

Studying Salvation – Part 4 – Faith and Works

Introduction

1. Russian Missionary Illustration → we need to understand what faith is
2. Thiessen Quote: “What then is faith? It is not easy to formulate a simple and adequate definition.”
3. If we don’t know what faith is, we can’t have it and thus can’t be saved.

The Definition of Faith

1. The English words “faith” and “belief” are from the same Greek word (pistis)
2. Like love, what matters about faith is the object
3. Belief is simple (not heart faith vs. head faith), like other kinds of belief.
4. Reasons faith is normal belief
 - a. The New Testament evangelists just use the word believe without modifiers
 - b. The New Testament evangelists only warn of unbelief, not the wrong kind of belief
 - c. Faith is synonymous with “being fully convinced,” (Rom. 4:21), “receive a testimony (1 John 5:9), and being persuaded (Acts 28:24)
5. No difference between believing a person and believing a fact
 - a. Sometimes it’s believe in (i.e. John 3:16), sometimes believe that (Jn. 11:27, 20:31, 1 Jn. 5:1)
 - b. Jury duty illustration

The Sufficiency of Faith

1. 150 times faith is the only requirement given. (i.e. Acts 16:31)
2. *Everyone* who believes is saved (i.e. John 3:16, 6:25-40)
3. Christ’s work on the cross is sufficient (Gal. 2:19)
4. We are specifically told “not by works” (i.e. Rom. 3:21-29, Rom. 4:3-5, Eph. 2:8, 9, Titus 3:5)

The Definition of Works

1. Works are outward, take energy, are done by a person. Belief is internal and passive.
2. Both good works and bad works are still works
3. Illustrations of works → volunteering, communion, baptism, walking an aisle, raising your hand, repeating a prayer
4. Scripture prohibits us from making ANY work a requirement for eternal life, including the ones above