

Superficial Faith 2018-12-16

John 2:23-3:3

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Intellectually believing in Jesus on basis of signs does not guarantee salvation.... Styme

- Saving belief is evidenced by repentance that bears fruit. John 10:37

Jesus began to gain following...not all true believers. John 2:23-24a, Matthew 7:21-23, James 2:19

- Many believed in Jesus, but whatever their belief was, Jesus did not approve...it was not saving belief. Acts 8:13-23

Superficial belief/faith may have high view of Jesus, but not accurate or high enough.

- Muslims (believe he is a prophet), Jehovah's Witness (He is greatest creation), Nicodemus John 3:1-3
 - Nicodemus saw signs and intellectually drew right conclusions (Rabbi, teacher from God, God with Him) yet had no spiritual life.... needed new birth.

Superficial faith based on Jesus doing miracles, relieving problems, providing felt needs (food, heal, success, \$\$) not repent/trust Jesus Christ as Savior/Lord. John 6:14-15

- Jesus make life easier but not want to submit to His reign/rule in lives.
 - Using, not loving God: believe because what Jesus does/gives not who He is
 - When things don't go the way envisioned, they fall/walk away.
- God not errand boy to get what want but mighty, holy Lord not fooled by well-intentioned words of believing. Jeremiah 17:9, John 2:25, 1 Samuel 16:7; Hebrews 4:13

Kind of belief Jesus entrusts himself to is simple belief (Jesus Christ is Son of God) that begins with accepting God's evaluation of us on heart level. *Gospel*

- If see self as God sees us, we can begin to appreciate greatness of God's love.
 - Not hard to love someone who is lovely. It's possible to love unlovely.
 - But to love someone rebellious, selfish, corrupt, who hurts one who most loves him—that's Gospel love! Romans 5:8
 - Incredible.....Can't fool Jesus, He knows everything about you, sees your heart and yet will always love you anyway.

Jesus' covenant love is the foundation for genuine, saving belief that's evidenced by repentance that bears fruit. James 1:25, James 2:17, 1 John 2:3, Luke 6:43-44

- Acknowledging signs or speaking pious words without action is worthless.
 - Saving faith controls/directs choices, priorities, actions, words, relationships, love Jesus/others. James 1, John 3:7-8
 - Not perfection but desire and general pattern of obedience.
- Those who truly believe live as if they believe what they say they believe.
 - Love Jesus – not use Him for miracles, relief from problems, providing felt needs.
 - Good news of gospel is not everything goes well, get what want but get Jesus and He's enough regardless of life's circumstances.
 - He is near and sustains in hard times....that's our joy!

Saving belief/faith produces fruit not by striving in flesh but by abiding in Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:9-14, Psalm 139:1, John 15:4-5, 8, 2 Corinthians 13:5

- As we abide in Jesus, repentance and good works naturally occur like fruit on tree.
 - Instinctive/spontaneous good works from heart filled with love for Jesus Christ that understands deeply what Jesus has done and is doing for us.
 - Examine self: Superficial or saving belief.