

St. Bartholomew's Ducklington

Lent 2017, Sermon Series: Principles of the Reformation

Sunday 12th March - By Faith alone

Readings:- Galatians 3:1-14(29)
John 3:1-21

What is faith:

The definition in the Oxford dictionary is:

- 1: Complete trust or confidence in someone or something.
- 2: Strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof.

Discuss.

Read Galatians

Paul gives 5 reasons why Salvation is by Faith alone. The reading we had in Church gives 4 examples.

- 1: Their conversion Verses 1-5

You had to believe and then when you believed you were given the Holy Spirit.

How did you come to faith?

Do you feel you have been given the holy Spirit?

- 2: The example of Abraham Verses 6-9

Abraham did nothing except believe what God had told him and that belief was enough for God to credit him with righteousness.

How easy is it for us to have the faith of Abraham?

- 3: The inevitability of human failure Verses 10-12

We need to be aware that no matter how determined we are to do the right thing, how hard we work on our bad habits, on our

responses to the people around us, there'll inevitably come a moment when our defences will be weak, when someone will say something that will trigger a reaction that's less than godly. Where are we then?

The reading from John also answers this point.

Is this a good example of showing faith will keep us on the right path?

4: The meaning of the Cross Verses 13-14

This is central to the whole argument because if Christianity were just a religion of rules, then the cross would become irrelevant.

Discuss.

Jesus takes our place so that God can look at us and see the righteousness that comes from Jesus Christ alone. This happens when we exercise faith in Jesus Christ. It happens when we receive the promise of his Holy Spirit who fills us with God's presence, who gives us the righteousness that comes as a gift as we believe the promise. Discuss.

5: The priority of the Promise (15-25)

The primacy of faith over law keeping. That is that when God promises something, his promise is going to be kept. He says let me give you "an example from daily life: once a person's will has been ratified, no one adds to it or annuls it." Once a contract has been signed there's no going back on it. It has to be acted upon. And if that's true of a human contract, it's even more true of a divine covenant. If God promises something, you can be sure that he'll do it.

To sum it all up

John 3: 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Confirmed by Luke 23:42-43

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."