

This Is How We Know: Faith
March 25, 2018
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments. Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. (1 John 5:1-5 NLT)

Is having faith enough to save us? Well that depends on what, or *in whom*, we place our faith. As John says, if Jesus Christ is the reason for our faith, we have all we need to win these worldly battles. So how will we know true faith? This week we will spend some time reviewing what John has to say about it in the above mentioned verses.

Digging Deeper

Faith...

Gives us the OPPORTUNITY to love and obey God.

- What does faith mean to you? Is it enough to simply say you believe in God? As the Bible tells us, even the demons believe in Him. (James 2:19) An authentic faith will always force us to do something as an act of trust and confidence. Have you ever thought of the expression of your faith as an opportunity to affirm your love for God? Would you say, more times than not, you respond with action in situations where you sense God calling you to be His hands and feet? When we bless others we always end up receiving the bigger blessing.

Is usually OPPOSITE to our way of thinking.

- Read Hebrews 11:1. Do you have that assurance and conviction of what you hope for, even though you don't see it now? We say, "Yes, Jesus, we believe!" But think about this for a minute, do you say you are a child of God, or is that how others describe you? There is a very important distinction between the two. Is it possible we could benefit from changing the manner in which we demonstrate our trust and hope in the God's providence? Perhaps if we try shaking up our typical responses a bit we might be able to fully experience what our recent revival speaker, Mark Nysewander, says about the evidence of genuine faith: "Faith only begins when we put ourselves in a position that, if God doesn't show up, we're in real trouble." Have you ever placed yourself in such a situation? Did your leap of faith start with a single step you might not have normally taken? How did God make His presence known to you through the outcome?

Enables us to OVERCOME the world.

- Read Mark 9:22-24. Why do you think the boy's father says he believes, but then asks Jesus to help him overcome his unbelief? Perhaps he is saying he knows he is a sinner and he believes that Jesus has the power to overcome any sin that lingers in his heart, even his doubt. When we

have faith enough to believe, the impossible becomes possible. Jesus has equipped us with the tools we need to survive any obstacle the enemy hurls in our direction. How does faith change your perspective in the face of disappointment or suffering? Has the testimony of another believer helped your unbelief?

- Read James 1:2-5. We know that our faith will be tested by the trials of this world. Faith is a weapon God has given us so that we can rise above the temptation to doubt in His goodness. How would you say you handle difficult circumstances? When fear and worry are overcome by a fully developed faith, this is how we will know a perfect and complete life, needing nothing!

Conclusion

Peter believed he could step out onto the water when he walked alongside Jesus. But when the weather started getting rough he took his eyes off of Him and sank in his fear and doubt. What he needed was greater than mere belief, he needed faith. Isn't that true of us all? When we start to sink we need Jesus to remind us that faith is for all who repent and trust in His saving power. Do you believe...or do you have faith?