

Today's Sermons

Morning: Whatever Happened To The Blood?
Evening: Q & A

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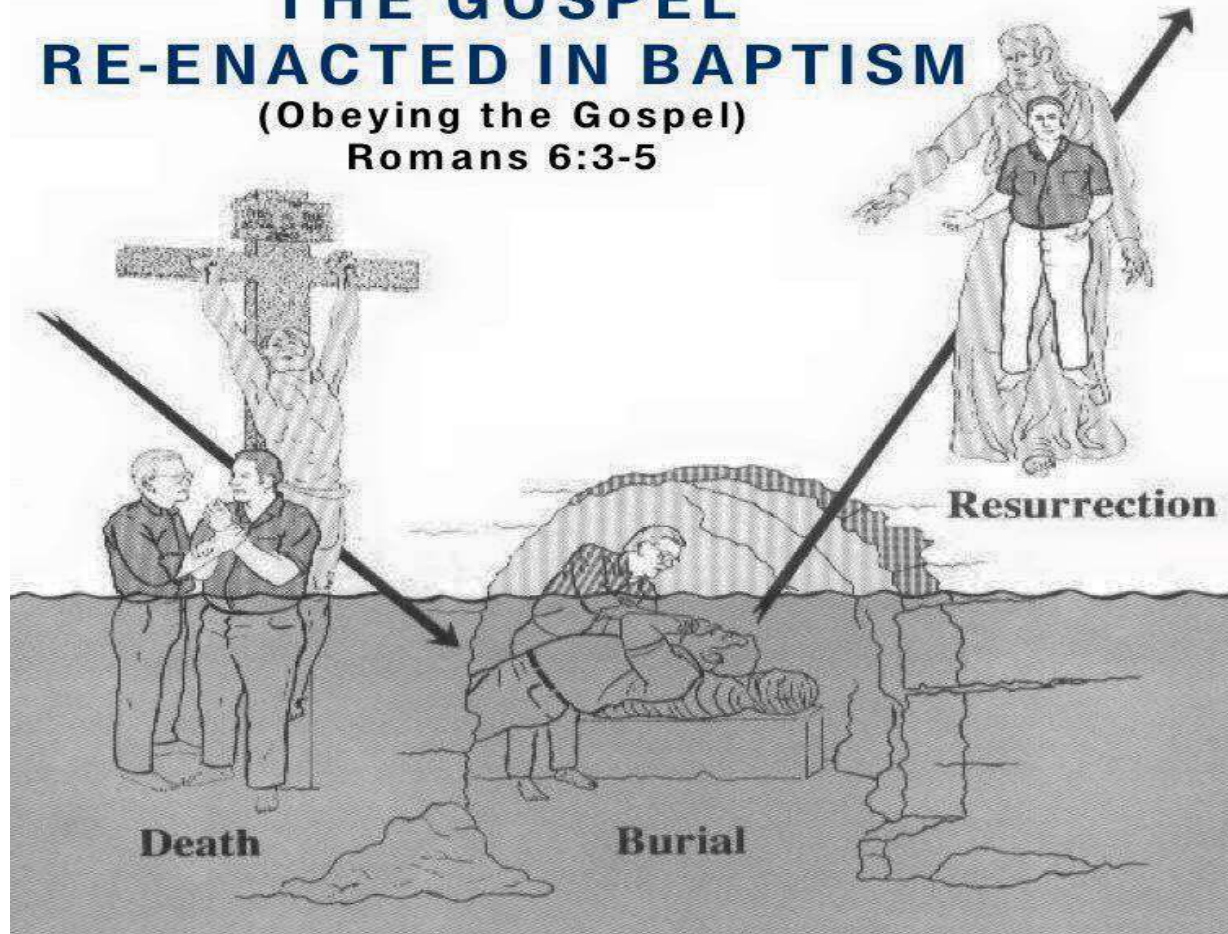
FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	23
Sunday AM Worship	36
Sunday PM Worship	18
Wed. Bible Study	7
Offering	\$1515

THE GOSPEL RE-ENACTED IN BAPTISM

(Obeying the Gospel)

Romans 6:3-5



West Jefferson Church of Christ

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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am

AM Worship:...11:00am

PM Worship:...6:00pm

2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am

"Back to the Bible"

AM 580 WSKS

93.5 FM

**We Extend A
Warm & Cordial
Welcome
To All Our
Visitors!**

Know Of A Certainty

By Tom Wacaster

Over a span of almost 50 years of preaching, I have frequently been asked, "How can I be sure that I am saved?" I have no doubt that those asking the question were sincere, and in many instances, those asking were among the very ones whom I considered to be some of the most faithful workers in the church. Why is it that otherwise strong Christians sometimes have this nagging doubt about their salvation? Why is it that we are prone to doubt when the Bible clearly tells us that we can know we have salvation?

Luke wrote his biography of Christ in order that Theophilus might "know the certainty concerning the things" of which he was instructed. There is not the slightest hint of guesswork, speculation, subjective intuition, or uncertainty in the Gospel of Luke. This is true regarding any book of the Bible. Luke did not write this Gospel to leave men in doubt. It is inconceivable to think that the "certainty" of any inspired writing would produce uncertainty in the lives of its readers. Consider the following.

In one sense questioning one's status in life is healthy. Likewise, a regular spiritual "checkup" is good for the soul. It seems that humility may play a part in doubts that arise from time to time, but caution must be exercised that we do not go to the opposite extreme and run from a proud spirit to one of

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self-debasement and fearful doubting. The following is attributed to an Egyptian king by the name of Akhenaton: “True wisdom is less presuming than folly. The wise man doubteth often, and changeth his mind; the fool is obstinate, and doubteth not; he knoweth all things but his own ignorance.” Another expressed the wisdom in doubting like this: “How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wise!” (Alexander Pope). Even some of the strongest of Bible characters had their questions and doubts. Abraham doubted God’s promise that he would have a child in his old age through whom the Lord would bless the world and sought instead to have Ishmael fill that role. Thomas would not believe the Lord had been raised from the dead until he could see it with his own eyes and touch the Lord’s side with his own hands. Even John the Baptist had some very serious questions about the Lord when he (John) was facing the closing days of his life in prison. You see, doubt should drive us to deeper investigation and self-examination. Doubt becomes dangerous when we began to question God’s promises. What, then, is the answer to our doubts and fears regarding death, salvation, and that spiritual realm wherein our hope resides as an anchor of the soul (Heb. 7:19)? There are at least three factors that affect the depth of our confidence: faith, facts, and feelings. These sustain an important relationship to one another and play a vital role in developing assurance in the heart of the child of God.

Consider this word faith. To have faith in some thing or some person is to trust the object of that faith. I have faith in the local bank to protect what I have deposited up to and including the point at which I desire to make a withdrawal. It is because of my faith in that institution that I can fully expect the funds to be there when I need them (of course the FDIC helps in this area, but then again, I must have a certain degree of faith in that branch of government as well). Solomon told us, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding” (Prov. 3:3).

Now we turn our attention to the facts. The Hebrews writer defines faith as “assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). The KJV reads, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” I am interested here in the Greek word translated “assurance” (ASV) and/or “substance” (KJV). The word denotes support for something; something upon which a hope is based. Biblical faith is not a blind faith, but rather one that is founded upon evidence that is brought to bear in any situation. Barclay points out three distinct areas in which faith and hope find application: (1) It is belief against the world; (2) It is belief in the spirit against the senses; (3) It is belief in the future against the present. Or as one author put it, “Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible, and achieves the impossible.” I believe in God because of the “facts.” The KJV sums it up with the word “evidence.” When a jury sits in judgment upon an accused, they do so based upon the evidence (i.e. facts) that is presented during the

court proceedings.

Now we come to feelings. Feelings, or emotions, in and of themselves, are good. God created us to feel, to be moved with compassion, to shed a tear over loss, whether ours or that of someone else. If man had been created completely void of emotions and/or feelings he would experience no sorrow; but then, neither would he experience joy and happiness. It is important to note that God warns us against the deceptive nature of feelings. “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (Prov. 16:25). The sad truth is that many people base their spiritual status on how they feel with little or no consideration as to what the Bible teaches on the matter.

Now with all that said, it seems to this humble scribe that the absence of assurance among those who have obeyed the gospel, and who are doing their best to live a faithful Christian life, is due to the failure to keep faith, fact, and feelings in proper relationship. Fact: God has promised forgiveness, along with a home in heaven, to those who obey the gospel and live a faithful Christian life. Faith: I believe what God has said because of the evidence that supports that promise. Feelings: I rejoice in that assurance, knowing that, though I fall far short of what I should be, God has promised to save me to the “uttermost” through the cleansing power of the blood of His Son. It is when men take their eyes OFF the facts, and allow their faith to falter, that their feelings kick in and they no longer “feel” as if they are saved. Remember, “faith comes by hearing...the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Or as one put it, “Doubt comes in at the window when inquiry is denied at the door.”

A pilot is instructed to always trust the instruments in the plane rather than the way he feels. Feelings can be deceptive. The same rule applies spiritually. Trust the instruments that God has given to us in His word. His promises are sure, the evidence incontrovertible. If the instruments contradict what you feel, then it is your feelings that are wrong and not the instruments! If you walk by your feelings rather than trust in the word of God, you will rob yourself of the joy and happiness that comes with God’s promises. But worse yet, you will never rid yourself of doubt, and you will continue to be plagued by the unanswered question, “How can I be sure?”

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“Then believed they his words; they sang his praise” (Psalm 106:12).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Dec 27 – Prayer Service after Evening Worship
- Jan 3 – Men’s Business Meeting & Ladies’ Bible Class
- Jan 10 – Preach-N-Eat and 1:30 Worship (Song Service)
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell