

Theme: Faith and Purpose

July 28, 2019

Possible Title: **Faith is Followed by Fruit.**

Big Idea: Discovering the link between faith and works

Last Sunday, Pastor Joel's message communicated the importance of demonstrating hospitality. Hospitality is an example of a believer living by faith in a practical tangible way. Our faith in Jesus is always going to lead to action.

There is a theological basis for the righteous actions of a Christian...

1. We are image bearers of God. Gen 1:26 Take a look at God...

2. God acts and all of His actions are righteous. Psalm 145:17

3. We are united with God in Christ through faith. Gal. 2:20

4. Therefore God desires to work through us. Col 3:10; 17 – put on the new self.

5. The good deeds that God prepared for us were conceived in the mind of God before the foundation of the world. Eph. 1:4; 2:10

*Relationship of faith and works – **Ephesians 2:8-10** Saved by grace through faith = our salvation freedom to know ultimate purpose and the good works God created for us to perform.

Philippians 2:12-13

- work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

- God is at work in you to will and to work for His good pleasure.

*God comes along side of us like when my dad taught me how to swing a baseball bat.

John 15:1-5 (vs. 5 in particular) – Jesus is the vine. We are the branches. If we are united with Jesus, we will bear fruit. Fruit bearing is a sign of our connection to Jesus and fruit bearing is the inevitable outcome from being connected to Jesus.

1) Jesus is the vine or main trunk. God the Father is the caretaker of the vine.

2) We are the branches connected to Jesus. Branches that bear zero fruit are removed. If the branch produces fruit it gets to stay but it is pruned so it produces more fruit. *illustrate with grape vine from Aldi. Pruned according to directions. Went from 3 clusters of grapes to 97 clusters of grapes.)

3) Jesus made the branches clean by His word.

4) Abide in Jesus. Jesus will abide in us! Mutual. Fruit will come by virtue of abiding in Jesus. Only in Christ are we able to produce fruit. *Grafting...a cut branch will only produce fruit if united to the main root system. They become inseparable.

5) Jesus promises we will bear much fruit if we abide in Him. Apart from Him we can do nothing. Profound!

James 2:14-18 – show examples in Hebrews 11 of faith always acting according to God's directions.

- faith is validated through works.

- 15-16 = SWAP - our church puts their faith into practice!

- faith is supposed to have a partner. Without works, faith is dead, being alone by itself.

- the challenge: show me a faith without works and I will show you my faith by my works.

- Hebrews 11 examples of faith and works:

- vs. 4 by faith able offered...

- vs. 5 by faith Enoch was taken...

- vs. 6 faith is coupled with seeking...

- vs. 7 by faith Noah prepared an ark...

- vs. 8 by faith Abraham obeyed by going...

- read **Hebrews 11:32-34**

Faith is followed by action!

Titus 2:11-14

– the faithful are described.

- Salvation comes...then freedom from sin...then freedom to live rightly before God...believers are hope filled and longing for Christ's return...

- redemption came to make us a people for Himself who are eager to perform good works!

*A friend of mine has a spare room he rents out. Compare and contrast the two different experiences with tenants.

Titus 3:8, 14

– vs. 8 – In Paul's final thoughts to Titus, he admonishes him, "Be careful to engage in good deeds!"

- vs. 14 – To the church Titus was part of, Paul says, "let the church LEARN to engage in good deeds and then they will not be unfruitful."

*In the process of learning to respond, you develop a better sense of anticipation. After years of experience in any task, one of the benefits is knowing what to expect. A good driver can anticipate what is coming next. A seasoned married couple can anticipate the needs of their spouse. New parents struggle to anticipate the needs of their new baby. Things are not usually quite as rough with each consecutive child because parents get better at anticipating needs.

James 1:27

– Pure religion

- Visit orphans and widows

- remain unstained by the world.

*Anticipation and Availability

Conclusion:

God is and because of who He is, He acts.

God is and because of who He is, His actions are righteous.

We belong to God through Jesus.

Because of Whose we are, we act.

Because of Whose we are our actions need to be God directed and righteous.

As humans we are by nature creatures who live and move...may we as redeemed creatures realize we live and move with a divine purpose! May all of our actions be the actions of God in us working out His purposes for His glory and our good.

Closing Hymn: Take My Life, and Let It Be