**The Role of Faithfulness in My Salvation**

In past studies, we have seen that a person is transformed by hearing and believing the gospel, repenting of sin and acknowledging Jesus as Lord and that they establish a covenant relationship with Christ through the act of baptism. But when Jesus said He came to seek and save the lost, He didn’t mean He simply wanted to get men and women baptized. Becoming a Christian is only the beginning of a life of discipleship.

There are three principles taught in the New Testament that I believe are crucial to understanding my responsibilities to Christ once I have obeyed the gospel.

**God expects change.** Let’s face it, every person who comes to Christ is carrying some baggage, no exceptions. That’s why Jesus said, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). While His invitation is universal, so is His expectation that any who come will conform to His will, not the other way around. God’s definitions of right and wrong are pretty clear in the Scriptures. James said studying the “perfect law of liberty” was like looking in a mirror; finding things in my heart and life that violate God’s will, I must then change the things that are amiss (James 1:23-25).

God, through His grace, is offering us the privilege of being conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). Peter said that we should “become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust” (2 Peter 1:4). How can my nature begin to look more like God’s? By adding to my faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love (vs 5-7). Jesus is saying, in effect, “Come as you are and I will show you how to fix your problems.”

**Obedience is not optional**. Salvation without regard to obedience to God’s will is not possible. In other words, salvation by faith alone is an unscriptural doctrine. Space is at a premium, but allow me to offer two passages. “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord’, and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46). “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter” (Matthew 7:21). No one can earn salvation, but neither can one get to heaven without submitting to the authority of Christ.

**Salvation despite imperfection equals grace.** The apostle John said, “I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin” (1 John 2:1). Now that’s setting the bar pretty high! In fact, in the verse before, He had just said, “If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.” God deals with this dilemma in 2:1: “If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

John summarizes the Christian life this way: “If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1:7). Then, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (v. 9). That, my friend is salvation by grace through an active faith.

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