

God: The Ultimate Humanitarian

Chapter Thirteen: A Humanitarian by Giving Us Saving Faith

One of the great proofs of God's love is the faith we have in our hearts. So often, people get confused as to what faith is and where it comes from.

By his perfect life and innocent death Jesus GIVES to us the precious gifts of faith, forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

Faith is an interesting concept because the Bible talks about it in two distinct ways. Before we are called or brought to faith and then after we are in faith.

It's important that we know and understand these two different ways the Bible talks about faith because that will help guide us in our discussions.

In the first case, the Holy Spirit is at work to bring us to faith through the Word. As we look at the Bible passages we will see why that it to God's glory. After we are in faith, then we are given direction to do things that will keep that faith strong. Things like Bible Study, coming to church, personal devotion, and attending the Lord's Supper regularly are all ways that our lives are filled with the Word so that the Holy Spirit can build us up in faith.

After we are in faith, we are also told to put that faith into action. We do this by praying, giving of our time, talents and treasures, spreading God's Word, being loving, caring and gentle. These are called the fruits of faith. They are the actions that a believer will naturally show.

This morning we will see God's love in calling us to faith and keeping us in that faith.

1. The Bible teaches that God has done everything to save us. God the Father gave the plan of salvation to Adam and Eve, Jesus carried out that plan perfectly, now the Holy Spirit works to give us what Jesus won (John 3:16). There is nothing we can or should add to God's perfect plan and the perfect work of Jesus. We answer questions like these many times in Bible Study, church, sermons and devotions.

- Who loved us from eternity? _____ **God** _____
- Who came to earth to save us? _____ **Jesus** _____
- Who lived that perfect life for us? _____ **Jesus** _____
- Who suffered and died on the cross? _____ **Jesus** _____
- Who declared it is finished? _____ **Jesus** _____
- Who rose from the dead to show that he had won the victory? _____ **Jesus** _____
- What does Jesus' resurrection show us about God the Father? **Accepted the price Jesus paid**
- What can or should we add to this perfect work? _____ **Nothing** _____

2. Yet, so often, after we look at all that God has done through Jesus to save us, there is a little voice in our head that wants to believe that we have a part to play in our salvation. That we partner with God in some way to choose to believe in God. The Bible presents a big problem with this kind of thinking. It shows us we can't choose God.

➤ Why can't we be partners with God and bring ourselves to faith in Jesus Christ?

⌘ 1 Corinthians 2:14. ¹⁴The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

? When an unbeliever hears the Word of God, what reaction does this passage say they have? Why? **They often think that it sounds foolish, or we are foolish to believe something like this. They reject our invitations to church, they might joke about us a little bit, they don't want to listen to the truth.**

⌘ Ephesians 2:1. As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.

? What does a dead man choose to eat for lunch? What does a dead person choose to wear in the morning? Why or Why not? **The dead can't choose anything, they are dead**

? If the Bible describes us as spiritually dead, how can we choose to be a believer? **We can't choose anything since we are spiritually dead any more than a dead person can choose a meal or an outfit**

⌘ Romans 8:7. the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

? This passage talks about a war. Think of David and Goliath. Was Goliath ready to lay down his arms and to choose to believe in the true God? Why or why not? **No, he was an enemy of David and Israel and Israel's God. He made fun of this God. He did not want to submit to that God.**

? This passage talks about a war between our own sinful minds and God. Do we want to choose to believe in the true God if we are at war with him?
If we are in a war with God, why would we want to submit to our enemy

⌘ Ephesians 2:8-9. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

? Let's underline or circle together the many ways that this passage shows us it is God who does all this work for us.

3. There is a point in all of these passages. They all show the same thing about people. Are there some people that are better prospects to be converted than others?

No all people are spiritually blind and dead. All people need the same thing, the love of God to bring them to faith

4. How does the Bible describe the work of the Holy Spirit calling us to faith?

✦ 2 Corinthians 4:6. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

➤ It is described as: **A light that shines in the darkness of our heart**

✦ Ephesians 2:4-5. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

➤ It is described as: **Being made alive, when we were dead**

✦ 1 Corinthians 2:14. ¹⁴ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

➤ It is described as: **Being made wise when we were once foolish**

5. How is the conversion of the Apostle Paul a living example of what we are talking about?

✦ 1 Timothy 1: 15,16. ¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

The evidence of his foolishness, hatred, and deadness was evident. You could see his war with God right in front of you. Yet, God, in love, God called a person whose heart was hard to see the truth of the Gospel and through the Holy Spirit he believed

6. How does Paul’s conversion help us understand our own conversion?

God works the same miracle of faith in our hard hearts, whether it is at baptism or coming to faith, the Holy Spirit comes and works that faith in our hearts

7. Let's add a couple more statements to what God has done to save us.

- The Holy Spirit shows us God's love by Calling _____ out to all sinful people with the Word.
- The Holy Spirit Brings _____ us to faith through the power of the Word when we don't want to have anything to do with God.
- The Holy Spirit continues to Strengthen _____ our faith

8. How can you know whether or not the Holy Spirit is working faith in your heart?

✦ 1 Corinthians 12:3. No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

Confessing that we believe in Jesus as our Savior is proof that the Holy Spirit is at work in us.

9. Why is comforting to know that God does this work in bringing us to faith and keeping us in that faith and it is not up to us to make sure that we do that?

Since God has done it, it is perfect.

If I have to do it, it will be imperfect.

How many things do you do perfectly? How many things do you do well? How many things do you do well enough to just get by?

What if we aren't doing this faith thing well enough?

The comfort is that God does it all for us, even bringing us to faith and keeping us in that faith.

Assignment: Please read Chapter 14 of *God-The Ultimate Humanitarian*