

Trusting God in Troubles Time, Part Four

Galatians

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Trust in the Book of Galatians

If you want to understand what the Bible has to say about trust, it is only a matter of time before you come to the book of Galatians. From the very first verses, it is clear that Paul seeks to bring his reader back to the one true Gospel in which faith (or trust) plays a central role. The theme of faith runs throughout the entire letter, and so, over the next two weeks we will draw out some of the big ideas related to faith in this amazing letter. Here is a brief overview of “faith” in the book of Galatians.

Faith and Righteousness

In Galatians, we find one of the most concise descriptions of the function of faith in God’s plan for salvation. In chapter 2, verse 16, Paul writes, “we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus”. For Paul, a person becomes a member of the people of God on the basis of a Gospel of simple trust and reliance on God’s faithful and gracious work in Christ (Rom. 4:5, Eph. 2:8-9). The Gospel undercuts human pride because it reminds us that our only hope is the Cross of Christ and the forgiveness and righteousness that He gives. As humans, we often derive our worth from what we accomplish, whether it is at work, in our relationships, or even in our athletic ability. Overwhelming stress and doubt can often be a sign that one or more of these things are beginning to corrode in our lives. But, our right standing with the LORD can never corrode, no matter the circumstances of our lives because it is not based on our performance, but purely on faith in Jesus Christ.

Faith and the Faithfulness of God

The simple and child-like faith of a believer is deeply connected to, if not dependent on the immense faithfulness of the LORD. This is why Paul invites the church to consider the example of Abraham. Abraham believed the LORD and it was counted to him as righteousness (Gal 3:6, Gen. 15:6). He was a man of faith (Gal. 3:9) simply because he took God at His word, responding in the only fitting manner to the word of the LORD. Although Abraham faced many difficulties in his life and had every reason to doubt, he kept in view the amazing faithfulness of God.

Faith and our Union with Christ

When a person believes in Jesus Christ for salvation something miraculous happens! There is a union that occurs between Christ and the believer; a spiritual identification in which the believer is said to be “in Christ” (eg 2 Cor. 5:17) and more amazingly, Christ is said to be “in” the believer! (Gal. 2:20). Our union with Christ as Christians has many rich and wonderful implications, including the promise to walk daily in the strength and resources of Jesus Christ through our faith in Him (Phil. 4:13, 2 Cor. 12:9). Paul claims that because Christ is in him, “The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). This power of Christ is found

not merely in His teaching and the inspiration of His example, but in the daily life of faith and union with Christ as our Savior and LORD.

Faith and Freedom

Near the end of his letter, Paul gives the Galatians a solemn warning. He tells them in effect, if you seek to earn right standing with the LORD by your own efforts, you will become a slave to the very rules that you have burdened yourselves with. Moralism and legalism lead to bondage, but the Gospel is a message of freedom for those who trust Jesus Christ. “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1). The Christian life is to be a life of freedom as we daily trust in Christ for all things.

Faith in All Times, Not Just Troubled Ones

If we learn one thing from Galatians, it is that faith is central to the Christian life. To walk in faith and trust in the LORD is not merely for troubled times. It is to be the very mark of the followers of Christ throughout all of our lives. May the LORD enrich us as we study together the theme of faith in this amazing letter!