuting Christians. Islamic jihadists feel like they are doing right by blowing themselves up to kill Jews and Christians. Those feelings are as real as yours. If feelings are the basis for acceptable faith, then we should honor those behaviors! (But they aren’t!)

Bottom line, a Christian’s faith isn’t blind, but rests on the rock-solid evidence of the revealed, confirmed, recorded word of God.

The Main Thing

Unthinkable! The very idea that Jesus died in vain is repulsive. Even to entertain the thought that God’s eternal purpose could be nullified seems nearly blasphemous. But rendering the cross of Christ powerless is precisely what Paul said he sought to avoid by not preaching the gospel in eloquent speech (1 Cor. 1:17). “*The word of the cross,*” he further maintained, is “*the power of God*” (v. 18).

Paul assured the Corinthians that they had not responded to his preaching because it was filled with beautiful oratory or persuasive philosophy or worldly wisdom. Instead, he said, “*I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*” (1 Cor. 2:2).

The message of the cross is God’s power to salvation (Rom. 1:16). That message is to be preached and taught and shared. The church’s responsibility is to spread that good news.

It is true that the Bible teaches us to be better husbands and wives and parents and children and employees and employers, friends, neighbors, and citizens. From it we learn how we can have stronger, more meaningful relationships. There are principles that can help us be more fiscally responsible. We are able to be better people, more fulfilled, contented, and purposeful by following the Bible’s teaching. But the fact is, we can be all of those things and share all of those valuable teachings and yet make the cross of Christ powerless if we fail to get around to teaching the essential message: the word of the cross.

The old saying is true: “The main thing is keeping the main thing the main thing!”

--David Deffenbaugh (Oklahoma City) via *Old Paths*

COLD WATER CHRISTIANITY

One hymn I remember well from my childhood is called “Room in God’s Kingdom.” In this three-stanza hymn, the writer describes various aspects of Christian service and states in the chorus, “There is work that we all can do.” The song leader at the congregation we attended selected this song on a regular basis. Sadly, many of our present-day hymnals have omitted this song.

A line in the song makes reference to giving a cold cup of water in Jesus’ name. In reality, Jesus made two references to giving a cup of water. In Mark 9:38-41, John asks about someone they did not know who was casting out devils in Jesus’ name. Jesus then commends that individual and makes reference to the importance of presenting a cup of water. In Matthew 10:42, as Jesus sends out the twelve, He once again makes reference to giving a cup of water to a disciple. However, this cup differs in that it contains cold water.

Obtaining cold water in Jesus’ day would have taken a special trip to the well. Water at room temperature was certainly available, but cold water took added effort. It involved personal sacrifice. Presenting a cup of cold water required discipleship. Today, it’s those individuals who take seriously Jesus’ commands that continue to present the cold water. These Christians are not afraid to roll up their sleeves, go the extra mile, and get the job done.

Are you a cold water Christian?

--Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)