

which is all receiving." So Paul exclaims in our text, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace..."

Do you see with me then the call to faith is not only so important and so incredible, but clearly also so inviting? The call to faith is so inviting, for since the call to faith is also totally a grace matter, a gracious call to freely receive all what God will freely give in and through Christ Jesus, therefore that call may be made to all, and the promise offered to all by faith "is sure to all the seed", says God's Word, whoever will believe among Jew or Gentile. The gracious gospel call is to all peoples and the call is look to Jesus Christ, and whoever believes on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

The great evil and offense of unbelief is that it is not listening to God Who only speaks truth and is infinitely sincere in His gospel call to all. We should listen to God above all, but unbelief won't listen to God at all. Are you, dear friends, hearing and responding to the gospel call in faith? That all may truly believe in Jesus Christ with a true faith, consider yet with me our fourth and last point about the gracious call to faith, namely, that it is so impressive beyond measure. The call to faith is not only so important, so incomparable, so inviting, but also so impressive.

Why should we say that? Well, consider what is all truly and freely and eternally given to us through faith in Jesus Christ. Without faith in Christ we are hopeless and helpless and hell bound beyond question, but through faith in Christ, we are saved and rich in true blessings for body and soul for now and forever and heaven bound without question. It is so impressive the change of status and outlook and future that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Your and my salvation, our justification and sanctification and glorification is all "of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed...."

When you, by the Holy Spirit, grasp this gospel of grace and that it is of faith that it might all be of grace, the believer knows and experiences it is tremendous beyond words, and it calls for endless praise and adoration, this great gospel of Jesus Christ. Dear friends, the gracious call to faith, be sure to understand and receive it as a call so important, so incomparable, so inviting, and so impressive! For this gospel call "is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed...." Even so, forsaking all, I trust Him! Do you too? Amen.

Hans Overduin, Radio Pastor

August 5, 2007

Publication No.322

BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



FAITH AND GRACE

Have you ever asked the question why in the Christian religion the gospel message declares a person is saved by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ? Hear what God's Word says looking especially at Romans 4:16 where we read about the gospel message, "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." What I now would stress from this verse is that salvation by faith especially means salvation by grace completely. Consider with me the gracious call to faith and notice how it is a call so important, so incomparable, so inviting, and so impressive!

How is the gracious call to faith in Jesus Christ and His gospel so important beyond measure? Well, it is all important because the fact is, as we can read also in Hebrews 11:6, "without faith it is impossible to please God." Faith is the instrumental means by which you receive the gospel of Jesus Christ and believe the promises of God's Word for yourself. You need true faith in Jesus Christ to be saved! This also comes out clearly in the Romans 4 passage in its context. In the first three chapters of Romans, the apostle Paul teaches indisputably how all mankind is under the curse and bondage of sin as fallen sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. Every human being since Adam and Eve is conceived and born in sin and by nature depraved and full of sin. No one, since the Fall into sin, comes into this world as a saved person but as a guilty condemnable sinner before God, our sole Maker and ultimate Judge.

But as Paul then expresses in Romans 3:21 and following, there is hope for all for God sent His Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and all who have faith in Jesus Christ shall be saved. In Romans 4 then Paul shows from the life story of Abraham and of David how that they were saved by grace through faith in God and His promised Redeemer. Romans 3:26 teaches how God at the present time in our New Testament age demonstrates His righteousness, "that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." What is implied in the text and, indeed, in all of Scripture, apart from faith in Jesus Christ is that you can't be saved and won't be saved. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." [John 3:36]

From this we learn it is important beyond measure that you and I have true faith in Jesus Christ.

That this gracious call to faith is so important beyond measure is something you may well have heard before, but it bears repetition, especially in our age of so much tolerance for all kinds of beliefs and faiths and in our age of pluralism and relativism! There is a teaching out there, sometimes referred to as universalism, which asserts that all will be saved in the end, all will go to heaven, and God will send no one at all to hell, except the devil maybe. But that is false teaching, indeed, it is the lie of the devil and the antichrist spirit of the age that promotes this idea. So it is good and wholesome and beneficial even to be reminded from God's infallible unchanging authoritative Word that the gracious call to faith is so important, beyond measure even, for without true faith in Christ you simply won't be saved. God works faith in the heart by His Holy Spirit through the Word of God, convicting of sin and calling to come to Jesus the Saviour.

The gracious call to faith is a matter so important, and what a mercy and favour from God that also now again the call to faith is being preached and given in Jesus' name. How good God is in granting you to hear it also now. And that you too will respond to the gracious call to faith, notice next with me how this is a call so incomparable beyond measure! Here we need to think just of the uniqueness of the gospel call to faith, and the basis of this call, and the meaning of this call.

The call to faith in Christ and the teaching of salvation by grace through faith is so unique for it is declaring to us that God saves sinners not by any works or worthiness of ourselves. All other religions promise a salvation that is dependent somehow on a person's works or faithfulness in devotion to their gods. But the Christian faith teaches salvation by grace through faith, not of works that we do, lest any man should boast. In the Christian faith, the gospel of the Bible, you are saved apart from any single work or contribution on your part. You are totally eternally saved without a single stitch of anything that you contribute. You can contribute absolutely nothing to your salvation being a guilty depraved sinner in yourself, and the gospel message is you need not contribute anything whatsoever to be totally saved, but you are saved by grace through faith, and God designed that it be by faith, that it might be according to grace, says Paul in Romans 4:16.

But this incomparable gracious call to faith has a rock bottom basis and solid foundation on which it stands, namely, the gracious and glorious Person of Christ and all His perfect saving work on sinner's behalf! The good news of the gospel is that in and through Jesus Christ, God has in the place of sinners and on behalf of His people lived out and accomplished that perfect righteousness before God that He justly calls for from us, and Jesus Christ at the same time has perfectly and completely endured the full punishment for sin that we deserve, left to ourselves. Behind the gracious

call to faith is the gracious merciful Triune God of salvation Who in Christ Jesus, the promised Redeemer, has, as one preacher expressed it, "absorbed the wrath of God, bore our sins and purchased our freedom from the guilt and corruption and punishment of sin, and Christ has provided a perfect righteousness and provision for us; He has defeated death, He has disarmed Satan, He has purchased a final healing and holiness for His people, and He has all the power to bring us to God as those perfectly reconciled, truly redeemed, and wholly renewed." The gracious call to faith in Christ, and salvation by grace through faith is in this gospel context and the accomplishments of redemption through Jesus Christ the Lord. The Holy Spirit works faith in and through the Word of the Gospel proclaimed and applied to the hearts of the hearers.

And now to see even more that the call to faith is a gracious call incomparably so, notice yet the meaning of faith, or what actually faith is. Faith in Christ, as God requires that from us, is not a work that we do but it is by the power of the Holy Spirit under the conviction of the truth of God's Word, simply believing and receiving all that God has done for our salvation in and through Christ Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. Faith is recognizing and accepting Christ has paid all the debt we owe to God, and He has purchased all the perfect righteousness God justly requires from us. Of ourselves we never can pay the debt we owe, and we never can accomplish any perfect righteousness before God, but the gospel message is you don't have to either, but trust in Christ, believe in Him, and all He is and has done becomes yours and mine, by grace alone through faith alone.

Salvation is by faith that it might be according to grace. Faith means receiving something as opposed to doing something. Faith is that which welcomes the divine solution of salvation to our human predicament as sinners. Faith is the instrumental means of holding up the empty sinful hand pleading God's mercy and grace for Jesus' sake. Faith makes crystal clear that God does the saving, and needs to, shall you ever be truly saved! Faith is tailor-made to say, all you need is with Christ Jesus the Saviour. Andrew Fuller, a gospel preacher long ago, stated we are saved by faith, because "faith is a peculiarly receiving grace." Faith receives not just salvation from Christ, but Christ from Whom salvation flows in all its riches and benefits for us. Faith links us up to the Saviour in Whom and from Whom all salvation blessings are found. Faith is not coming to God with something of ourselves but coming to God with nothing but all that is not good, and looking to Him, calling to Him for all that is good, everything necessary for the whole of our salvation. Faith is not coming to God with anything, but coming to God for everything for Jesus' sake, and coming to Him again and again in that same way. Do you so come to God in Christ Jesus? Are you living in true faith in Him? Oh, the incomparable Christian gospel message and the gracious call to faith, as someone put it, "it's all about grace - which is all giving, and faith