

Week 3 – Faith Is Not Futile

GOD'S
NOT
DEAD

1. Faith Activates The Restoration Process

- Read 1 Corinthians 15:19-23 & 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

All of humanity is born into sin. Instead of reflecting the Creator perfectly, we portray broken and distorted images of him. We seek out wholeness in a variety of ways, but they are all futile. Jesus was the first and only man to live as a perfect image-bearer of God. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus paved the way for humanity to be reconciled to God and to be restored as his image-bearers. We are saved by putting our faith in this truth, and it's then that the process of restoration begins in our hearts. Transformation by the Holy Spirit will take our entire life time, as he molds us into vessels that are more like Christ. As he works in our hearts, we will become increasingly more humble, relying purely on him to work in and through us. Our full restoration will be made complete when Christ returns for his church.

- ❖ Q: What are some ways that we try and find wholeness outside of Christ? Why are they all futile?
- ❖ Q: Why are we not fully restored at the point when we are saved through faith?
- ❖ Q: Are we able to be transformed at all before Christ returns? (Romans 12:2)
- ❖ Q: Do you notice any personal transformation in your character in the last year? How did God start the process of transformation with you? What did he teach you in order for you to start being obedient?
- ❖ Q: What does God want to transform in you next? (What area of your character has he put his finger on, that needs to be restored?)

2. If Our Faith Is Not In Vain Then Neither Is Our Faithful Labour

- Read 1 Corinthians 15: 57-58, Ephesians 2:8-10 & Romans 12: 2

Our faith should lead us to obedience. Obedience bears fruit that glorifies God. When God asks for us to give an account for our lives, he will not be measuring our success in the way the world does. Many of us are willing to sacrifice things for our success but we are not willing to be put out of our comfort zones to faithfully obey Christ. We need to be careful that we as a Christian community do not fall into the trap of pursuing success rather than faithfulness to Christ. We need to remember that our real rewards for this life are in heaven.

- ❖ Q: Why are we willing to give up time with our families, sleep and other significant things in our lives in order to be successful?
- ❖ Q: Is the pursuit of success a trap that you have fallen into?
- ❖ Q: Do you think it possible to pursue worldly success and to faithfully obey God at the same time? (Matthew 6:24)
- ❖ Q: Do you consciously think about your reward for this life being in heaven? What impact does it have on your life?
- ❖ Q: When was the last time that you actively chose to obey God rather than follow something that would give you temporary gain?

3. Through Faith Jesus Calls Us To Walk On Water – The Realm Of The Impossible

- Read Matthew 14: 25-33

Peter was brave but his faith was weak. He learned about God's strength when his own faith failed him and he started to sink. Jesus was able to save him in his weakness. Later on when Jesus was arrested, Peter had tried to be brave but his faith failed him yet again and he denied ever knowing Jesus. Fear was greater than his faith. But Jesus still called Peter to be an apostle, someone on whom he would build his church, because he knew what his resurrection power could do in and through Peter. It is in his power that we can trust, not in our own. He is calling us to faithfully obey him, so that he can work in and through us.

- ❖ Q: Why did Jesus still use Peter when his faith had been so weak? Why is this encouraging for us?
- ❖ Q: What does it mean for us to trust in Christ's strength and not our own? Can you think of an example of this in your own life?
- ❖ Q: In what area of your life is God calling you to faithfully obey him so that he can work in and through you, even though the circumstances are overwhelming or out of your control?