

Living By Faith, Not Feelings

November 22, 2020

I want to start this morning by presenting you with some basic facts about us, stated in the first person.

1. God loves me. We know this from John 3:16 in the Bible.

John 3:16 (NIV) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Note the emphasis on God's love.

2. God sent Jesus to save me from my sins. We see this in 2 Corinthians.

2 Cor. 5:21 (NIV) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

3. God wants a personal relationship with me. This we see by inference from where the Holy Spirit does his work.

John 14:17 (NIV) The world cannot accept him (Holy Spirit), because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

The Holy Spirit was poured into all the disciples of Jesus, both male and female, on the day of Pentecost. Additionally, the Holy Spirit came to live inside each of us at the moment we put our faith in Jesus. The Holy Spirit is in me. You can't get more personal than that.

And now, we are to live by the leading of the Holy Spirit. We know God personally.

So there are three simple statements of spiritual truth.

God loves ME.

God sent Jesus to save ME from MY sins.

God wants a personal relationship with ME.

Let's say them aloud together. And as you do so, point to yourself when you say "me" or "my", and give it some emphasis.

God loves ME.

God sent Jesus to save ME from MY sins.

God wants a personal relationship with ME.

These three facts are marvelous, awesome, astonishing. These are truths to start every day with. It is said by health experts that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Eating breakfast gets your body off to the right start for the day.

Well we need to get our spirits off to a right start each day as well. These three spiritual truths are part of a good spiritual breakfast. Keep them in mind as you start your day. They will guard your faith and keep it strong.

Now, in order to do that, you need to be on guard against something that can weaken your faith. You need to be on guard against your feelings.

Your feelings can weaken your faith in Christ.

See, the problem with feelings is that... **Feelings may cause you to forget the facts.**

Remember the facts? What are they? God loves ME. God sent Jesus to save ME from MY sins. God wants a personal relationship with ME.

The problem with feelings is that they can distract you from these facts of your spiritual life.

When you wake up in the morning, and you didn't get enough sleep, you feel... groggy, tired, unfocused, with a lack of energy. Some of us feel that way even if we did get enough sleep. Before you are ready to face the day you need to become fully awake. Maybe you depend on caffeine, breakfast, some exercise, or time awake to become ready to face the day. You don't feel ready to face the day.

In addition to a groggy physical mood, you may also be suffering from a anxious mental mood. Maybe you are feeling anxious about something coming up in the day. Maybe you still feeling grieved by something that happened the day before. Or maybe it is something else that has depressed your mind and spirit as well as your body.

You don't FEEL like getting up. You don't FEEL like going to work. You don't FEEL like doing school. You don't FEEL like praying. You don't FEEL like worshipping God. You don't FEEL like loving others. And your mind is focused on how bad you feel.

Well, a good way to overcome all these negative physical, mental, and spiritual feelings is to remind yourself of these three wonderful facts. God loves me. God sent Jesus to save me from my sins. God wants a personal relationship with me.

Take a few moments, pretty soon after waking up, to remind yourself of these three truths. Focus on the facts of your faith, not your feelings. Be careful, because your feelings may cause you to forget the facts. Feed your faith with spiritual truth.

The preacher, Dwight L. Moody, wrote, *"I prayed for Faith, and thought that some day faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, 'Now Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.' I had closed my Bible, and prayed for Faith. I now opened my Bible, and began to study, and Faith has been growing ever since."*

-- Dwight L. Moody

Push your feelings aside and feed your faith on spiritual truth.

In addition to feelings causing you to forget the facts, your feelings may do something else. **Feelings may cause you to doubt the facts.**

You might think, "If God loves me so much, why do I feel so bad?" Or, when you are feeling down, you might think, "I don't feel the joy of salvation, so maybe I'm not really saved."

Listen, whatever the cause of your feelings, they don't change the facts. The facts of spiritual truth don't change. Feelings change, but spiritual truth does not change. God still loves you. Jesus still saves you. God still wants a personal relationship with you.

Someone said, *"Feed your faith and your doubts will starve to death."*

And it is true. So push your feelings aside and stand firm on the facts of your faith.

Now there are feelings that are important. These are the feelings that God has promised to us. **God wants you to claim the promised spiritual feelings.**

He wants you to claim the Joy of your salvation.

John 15:10-11 (NIV) If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Jesus wants you to be filled with JOY.

I like the prayer that one man prayed one day. "God, its been a pretty good day so far. I've been comfortable and warm. It's been really nice. But God, in a moment I've got to get out of bed... and things are likely to go down hill from there... and I need Your help."

How many mornings do you wake up just filled with JOY? Not too often. That's because we wake up in our feelings. We have to remind ourselves of the spiritual truths that our faith is based on. We have to claim the joy that is ours in Jesus Christ. This joy is based on facts of spiritual truth.

God loves ME.

God sent Jesus to save ME from MY sins.

God wants a personal relationship with ME.

You have to remind yourself of these facts so when you are down, you can claim by faith the joy Jesus wants you to have.

God also wants you to claim the Peace that he promises. Jesus spoke of this peace in John 14.

John 14:27 (NIV) Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you... Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

We are living under constant stress these days. The world is so different from what it was a year ago. And it may never be the same. And even if it does get back to resembling what it was before the pandemic, we are still a year away from that. We are living in stress that will continue for a while. We need some peace from the stress.

It is this kind of peace that God promises us. But it comes through prayer.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Yes, joy and peace are ours in Christ Jesus. But, we must be intentional about pushing negative feelings aside and claiming what is ours in Jesus.

So I encourage you to develop the habit of starting your day in prayerful review of these spiritual truths. Each Day we must choose to live by faith over our feelings.

Someone here might be feeling hopeless because of your sins. Today, you can know the joy and peace of God's salvation.

He loves you.

He sent Jesus to save you from your sins.

He wants a personal relationship with you.

You must believe on Jesus, that he took your sins upon himself when he died on the cross. You must repent of your sins, turning your life over to him. I would be glad to answer any questions about this that you may have, and guide you in praying for God's forgiveness.