

You Belong - July 9-July15

Q #21. What is true faith?

A. True faith is not only a sure knowledge by which I hold as true all that God has revealed to us in Scripture; it is also a wholehearted trust, which the Holy Spirit creates in me by the gospel, that God has freely granted, not only to others but to me also, forgiveness of sins, eternal righteousness, and salvation. These are gifts of sheer grace, granted solely by Christ's merit.

Memory verse: Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. Hebrews 11:1&3

Devotion 1 Where does that come from and how do I get it? "True faith." I hear that and I can't help but think, that's not me! True faith...it's the faith of the apostles, the martyrs, the Mother Theresa's and the Martin Luther King Jr's. But the rest of us, much less me? I don't attain to that kind of greatness. "True faith." But this Q & A invites me, and all of us, into a different understanding of faith. True faith not just of those we consider spiritual superheroes, but a faith gifted and given by a faith-ful God. So it turns out, faith isn't something that's procured out of nothing from within our own spirits, but worked in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Which means that actually it's not something we have to achieve, but something that we get to lean upon and live out of because the Spirit is already there, working in us to grant us this trusting faith. Doesn't that take the pressure off? To live freely out of God's faith in you, instead of anxiously wondering if you have enough? Because that seems to often be the question, doesn't it: "Do I have enough faith?" When actually, the faith that is in us through Jesus and by the power of his Holy Spirit is more than enough. Rely on the good gift of faith in your life—because true faith, in fact, is for and in you.

Prayer: Triune God, we are grateful for your good gift of true faith. May we rely on it when our own spirits fail, and may you strengthen your faith in us each day.

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Devotion 2

What gifts are given us through faith?

The Heidelberg Catechism lists three. True faith means we believe our sins are forgiven. So you let a “special” word slip in front of the kids yesterday as the car in front of you cut you off in the turn lane. So you let your annoyance with a coworker bubble up and pour over this morning. So you let the built-up resentment spew into your marriage. The list goes on, but the truth of faith remains: we are forgiven. True faith means we have been made righteous. Faith is a message of grace! Nothing you could ever do would be enough to assume your own righteousness. Believe me, I’ve tried. Unfortunately, morally, you’re just not going to cut it. But in Christ, the story changes—God has made you holy, through him, and nothing you can do will alter that. From now on, you are righteous. True faith means we are saved. That’s it, it’s done—Jesus did it for you, so you don’t have to ever carry the burden of not being enough or doing enough for your own salvation; it’s been done for you and you get to soak up the good gift. True faith is receiving God’s present of salvation. Got it? Before we go, I’ll remind you that faith—and its good gifts—are not a result of your own doing, but God’s Spirit in you who grants you true faith. Thanks be to God for his faith-fulness in the lives of his people!

Prayer: Gracious God thank you that we don’t have to worry about achieving your gifts of faith on our own, but that through your Spirit we can receive what you offer us: your forgiveness, righteousness, and salvation, now and forevermore.