



Blackfoot Church of Christ

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The Faith of God

By Doy Moyer

Perhaps it sounds strange to think in terms of God having faith, at least in the typical sense that we think of it. However, there is a phrase, easily overlooked, that Paul uses in Romans 3 that says exactly this:

“What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?” (Rom 3:3)

The phrase “faithfulness of God” is the “faith of God”. Let’s think about the context. Paul speaks in Romans 1 of the Gentiles (non-Christian) who, by their actions, suppressed truth in unrighteousness. Several specific sins are listed, and Paul argues that there is no excuse for their failing to acknowledge God. In chapter two, Paul shows that those who judged the Gentiles for their sins were also guilty. This included the Jews who perhaps thought that since they were the beneficiaries of God’s Law and covenant, they were exempt from such guilt. They were hypocritical for thinking that they could act contrary to God’s Law while thinking they were a “a guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness” (2:19, a reference to Isa 42:6). God would judge them just as He would judge the Gentiles. All have sinned (3:23), and all deserve God’s wrath. Everyone does some things that are in line with God’s will, including those Gentiles who did not have the Law (2:14-15), but no one does everything that God’s Law required. The true Jew was not one who simply showed outward signs of keeping the Law (like circumcision), but rather was one whose heart was truly invested in wanting to do God’s will (2:28-29; cf. Deut 10:16; 30:6). This should be a lesson for us.

The Jews, then, were not faithful to the demands of the Law. They, like the Gentiles, were sinners and in need of God’s help. As chapter three begins, the questions are posed, “Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?” Paul answers, “Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews

were entrusted with the oracles of God.” That is true, but what happened when they were unfaithful? Did that somehow nullify the faithfulness of God in keeping His promises? “By no means! Let God be true though everyone were a liar!” (cf. Ps 116:11) God will never fail to keep His promises.

Herein the faith of God is front and center. Paul argues that true salvation is the result of God keeping His promise (to Abraham), and the promise rests on grace (4:16). This would happen through Christ. The remarkable part of this is that what we are really being told here is that salvation first comes because of the “faith of God.” That is, God is faithful, and it is this truth that stands as the foundation for everything else Paul is arguing.

In reading Romans, we should already know that this was to be a major point. The thesis of Romans is in 1:16-17 where we read that in the gospel is God’s power for salvation, but why? “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’” Each of these phrases has been discussed and debated for a long time. Is the “righteousness of God” referring to God’s righteous character, or is it referring to the righteousness that God gives? Or both? At first that seems to be up in the air, but when we get to Romans 3:3, I believe the answer is given: The “righteousness of God” first refers to God’s own faithful character, and it is based upon this that salvation is provided. Perhaps this can clue us in to an understanding that “from faith to faith” involves God’s faith as the foundation for our faith. Without God’s faith first, our faith would be futile.

Consider further Paul’s point in Romans 3:21-22: “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.”

This section expands on the thesis of 1:16-17. God’s righteousness, His faithfulness to His promises, was demonstrated apart from the Law, and Abraham is given as the proof of this (ch. 4). The Law and the Prophets bear witness, but they are not the source of God’s righteousness. Next is the phrase, “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.”

“Faith in Jesus Christ” can just as well be translated “faith of Jesus Christ,” given that “Jesus Christ” here is genitive. That is, this is “the faithfulness of Christ” (as the NET translates it). This understanding solves the awkwardness of saying “through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe,” as that makes “faith” and “believe” circularly referring to the same people (we are saved by faith if we believe). Instead, this affirms that God’s righteousness was fully manifested and realized in Jesus Christ as He carried out God’s plans and purposes in going

to the cross. Because Christ was faithful “to show God's righteousness” (v. 25), then those who believe have a foundation for salvation.

“There is no distinction,” says Paul. There is no distinction in the fact that all are sinners, and there is no distinction in the fact that Christ died for all and makes salvation possible for any and all who come to Him in faith (i.e., trust and all that such implies). Because of who God is and what Christ has done as a demonstration of God’s righteousness, we may have hope. Isn’t that amazing? Is it not a relief to know that when we trust God, we are basing this trust on God’s righteousness and faithful character as finally demonstrated by Christ?

Rejoicing in our Labor

By Ross Ward

The book of Ecclesiastes has some very poignant teachings about this world. The writer, we will assume to be Solomon, evaluates the vanity of life upon the earth. This is the man who God gave an abundance of wisdom, along with many other blessings in this world, II Chr 1:10-11. He saw vanity in the works of his hand. His focus seems to be upon the temporal nature of these and that a person can obsess over them, which draws one away from God (both of these are challenges for us). Solomon may even realize these works of our hands are temporal and not eternal in nature. There are certainly many vanities of this world as he enumerates in his book, but he does at times give commendations to things of this world. He states in Ecc 5:18-19, “Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.¹⁹ Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.” Notice he states it is good to enjoy our labor that we take under the sun. No they are not eternal and placing undue value upon them will lead us away from God, but they are gifts from God, we can “rejoice in our labor” it is “our portion” from God. Realizing they are gifts from God may help us keep them in proper perspective. No, we cannot obsess over them nor live our life for the purpose of fulfilling these pleasures. Many are lost today because their whole focus in life is for the temporal pleasures of the world. As Christians, we can take heart that we have been blessed with the physical and can take joy in these things while we are here, after all they are gifts from God.

Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Angie Woodside has been diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis and has started treatments for it.
- Debbie is in DC and Ross will be traveling there tonight. Their new grandson is doing great. They will flying back Wednesday.
- April has been to the Dr's this past week in Boise. They are changing her medications
- The Christians in the Philippines.
- Bible class tonight is postponed till next week
- Next Sunday is our regular scheduled business meeting
- We have CD's of the meeting with Tim McPherson if any would like copies

For prayer requests, call or text

Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

Assignments

<u>Today</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Tom Mitchell Lord's Table – David Porter Sermon – Ross Ward	<u>Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Chad Mitchell Song Leader – David Porter Invitation – Ross Ward
<u>Next Sunday</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – David Porter Lord's Table – Ben Palmer Sermon – Ross Ward	<u>Next Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Chad Mitchell Song Leader – Ben Palmer Invitation – Ross Ward

Blackfoot Church of Christ
370 North Shilling Ave.
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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