

Can We Find Real Faith on Earth Today?

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Before you think I'm judging, this is not my own question. This is a question that Jesus posed and Luke recorded, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8b).

You may not recognize this important Scripture because it's almost impossible to hear it from the pulpit today. The prevailing attitude is that faith is positively flowing. Yet, before the Lord Jesus left this planet, He threw down this very serious question about the future.

It came after long teaching about the single power in creation responsible for all there is and all we see—faith. The Lord ended this dramatic class with a question that, on the surface, seems to make no sense. It's a question about the state of affairs when He returns to collect His church, His bride—Will he find faith?

In this question, what kind of faith did Jesus mean? He was really asking if He will find His and His Father's kind of faith when He returns. His question challenged those listening back then and challenges us as we read His words today. Will we believe to the end, to the saving of the soul? Or will we believe instead that we can receive our favorite parts of His truth and spit out the rest as bones?

Jesus asked about our faith in Him, His Father's kingdom and our new creation life. He is the anchor of all faith. He who is faith makes a statement concerning our faith to provoke us to think and examine our beliefs. From the sober overtone of His words, "real faith" is more challenging and perhaps less glamorous than today's "pop faith." The Christlike faith is

more humbling and crumbling than the simple, creative faith we have been taught.

Jesus taught us Christlike faith when he said, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ... He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 10: 34, 39). And, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life,, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26).

Today, Christians fear death and detest the idea of dying, even for the cross. Throughout Scripture, God reckons us concerning our faith in Him. He looks for an upright faith that changes us from the inside out. It's the kind of faith that makes us less dependent upon this world (and ourselves) and more dependent upon Him.

The soul cry of most believers is to live as close to the edge of redemption as possible and still inherit eternal life is. This "faith" wants to fit in with humanity and society, not be outfitted with the Lord Jesus Christ. We desire power, not purging. We want glory, not suffering. We want the riches of men above the eternal riches of Christ.

More than all that, we want Jesus on the throne, not Jesus on the cross. This is not a new idea. John wrote, "Therefore, knowing that they would come and take Him by force to make Him king, Jesus departed again to a mountain by Himself alone" (John 6:15). Why did Jesus walk away? Because that kind of faith is scary.

Christ had a different "faith" in mind as He was leaving the planet and permitting His beloved church to grow and prosper amid the kingdoms of men. He knew the reign of intellectualism would slander His kind of faith and present His laws of righteousness and truth as tyrannical and enslaving. He knew

the temptations would be hard, and the persecutions would be harsher. The standards of His Father would relentlessly pursue, irritate and clash with the latitudes of the world, thereby lulling His redeemed to sin.

Peter cautioned us about this. He said the world's promise to liberate us from our Maker and His seemingly rigid laws was really an instrument of bondage. " Although they promise them freedom, they themselves are slaves of corruption, for by that which a man is overcome, to this he is enslaved" (2 Pet. 2:19).

Yet the true believer is bombarded daily with questions about our precious liberty. After years of relationship with the Lord, why do we still ask, "Can we drink? Can we smoke? What exactly is hell? What is blaspheming the Holy Ghost? Is listening to worldly music a sin? If we fall into adultery or fornication, will we go to hell?"

Why don't we ask, "Should I love God? Can I give all I have to the poor? Can I visit the sick, singing praises to the Lord?" Generally, when these questions are raised, if they're raised at all, it is in this context: "Do I have to, and how much do I have to?" That shows our sinful mindset rather than holy mindset.

Christ-faith calls all things, even our sanctification and devotion, into His Father's control. Pure Jesus-like faith is a complete reliance on Him even to the death. That is the kind of faith the Savior is looking for when He returns to the earth. {eoa}

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