

008 - Faith and Love - Ephesians 1:15-16a - 2014-07-13

Call to Worship: 1 John 3:23

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 2:4

Sermon: "Faith and Love" Ephesians 1:15-16a

Benediction: 2 Timothy 1:13

The last three times we have discussed the spiritual blessing of an inheritance, a share in all the riches of God in Christ Jesus. Last time we concentrated on how God caused us to obtain the inheritance by working it according to the counsel of His will, so that even though believing in Christ is something we do, our believing would be understood as His work in us, to the praise of His glory.

We now see how the apostle builds on that truth by teaching us this:

Since faith in the Lord Jesus is the work of God in a person, hearing of someone's faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints is cause for us to thank God.

I. Understand what had happened (15)

A. The apostle had received news about the Christians in Ephesus, had heard about them from someone

1. of their faith in the Lord Jesus
2. of their love for all the saints

B. Hearing about their faith and love had caused the apostle to do something (16a)
He gave thanks to God for them without ceasing

II. Understand the connection between what had happened and what we just learned about the blessing of obtaining an inheritance; OR Why when the apostle heard of their faith and love, did he give thanks to God?

A. At the beginning of verse 15 we see "therefore" or "wherefore" or "for this reason"

B. The reason goes all the way back to verse 11

1. God works all things; so, if we through faith in Jesus Christ obtained an inheritance in Christ, even our faith is the work of God
2. He did it that way so that we who believe in Christ would be to the praise of His glory, not our own
3. So, when Paul heard of people with faith in Christ, He understood their faith in Christ to be the work of God in them, so He thanked God for them!

C. When the apostle heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus, did he

1. congratulate them on their excellent choice?
2. commend them for making the right decision?
3. praise them for how they stopped resisting the Lord and let Him come in?

Since faith in the Lord Jesus is the work of God in a person, hearing of someone's faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints is cause for us to thank God.

III. APPLICATION: Understand how this truth has been abandoned by our Southern Baptist brothers

- A. shift of official doctrine 1689 - 1742 - 1812 - 1833 - 1925 - 1963 - 2000
- B.

IV. APPLICATION: Understand how this truth causes me to insist on true profession of faith

- A. pastors normally hear about circumstances and actions
- B. we need to hear about faith in the Lord Jesus
 - 1. initial faith
 - 2. continuing faith

V. APPLICATION: Understand how this truth prevents our using the invitation system or in any other way pressing people for a decision

- A. it is not helpful as a means
- B. it produces false conversion
- C. we know there is no real pressure to do it

VI. APPLICATION: Make use of this truth in understanding your own conversion

- A. the case of a child who loves Jesus, but only much later understands his need for a savior
- B. the case of a person who

VII. APPLICATION: Make use of this truth in communicating about your own conversion

- A. what we typically say
- B. how Paul spoke: 1 Timothy 1:12-17
- C. how we might speak (following Paul as above)
 - 1. thanking Christ Jesus, thanking God
 - 2. describing our former sinfulness
 - 3. attributing our conversion to the grace of the Lord
 - 4. attributing God's actions to the glory of God
 - 5. ascribing all praise to God

Since faith in the Lord Jesus is the work of God in a person, hearing of someone's faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints is cause for us to thank God.

Faith in Christ and Love for All the Saints

Faith in the Lord Jesus was the main thing all along

Faith in the Lord Jesus was hotly contested in the first generation

Paul was contesting for faith against the circumcision party

James was contesting for faith against others

John was contesting for faith against antinomians

Faith in the Lord Jesus was hotly contested in the Reformation

not faith per se, but “faith alone”

Faith is the thing contested for here and now, also

Revivalism would have us lose it

I. These are inward, yet show themselves outwardly

Note that the apostle has heard about them

II. They are important because of their object

A. Faith is in Christ

B. Love is for all the saints

Colossians 1:3-4 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, (4) since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints;

1 Thessalonians 3:5-8 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain. (6) But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you-- (7) therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. (8) For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

Philemon 1:4-5 I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, (5) hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints,

Gill:

These two graces, faith and love, are inseparable; they always go together, and are to be found in the same persons; and where they are, they cannot be hid, as they were not in these Ephesians; their faith was professed by them, and was made public, and their love showed itself in deeds, as well as in words, to the saints: hence the apostle came to hear of them both, upon the certain relation of others; for these things were come abroad, and were talked of;

Goodwin:

The apostles provokes them to thanksgiving and to further increasing in grace by shewing what is own prayers and thanksgivings were to God for them

consideration of the greatness of the benefits of God toward us . . . the soul . . . is provoked to give thanks to God

faith and love together, both as the two eminent graces, and as the two great evangelical commandments, summing up all in these two

likewise, the whole work of conversion

1 Timothy 1:13-14 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. (14)
And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

he doth not speak simply of their believing at first . . . It was the continuation of their faith, whereof he had heard.

Place in Goodwin

<http://www.archive.org/stream/worksofthomasgoo01good#page/268/mode/1up>

Call to Worship: Psalm 119:17-18

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 3:5-14

Sermon: "Thanks and Prayers --- For What?" Ephesians 1:15-18a

Benediction: 2 Peter 1:2

634 We Praise Thee, O God

406 I Hear Thy Welcome Voice

370 We Have Heard the Joyful Sound

500 He Leadeth Me

437 Christ, Of All My Hopes the Ground

677 Nothing But the Blood