“Faith in Christ Alone”

Romans 1:16-17

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 2/28/21)

Both baptism and communion declare God’s delight in saving sinners, graciously and exclusively through His Son, Jesus. (Q1) This glorious Gospel says that God freely gives us the very righteousness that He requires so that we can be made right with Him. Read today’s short passage and ponder each phrase. Paul wrote these words while desiring to go preach the Gospel in Rome. In all the other cities he had visited his message was met with ridicule or rage. Even so, he couldn’t wait to serve as Christ’s ambassador in Rome. What explains this kind of boldness? What will prompt us to be eager, bold ambassadors for Christ in an era where the Gospel is increasingly met with ridicule or rage?

Rome was a powerful empire like no other. But Paul told them that a far greater Power had burst on the scene. This Power was unlike Rome in every way except one: this Power would also lay waste to its enemies: sin, death, and Hell. The Gospel alone has the power to destroy evil in the human heart. The Gospel alone gives the power to save and change lives for all eternity. Are you eager to share this Gospel of grace? We seem to have no problem speaking out about the Seahawks, Gonzaga basketball, politics, vaccinations, or even inviting others to church. But do we have the enthusiasm to share Jesus in our everyday lives? (Q2)

The Bible indicates that we are all approaching judgment: our lives on one side of the scale, God’s perfect holiness on the other. Read Rom. 1:18-19. Any unrighteousness will be met with His eternal wrath. EVERYONE knows that God is holy and that they are not. The good news of the Gospel: All I need as a sinner God has provided me in Jesus Christ. The only righteousness that God approves is the righteousness provided by Jesus Christ. The Gospel does NOT talk about how much we must **do** for God; it’s all about what Jesus has **done** for us. Jesus’ gift of righteousness is provided by Christ alone and received by faith alone. You are meant to live by faith, not feelings or legalism. Your security is not in how you feel or what you do, it is only in what Jesus has done for you. (Q3)

What is faith? What is enough? What is a saving belief? Faith is a God-given gift from the Lord. Faith has 3 key ingredients. **Faith requires knowledge of the object of our faith: Jesus.** When Jesus said, “It is finished,” He was saying that He had done all that was necessary. Yes, we should call upon His name (see Rom. 10:13-14). But we don’t need exhaustive Bible knowledge. When Karl Barth was asked to name the greatest theological truth, he responded, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” But knowing truth is not the same thing as possessing truth. Knowledge alone is not faith. **Faith requires agreement.** It is not enough that you know that a life jacket works. You must put on the life jacket! **Faith also requires trust.** Remember jumping into your father’s arms? You knew that he would catch you and not let you fall. Cast yourself entirely on your Heavenly Father. What He says He will do **He will do!**

Trust means surrendering your life to Jesus. In Gen. 15:6 Abraham heard the promise and agreed it was from God. But his faith was when he believed in the Lord and trusted the covenant promise. He was “all in” for God. (Q4) Are you feeling the tug of the Holy Spirit? Why don’t you right now pledge your allegiance to Him? This week, let us live lives that bear witness to this Gospel: Jesus has the power to save and He will save all who put their faith in Him. Amen. (Q5)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Read Rom. 6:3-4. In your own words, explain how the symbolism of baptism relates to today’s study. Read Luke 22:19-20. In your own words, explain how the symbolism of communion relates to today’s study.
2. Why is it easier to talk politics than to share about the real Giver of Life? What can I do about this problem? Mark 5:19 provides some help.
3. What part does scripture memorization have in living by faith and not by feelings? What part do friends play in living by faith and not by feelings? (see Heb. 10:24-25)
4. What does it mean to be “all in” for God in 2021? What happens if (when!) we blow it?
5. Have everyone in the group share 1-3 names of friends or family who need to put their faith in Jesus. Commit to pray daily for these precious people.

“I Know Whom I Have Believed” (Daniel Whittle)

I know not why God’s wondrous grace

To me He hath made known,

Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love

Redeemed me for His own.

Refrain:

But “I know Whom I have believed,

And am persuaded that He is able

To keep that which I’ve committed

Unto Him against that day.”

I know not how this saving faith

To me He did impart,

Nor how believing in His Word

Wrought peace within my heart.

I know not how the Spirit moves,

Convincing men of sin,

Revealing Jesus through the Word,

Creating faith in Him.