



Sunday, July 28, 2019

Pastor Keith Sovo

Intro to Faith

Faith is one of those difficult concepts to define in contemporary culture. It is not difficult to find people from all walks of life who would claim to “believe in Jesus,” even if their lives look nothing like the life He calls His disciples to. So, why the disparity? How can someone say they believe in Jesus while not actually being loyal to Him or obeying what He says (Luke 6:46)?

Part of the reason has to be that we lack allegiance or loyalty to just about everything else in our lives. An unintended consequence of all the freedoms we have to choose is that we begin to think (even if only subconsciously) that we only need to be loyal to ourselves. If we purchase tomatoes from a store, but the store down the street begins to sell tomatoes of a similar quality at a lower price, we are going to buy our tomatoes at the store down the street. Sadly, this dynamic gets amplified when thinking about marriage. We marry (selfishly) because we think that another person is going to meet our needs, but then when they fail to do that (or we find someone else who will meet them at a lower cost to ourselves), we ditch that person for something or someone else in the name of “irreconcilable differences.”

This lack of loyalty and allegiance in other areas finds its ultimate tragedy in our relationship to God. We often come to God initially because of the great promises that our sins can be forgiven, and that heaven is simply too good to pass on. But, once we embark on the Christian life, we still know (or believe, in the contemporary sense) that those things are true, but life is still hard. Thus, even though God has given us no promises of a life of ease in the present, we begin to doubt God’s goodness to us.

The remedy for all this, is to truly believe and give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever (Ps. 136).

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read 1 Peter 1:3-9

“Confidence Plus Allegiance”

Key Ideas

- 1) As Christians, we often do not need to learn new doctrines or theology, but we need to deepen our belief in those doctrines and applications of them.
- 2) It is possible to start out in the Christian life with deep belief, but then settle for “barely believing.”
- 3) Saving faith in the New Testament is confidence in God (including His holiness, wisdom, mercy, goodness) plus allegiance to Him (Heb. 11:6).
- 4) Our belief in God must be according to who He really is, as He has revealed Himself in the Bible.
- 5) Belief always leads to action/obedience (Heb. 3:14).
- 6) We must guard against “drifting” away from God.
- 7) Satan’s great lie is that we cannot really trust God for ultimate happiness or salvation.
- 8) The main attribute of God we tend to doubt is His goodness.
- 9) When counseling others, we’re much more confident in God’s goodness than when suffering comes to us in our own lives.
- 10) The prosperity gospel-lite implies that trials count as evidence that God doesn’t really love us.
- 11) This cannot be true because Jesus Himself said, “in the world, you will have tribulation.” (John 16:33).
- 12) The things that count as evidence for God’s love are...
 - a. The cross (Rom. 5:8)
 - b. The prospect of eternal happiness in heaven (Rom. 8:32).

Discuss

- 1) Would you say your primarily loyalty/allegiance right now is to God? How do you know?
- 2) What other things in your life might test your allegiance to God or cause you to doubt His goodness?
- 3) Read Romans 5:1-11. Paul makes a connection between faith and hope. What reasons do we have to trust God or hope in Him?
- 4) How easy or difficult is it for you to be conscious of eternity in your day-to-day life? Why?
- 5) How can we encourage one another to deepen our faith in God?