



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – August 29, 2010

Heart to Heart...

I am sure many of you get religious emails and stories. Some are moving and can stir the emotion. Feel good stories are supplied on Christian radio, books and in our emails. We need to realize that these feel good stories, even though they talk of Jesus or God, are not faith building stories. They are simply feel good stories! I realize some may not like to hear that but we must come to understanding the nature of real, genuine, saving faith. Too many are equating faith with an emotional stirring of the heart, a warm and fuzzy feeling and can't distinguish the difference between the two. (When times get tough people don't remember the 'fuzzy' stories!)

Jesus is the ONLY author and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2). He 'penned' with His life what saving faith is about and He is the ONLY one that can bring our faith to completion. For saving faith to take hold in us, it must come from Him. Jesus followed God's will and word all His days while on the earth. It is God's complete design that true, saving faith can only be built through His word (Roman. 10:17). "***So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.***" Notice there are two ingredients to saving faith: (1) *Faith comes from hearing.* This hearing is not our physical sense but with the internal spiritual heart, accepting and receiving what God says by acting upon it. Too many times lessons are preached only to have people do the opposite of what God spoke. They cannot hear! The heart is not affected. When the apostles went into the world preaching God's word, a few were 'hearers' as most were content staying in their own belief ideas. Paul taught God's word to people, appealing to them from the Scripture, the majority walked away because they were not hearers (Acts 28:25-29). When one 'hears' the word, they see with spiritual eyes and it is brought into their heart and they respond. That's saving faith! They make a commitment with their lives. Some of the most unforgiving and unloving people are those who profess faith in Jesus! They are moved by the emotional 'fuzzies' but when faith is called on to respond in forgiving one another, letting hurts go in the name of Christ, they can't do it! They refuse to do it! (2) *Hearing comes by the word of Christ.* We can hear a lot of religious things but only by the word of Christ can things come into focus and faith increase. God planned it that way. It doesn't come from man's word but Christ's word. The word is the only thing that can reach into the depths of man, touching every aspect of our being because God's word is living and active (Hebrews 4:12). Saving faith is produced in the heart (Romans 10:10) and if the heart is attaching itself to all the religious 'fuzzies', the word is reduced to man-made and faith can't be built.

Paul charged Timothy: "*preach the word*" (II Timothy 4:2). Notice it was not some nice moving story sprinkled with some reference to the word or the latest book or article. Faith can't be built any other way than the word. If the word is preached/taught then it depends on the heart of the hearer. Isn't it amazing how some story (or illustration) can get people's attention but there is little movement in the same way with the word of God? Think about it!!!

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