

What Has Become of Faith?

Shortly after the apostolic days some began to transform faith into something that it was not. Rather than faith remaining an effect or *fruit* of life it was made a *cause* of life. This error has led to one of the greatest practical and doctrinal divisions that there is in all of Christendom. The true *grace* of God is diminished, if not completely destroyed in some instances, because of this change. By keeping to the word of God we avoid such man-made perversions and continue in the truth. Notice in the following verses the cause and the effect.

*Jn. 3.36 He that believeth on the Son **hath** everlasting life ...*

*Jn.5.24 ... He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, **hath** everlasting life ...*

Both of these texts say in the simplest of terms that the one believing has life. *Has* is the Greek ἔχει, echei, 3ps. pres. ind. of ἔχω, echo, to have or possess. Life *must* precede faith. Therefore life is the *cause* of faith, and faith is the *effect* of life.

*Ga 5:22 But **the fruit of the Spirit is ... faith ...***

Since eternal life is a bestowal of God's grace upon sinners ...

*Joh 1:12 But **as many as received him**, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

*13 **Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.***

*1Jn.3.1 Behold what manner of love the Father **hath bestowed** upon us that we should be called the sons of God.*

... it is unreasonable and contrary to the Word of God to say that unregenerate sinners can produce spiritual fruit. It is unreasonable because faith must have a cause, which is God. How can a sinner be the cause of his own faith? Certainly faith cannot be the cause of itself. Nothing in all of creation causes itself. So, no one can believe except it is first *given* to them of God.

*Php 1:29 For **unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;***

It is contrary to the Word of God because the unregenerate sinner has no life of which faith must be the evidence. Faith is the evidence of something else which precedes it.

*Heb 11:1 Now **faith is the ... evidence of things not seen.***

The humanistic attempts to transform faith into something that it never was has usurped all the glory due to the thrice holy God for the salvation of the sinner. This perversion of faith renders the omnipotent God absolutely impotent to do anything for the sinner until he believes. Such faith has man as the great actor in salvation, and not God. This kind of faith says that Christ really didn't come to give His life a ransom for *anyone*. The whole redemptive work of Christ is contingent on whether one believes, or not. This kind of faith is the wind under the wings of so many of the antichrists that have risen in the world over these two millennia. What things have been done by this kind of faith!

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But as we have seen, faith is defined by the Word of God. Faith is the *result* of having eternal life, not the cause of it. Because we have *received* life, faith is imparted to us so that we may understand (He.11.3, *through faith we understand*) the things of God by Jesus Christ. How many of us have said, and it is true, that we might have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ many, many times before, BUT there was that one time when I *heard* it for *the first time in my life*. A biblically defined faith tells us how that was so. Here are some Scriptures which teach faith is a gift of God.

Faith is a gift of God. (Jn.6.29; Acts 17.31, *assurance*, Gr. *πιστις*, faith; Acts 18.27; 1Co.3.5; Eph.2.8,9; Phl.1.29; 1Ti.1.14; 1Pe.1.21;)

In conclusion the Father gave some by His grace to the Son before the foundation of the world; for these Jesus Christ came to pay their ransom with His own blood, and these shall *receive* the gift of life so that they believe on both the Father and the Son.

file: Faith