

What is your Faith Grounded in? (8/24/14)

This morning, I want to talk on the subject of faith. I have heard many people say “I have faith.” If they believe something to be true or they think because they believe in something that it will happen, they use the phrase “I have faith”. Last winter, I spoke to a woman who moved out of her house and left it empty during the winter months. I told her that Maine winters are brutal to empty houses and that she should drain her water pipes and turn off her water if she was not going to reside in the house all winter. I mentioned that broken pipes do a lot of damage and water ruins floors, floods cellars etc. She said “ I’m going to keep my fingers crossed and hope for the best. I’ll keep checking on the house and make sure everything is okay.” Well, not too many weeks went by before I heard her calling the local oil company and asking them to check her house because it looked like there was water in the cellar. Some people have the same faith when it comes to spiritual things. They hope for the best and just expect that when they die, they will be ushered into the pearly gates with no problem. Their faith is not based on facts or reality of Scripture; just assumption that everyone goes to heaven when their life on earth is over. However, according to Scripture, there is a saving faith that is genuine and authentic which seals a person for eternity. That is the kind of faith that I want to discuss this morning. Every other kind of faith is as worthless as a boat that has a few holes in the bottom of it. It is not going to get you where you need to be when Jesus Christ returns. Please turn with me to Colossians 1 and I want to focus on the prayer that Paul speaks about in verse 9. I would encourage all of us to take note of the way that he prays for people and to emulate it when we pray for ourselves and others.

He asks God for several things. Pay particular attention to the substance of the prayer and what he expects to take place when these prayers are answered.

1. Ask God so you will know fully what he wants.

2. Ask God that you will have great wisdom and understanding in spiritual things so that you will live the kind of life that honors and pleases Him in every way.

As a result of these requests being granted, you will produce fruit in every good work and grow in the knowledge of God.

God will strengthen you with his great power so you will not give up when trouble comes, but you will be patient.

You will joyfully give thanks to the Father who has made you able to have a share in all he has prepared for his people of light.

This prayer should be directed to Jesus Christ as the Word says, “Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of Jesus.” Let’s look at Colossians 1:15-21

Christ is the head of the Church and everything comes from him.

He is the first one who was raised from the dead and God was pleased to give Jesus Christ first place and to indwell himself fully in Jesus Christ. The fullness of the godhead dwells in Jesus Christ bodily. See Colossians 2:9.

Through Christ, God brought all things back to himself again, things on earth and things in heaven. God made peace through the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross. Hebrews 11:1 gives the definition of faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen.

Children have this faith. Look at Luke 18:17. King David wrote in Psalms 22:9-10; before birth a child can be taught the word of God and the Holy Spirit can work in their hearts. In Psalms 71:5 it says, "You, O Lord are my hope and my trust from my youth. Let me praise and honor you." Faith is powerful; it is the substance that hopes springs from. Faith isn't blind, but it is what truth's foundation sets upon. Without faith, you cannot please the Lord. Hebrews 11:6. On the other hand, no one can approach God without the Spirit drawing him. John 6:44 Jeremiah speaks about the love of God. In chapter 31:3 it says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have drawn you with unfailing kindness." In John 6:39, the Scriptures tell us that no one who the Father has given to the Son will be lost and they will be raised in the last day for that is his will. God has freed us from the power of darkness and Roman 8:7 tells us that the human, carnal mind cannot grasp the spiritual truths. The natural mind is hostile towards God and does not submit to the law of God nor can it do so. Romans 1:28 speaks about those who refuse to retain knowledge of God in their thoughts. They have rejected him and their hearts have become hardened towards him. sheds its beams breaking down the soil so the word of God can take root. It is certainly a work of mercy and grace to be a part of that process.

Miracles that Jesus performed in the New Testament are being performed in lives today. When a heart is seeking for understanding and knowledge of God, Jesus sends people to give the word of life to them just as it happened in the infant church history. It is amazing what God does in the hearts of people that others simply give up on.

When we pray and believe that God will answer, it releases power that breaks down barriers. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. See James 5:16-20. It goes on to say that Elijah was subject to like passions as we are and he prayed earnestly that God would withhold rain and it didn't rain for 3 ½ years. He prayed again and the rain fell from heaven and the earth once again brought forth fruit. If anyone wanders away from the truth and someone helps him get back on track, that person has saved a soul from death and will cause many sins to be forgiven. Don't get discouraged but take heart for God is faithful and He will bring a harvest in after we have sowed and planted.

Paul's four great New Testament apostolic prayers:

Colossians 1:9-12

9For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,10so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,11being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

Ephesians 1:16-19

16I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength

Ephesians 3:14-19

14For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Philippians 1:9-11

9And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.