

Capital Commission **Study Journal**

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The *faith* of Christ

Have you ever noticed that there is something different that was taking place in the life and ministry of Jesus as compared to the Christianity of our day, at least the churches that I've spent most of my life in? It seems like we invest large sums of money and exhaust ourselves trying to get people to come to church while Jesus hid from people at times. There were moments in Jesus' ministry where he would directly tell people, "Don't let anyone know I did this." This seems in stark contrast to the begging, cajoling, and pleading with people I've found myself doing.

When you look at the New Testament, what you find is that a substitute has been made. Christians were meant not only to have faith in Christ but also to grow to have the faith of Christ. To have faith in Christ means believing that Jesus is the Son of God; to have the faith of Christ means to have the same kind of faith in God that Jesus himself had. The faith of Christ means having the same confidence that Jesus himself had, which led him to do the things he did - teaching, healing, and giving himself to others so completely.

**WE PUT OUR FAITH IN JESUS SO THAT WE MIGHT
RECEIVE THE FAITH OF JESUS.**

What I found is that merely having faith in Christ leaves Christ outside of who I'm becoming as a person. To have this exterior notion of Christ's faith and love is not strong enough to generate statements like the one found in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loves me, and gave himself for me."

Without question, believing in Christ is a place to start, but it can be deadly if we remain there. We are to grow. We are to take the faith of Christ into ourselves, which then radiates through every dimension of who we are.

HEARING What Jesus Said

35-38a) A helpful way to illustrate the difference between having faith in Christ and having the faith of Christ involves the following scene on a boat on the Sea of Galilee.

38b) The fact that Jesus could lie down in the middle of a storm and go to sleep, as the waves were likely rolling over him, is a glimpse of what the faith of Christ was like (Mark 4:35-38a).

The disciples clearly demonstrated their faith in Christ by waking him and crying out, "Lord save us! We are perishing!" (Matthew 8:25 NKJV), even though they had not yet seen Jesus interact with nature by calming a storm or feeding a crowd. They relied on him to do something in the storm. They had great faith in him, but they did not yet have his great faith in God. They did not have the faith of Christ, which would have been strong enough to fend off their fear. To attain this degree of Jesus' faith,...

VERSE

Mark 4:35-41

(35) That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." (36) Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. (37) A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. (38) Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion,...

(38) The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" (39) He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. (40) He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (41) They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"



REFLECT

(Kingdom of God - The range of God's effective will; anyplace where what God wants done is done.

Eternal Life / eternal living - Knowing the only true God and his Son as an interactive, experiential relationship resulting in a life caught up in the life of God (see John 17:3)

Faith of Christ - The kind of faith that Christ possessed that enabled him to teach as he taught and do as he did (see Galatians 2:20)

...they had to enter into the kind of life that Jesus had, which was to come.

39) Jesus' faith was such that he relied on the power of his Father to stop the wind and still the sea just by speaking to it: "Peace! Be still!" This is the faith into which we can grow.

40-41) Then in kindness, Jesus turned to them in their fear, addressing them in that familiar way: "O you of little faith" (Matthew 8:26 ESV). Some people see this as scolding, but elsewhere in the Gospels, we see that Jesus had a high opinion of "little faith," saying that faith as small as a mustard seed could move mountains (see Matthew 17:20).



The Message of Christ: The Kingdom of God

Let's be honest, the idea that you can have the faith of Christ might seem daunting. Can we really have a life with God to the extent we trust him - and act in the same kind of faith in him - as Jesus did? Now, we are more likely to grow to this point as we understand how to live in the everlasting kingdom of God here and now. It is not off in the future, it is present right now.

There is another "substitution" you begin to notice. You see that people are being taught a message about Christ (who he was and what he did) instead of the message of Christ (the one that Jesus himself preached).

When you consider what Jesus preached, you find his message was all about the kingdom of God and how it was available to everyone with his arrival. While it has always existed in the past (see Psalm 145:13), when Jesus came, he brought it more fully. It will come in even greater power and glory when he returns.

Here is what Jesus said: "From that time, Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of God is at hand (Matthew 4:17 KJV; Matthew 3:2; 10:7; Mark 1:15). Many people think this means that we should feel sorry for our sin because the kingdom of God is coming some day. But when Jesus said the kingdom was "at hand," he meant it the same way that someone might extend his or her hand toward the dining room and say to a guest, "Here is the dining room." Jesus was telling his listeners that the kingdom of God was present among them in his own self (see Matthew 4:17).

When Jesus said to the people that they needed to repent, he was telling them to reconsider how they had been approaching their lives now that they could live in his presence and take his life into their own. They could embrace the abundant kingdom with a clear-eyed vision of a totally good and competent God who was right there looking after them.

KEY TERMS

Kingdom of God - The range of God's effective will; anyplace where God wants done is done.

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Let's
Connect

Please contact me if you would like to meet personally to discuss the things presented here, to be prayed for, or to learn more about our Breakfast and Bible study that meets at the Capitol on Tuesday @ 8 AM on Session Days in 159B EW.

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