

Salvation Requires Obedient Faith

Scripture: James 2:14 “What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?”

Introduction:

In 1999, Duane Ingle told me that he had someone I needed to meet. So he picked a time and came by and picked me up and we drove over to Waterloo to meet an older man named Collin Crawford, most of you know Collin who is now probably 85 or so, but that was my first time to meet him.

We sat down at his kitchen table and got to know Collin and I was really surprised when Collin started preaching one of the finest gospel sermons I had ever heard. He did a really good job at thoroughly explaining salvation and even explained the pitfalls of missing the mark of God. I was pretty much ready to sing the song of invitation....

But, Duane had clued me in before we arrived that Collin had never obeyed the gospel. So during this great gospel sermon that Collin was preaching, I did something very out of the ordinary, knowing full well it could be taken as me being rude, I launched out and cut him off.

I explained that he had no right to preach the saving message of faith and claim it as his own if he wasn't going to obey it and be baptized. I had taken a great risk but immediately I could see the expression on his face....he knew I was right and he simply said “*ok now preach it to me*”

And I did. I explained that salvation does indeed come through the blood of Christ to all those who believe and act upon their belief.

When I got done I asked Collin when he wanted to be baptized into Christ, I told him we could do it that night which was a church night or wait till the next day, and he thought for a second and said tomorrow will work just fine.

So we baptized Collin the next night and boy was he excited. The next Sunday he told me that here he was an old man and just partaking of the Lord's supper for the first time. He was excited....

Transitional Statement:

Church, there are a few among us who have been considering starting a relationship or maybe some are realizing the need to rekindle a relationship with God. Today I hope that we can understand that relationship with God begins and continues to exist through an obedient faith.

Lesson:

I. In the beginning

A. Mankind was placed in paradise relationship with God in the Garden of Eden

1. And that relationship existed through Faith and Obedience to God
2. Man was given instruction to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and he was suppose to trust God in that.

-And when he was obedient, he had a relationship with God

-But, you know the story, Mankind was given a Choice

-And They choose Sin

-And that sin Separated man from God Isa 59:1-2

B. You see, Trust and obedience was required for relationship with God and when the obedience was removed the relationship with God stopped.

II. So God, saw mankind in a pickle. You see man had made a wrong choice and now was unable to make it right with the eternal consequences of death. So God, in the most merciful display ever seen, calls all of mankind into His class room for a personal tutorial on how to have a relationship with Him. I am talking about the class room of the Old Testament...Gal. 3:24

A. Can you guess what He is going to tell them in this OT class room setting?

-Faith plus obedience equals relationship with Me.

B. So, during the OT, to have a relationship with God

1. He required them to have faith in Him
2. Obedience.....circumcised which was an act representative of cleansing, i.e. cutting away that which was unclean.

-And when Moses tried to just trust God and not obey the command of circumcision God was going to kill him till his wife, Zipporah stepped in and saved his bacon. Exodus 4:24ff

*When it came to understanding faith and obedience these Old Testament folks were so stubborn that class lasted 4000 years.....

-How would you like to enroll in that school.

III. Well you can only go to school so long and then you have to move from the school room setting to reality. You have to apply what has been learned and get your hands dirty so to speak. You've got to get out and apply what you have learned. So God dismissed the OT class out into the world of the NT and he gave them all a fresh start and opportunity by paying the penalty for their sins with the blood of His son Jesus the Christ and He gave mankind a new chance to have a relationship with Him.

Point to Note:

And just as always before God says if you want to have a relationship with me you must?You've got to Trust and Obey Me.

1. So when we talk about relationship with God we are essentially talking about salvation.
2. And to get into a relationship with God or to remain in a relationship with Him, we must Trust and Obey Him

A. When we talk about trusting God we are simply talking about Faith

1. Faith is the Greek word "Pistos" meaning a firm persuasion or conviction in God
 - a. And this only comes through hearing the word of God and believing itRomans 10:17
 - b. We can certainly be aware of God outside of scripture as is indicated in Romans 1:20

....but the firm conviction or trust in God comes only through His word.

2. Paul tells us that Salvation comes through faith Eph 2:8-9
3. And it is Faith that is credited as righteousness in Romans chapter 4
4. Romans 14:23 "...whatever is not of faith is sin"
5. So Faith is essential to salvation and comes through God's word
 - a. But, just like the past there are many today who think that only faith is needed for salvation....but that's not the case, salvation or relationship with God also requires obedience.

-Folks like this claim:

All you have to do is believe and your saved Rom 10:9-10, 13....if that were the case the whole flow of scripture would be in conflict with verses like:

- James 2:19 that says even the demons believe in Christ

-Does that make them saved? NO!

- Matt 7:21 that says not everyone that says unto me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven

-Just because you believe in me doesn't make you saved.

*Faith is a vital part of a package deal.....

B. As far as Obedience.....God says, here is what I want you to do with your faith

1. Initially, I want you to be circumcised just like we learned in the OT class, but not in the flesh, in the heart.....by being baptized (Col. 2:11-12)

- a. Remembering that circumcision represented cleansing, that is what baptism is about.....having your sins washed away..... (Acts 22:16)

-Baptism is being clothed with Christ Gal 3:26-27

-Clothed with His blood

-Ephesians 1:7

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace"

-Revelation 7:14 "I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

-And its through that blood that He takes away our sin and carried it Himself to the cross of Calvary.

2 Corinthians 5:21

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

b. Then at baptism we are untied with Christ Romans Chapter 6

-Get into Jesus Romans 6:3

-Through the death, burial and resurrection
Rom 6:3-4

-Which Paul calls the good news saying that it
saves you (1 Cor. 15:1-4)

-United with Him becoming His possession Matt 28:19

-*“into the name of”* in Greek means into the
possession of.

*We can't be saved outside of being in Christ or
being His possession

-John 14:6 *“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and
the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father
but through Me.”*

-Acts 4:12 *“And there is salvation in no one else;
for there is no other name under heaven that has
been given among men by which we must be saved*

c. Then, at baptism, we receive the gift (indwelling) of the
Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)

-That is God living in us

-As a down payment of our inheritance Eph Chapter 1

-Ron will be discussing this further next quarter in
a class on the Holy Spirit

Point to Note:

-We are not baptized by the Holy Spirit, In the new
Testament we read about Holy Spirit baptism and
it was done by the Holy Spirit for the direct
purpose of giving the apostles power in Acts
chapter 2 and letting the Jews know that salvation
had come upon the Gentiles in Acts 10. Both
these baptisms was not for the remission of sin but
were to bestow power and convince the Jews that
the Gentiles were to be included in salvation.

-The one baptism that Paul references in Eph 4:5 is
the immersion into water for the remission of sins
and that is the baptism that concerns us....

*it is the baptism into the name of Christ that we are talking about here, where we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit....God living in us.

d. At baptism we are reconciled to God Romans 5:10-11

-Relationship is given
-Salvation occurs 1 peter 3:18-22

-Because it is the point of faithful obedience.

e. At baptism a change happens

-New Beginning John 3:3 “Born again”
-Titus 3:5 calls it a regeneration

-Romans 6:4

“Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

-2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

-Transformation

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

f. Then we are added to the Church

-Acts 2:47

“praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

-1 Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

*We aren't voted in or we don't join the church

g. Then we have hope

1 Peter 1:3

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”

C. Once your in Christ and your relationship with God is established, God says if you want to continue this relationship your going to have to Trust and Obey Me.

-Hebrews 5:9

9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, NASU

-Revelation 2:10

“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

Conclusion:

Remember Collin Crawford, he has fallen away from the Lord, choosing only to believe but not be obedient to His commands.

So the question posses by James can faith without works save a man.....It's a rhetorical question.....NO! NO! NO!

Relationship with God requires Trusting & Obeying God.