

Discussion Guide: Hall of Fame of Faith – Part 7

Let us examine the Scriptures like the Bereans who "received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." Acts 17:11 (NIV)

July 20th, 2003: In Part 7 of Kimber's series entitled "Hall of Fame of Faith," Pastor Kauffman discussed the roles of good works and faith in salvation as well as touching on issues such as eternal rewards and faith overcoming fear. Kimber began the sermon by highlighting the different facets of faith as it pertains to salvation and sanctification. Again, Kimber recalled the theme of persevering faith in the Christian life. He said that we are "saved and sanctified by faith." He expounded on the "Divine Cooperative" which is the synergism between God and man. God initiates both salvation and sanctification, but man cooperates with God by faith and obedience. Kimber provided the examples of God creating the universe and giving man the *responsibility* to "subdue" or take care of creation. Also, the example of the virgin birth of Jesus in which the Holy Spirit caused Mary to conceive but yet it was Mary's *responsibility* to bear the pregnancy and raise the child.

But how does this "divine cooperative" work out in the everyday Christian life? To answer this question, Kimber pointed to the contrast between James 2:14-26 and Ephesians 2:8-10. Through this alleged contradiction, Kimber taught that saving faith is not a one-time event, but something that *continues* to occur throughout sanctification. The reason why James 2:14-26 and Ephesians 2:8-10 are both true (and not contradictory) is because faith preserves and produces good works. Faith that does not produce works is not real saving faith (James 2:26). His statement, "Saved by faith alone, but faith is not alone" sums up this concept well. True faith, saving faith, is faith that rests on Christ for salvation and sanctification by producing good works (John 14:15; James 2:14-26; Ephesians 2:8-10). Kimber also pointed to Philippians 2:12-13 where we see that we are to "work out [our] salvation with fear and trembling" because "it is God who is at work in [us]." At first this appears to be confusing, but Kimber uses Ephesians 2:10 to clarify. In that verse, we find that God prepares good works for us to walk in, but we are *responsible* to walk in them. In essence, God implants in us both the desire and the resources (e.g. The Holy Spirit) to live out the life He has graciously called us to; however, at the same time, we are *responsible* to have faith and obey God's calling. It is here where the issue of eternal rewards comes in to play.

Kimber mentions that our rewards in heaven are proportionate to the degree by which we are faithful stewards of the grace that God gives to us. In other words, we are *responsible* to live a life of faith by obeying God's commands and pursuing holiness.

The remainder of the time was spent examining Hebrews 11:23-27. Pastor Kimber pointed out that one of the works which faith produces is triumph over fear. We see in Hebrews 11:23 that Moses' parents overcame their fear of the King's edict (to kill Hebrew male infants) by having faith in God that He had something special planned for Moses. Moses also overcame fear by using his mind and considering eternal rewards greater than temporal earthly pleasures. Kimber pointed out the volitional verbs in the passage where Moses first *refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and then *chose* to suffer with the children of God. Moses made these decisions by *considering* the reproach of Christ greater than the temporary pleasures of sin and this life. Thus Kimber concludes that faith overcomes fear by *considering* heavenly rewards as more important than temporal earthly pleasures. Pastor Kimber pointed to Matthew 6:19-21 to illustrate this great truth.

In summary, Pastor Kimber taught that faith must produce good works or it is not real faith. God gives us grace and we are *responsible* to be good stewards of that grace (Romans 12:6). One of the evidences of faith working is the triumph over fear. The life of faith is a struggle. It is, as Kimber says, "scary." Christians are constantly battling their own sinful nature and suffering the mockery of men when they live a life of faith and obedience to Christ. So it is key that faith overcomes fear and produces good works. We place our faith in Christ for both our salvation and sanctification. In salvation, faith is trusting not in ourselves, but in Christ for a relationship with God; in sanctification, faith is trusting in God's promises of eternal rewards by living a Christ-like life.

Discussion Questions:

Read the key passages discussed in Kimber's message to start off the teaching/application time. The passages are: James 2:14-26; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12-13; Matthew 6:19-21; Hebrews 11:23-27.

1. How does the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 correspond to Kimber's discussion of James 2:14-26 and Ephesians 2:8-10?
2. Why does a saving faith always produce works? How does this relate to the overcoming of fear?
3. What other Scriptures illustrate the aspects of faith producing works?
4. How does Kimber's teaching about eternal rewards align with the parable in Matthew 20:1-16? How does Matthew 20:1-16 differ from 2 Corinthians 5:9-10?
5. Go around the group and name at least one fear that each member needs to overcome by faith in order to live a Christ-like life. After each member has named a fear or fears that keep them from Christ-like character and living, discuss how Romans 8:15 leads to faith overcoming fear.