

August 4, 2019 Faith Is Like The Canadian Shield Pt. 6 1
Corinthians 2:6-16

Faith that is like bedrock, like the Canadian Shield which we can see just north of this place along Highway 7 is incredibly strong. It is not fragile beneath our feet. It gives us a sense of place. It also gives us a sense of identity. In this series we have been exploring basic doctrinal truths that are like a foundation for faith that lasts, faith that saves.

We began with the utter lostness of man. We are lost because of our sin...no buts...no ands...no exceptions. No buts because there are no excuses. No ands because further information about what happened, what we did, said, thought, does not change the reality of our condition. Because of sin we are lost.

Second we looked at the reality, that God has chosen us for salvation. The late Dr. Allan Farris, under whom I studied at Knox College reminded us as candidates training for ministry, that to understand that God has chosen us for salvation we need look no further than the Gospel of John chapter 3:16. "For God so loved the world that HE gave HIS only begotten Son that whosoever believes in HIM should not perish but have eternal life." God made that choice. What we have discovered in the relationship of faith, is that the eternal God strong to save exercised that choice. Our human response of "Yes" to God, was just that a response to HIS marvelous, gracious, saving choice.

Third, that we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ who died in our place on Calvary's cross. Actually that was 3rd, 4th and 5th. I called that set of messages the series within the series. The importance of Jesus is this: remove Jesus dying on Calvary's cross, risen from the dead 3 days later on the Sunday morning, and Christian faith dissolves. All our hope, all our joy, the prospect of peace, the calling to love others without exception, even enemies dissipates like so much gas except for Jesus. The church becomes incredibly weak because she loses her way when she forgets that first and last it is about Jesus. No ifs, no buts, no ands.

Today we turn to 1 Corinthians 2 verse 12. Many other verses could have been the text. The text could have come from the Old Testament. I chose to make it a verse from the New. Here is the truth to which the whole of the Bible attests: We are renewed and transformed by the Holy Spirit of God. This is verse 12 of 1Corinthians 2. "We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand what God has freely given us."

First point: We have not received the spirit of the world. One of the things that means is this. When people look at the church of Jesus Christ, and at Christians as individuals, they should see that this entity, these people are different from the balance of the world, and the balance of human society. Remember the series I preached on John Ortberg's little book, Who Is This man: The Unpredictable Impact of the Inescapable

Jesus? Ortberg's whole premise was that followers of Jesus are different from the world and its values. And they always have been to the extent that the world has been changed in many many ways. Remember the view in Roman times that children were not human and therefore were expendable. Widows were expendable. The sick and infirm were expendable. The deformed were expendable. Followers of Jesus created orphanages to save discarded children. From the earliest times followers of Jesus took widows in and gave them food and shelter. Why? Because Jesus made provision for HIS mother from the cross. He made John responsible for her care. Followers of Jesus created hospitals and hospices. Followers of Jesus gave the world universal education. Teach them to read. One text book. The Bible. The Red Cross was founded by a follower of Jesus to bring help and mercy to soldiers dying from their wounds on battle fields.

1 Corinthians 2:12 tells us why all those things and so many other happened. The outlawing of slavery. The ending of child labour. "We have not received the spirit of the world, which frankly did not care. We received the Spirit who is from God and therefore like Jesus we must care. Our involvement with the Mully Family orphanages in Kenya is because we have been given the Spirit of God. And therefore we must care! The late Dr. Robert Schuller pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in California used to tell his congregation, and especially those who were joining the Church by profession of faith, "find a need and fill it." Why? Because that is what Jesus did. That is

what the Spirit of God calls us to do, to see need and to respond to the person and the people who are in need.

And yes, we have suddenly found ourselves talking about the Trinity: One God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at the same time. What do we have in this 12th verse? “We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God that we might understand what God has freely given us”. And I would add 2 words for clarity. “That we might understand what God has freely given us (in Jesus). That is why Pentecost occurred. Jesus said, “Wait for the Spirit to be given.” HE is the Spirit of power. Miracles happen when HE is present in the midst of followers of Jesus. HE is the gifting Spirit. HE bestows the gifts we need to do the work we do in a world that sometimes hard to love, and which certainly places disciples of Jesus in circumstances of trial. The fact is HE gives us the tools we need to do the work before us.

We call God, Father because Jesus did and HE instructed us to do so. And because God is the Creator there is a sense in which HE is the Father of all. In a specific moment in time God came into the world in Jesus to redeem the world. You know the story, ministry, the cross, the resurrection. Jesus departs out of the world and HE and the Father who are one, send the Spirit to renew us and transform us, to do the work that we call Kingdom work. It includes supporting an orphanage. Supporting a food bank. Making gently used clothing and other goods available to people for pennies on the

dollar. It includes never forgetting our primary business is the declaration of the Gospel, building up the faithful, preparing the faithful to do what God's Spirit leads us into as a matter of service to others.

If you are at all like me you are tempted to say "we can't do everything." There is a sense in which I agree with that statement. But at the same time we need to do everything that God's Spirit leads us into. We have been given the Spirit of God that we might understand what God has freely given us in Jesus Christ. Understanding means we are going to see needs to which the balance of the world, and the balance of our own society are blind. The spirit of the world would say we are a bunch of senior citizens with limited energy and resources. The Spirit of God clearly did not get the memo, or receiving it simply said, "No!" He has a habit of doing great things through the Abrahams and Sarahs of this world. Old people with limited resources and limited energy and faith...faith like the Canadian shield. The solid rock. God by means of the Spirit renews us. We get new insights, and we receive new marching orders. We do new things. And the Spirit of God transforms us. I am not the boy I was who told people God did not exist. I am not the young preacher I was who thought he was saying everything when he said, God does exist. We have continued to grow and change and mature. My battle with cancer was a time of God's revealing things to me...including it's not over till it's done.

The Spirit of God introduced us to new friends like Nancy and Martin. Renewing us. Reforming us. Transforming us and the condition we think we are living in. And putting a new, old song in our hearts. Praises the Lord!

Let us pray;

The words of the prayer once again come from an old hymn, happens to be 389 in the Book of Praise. Let us pray:

Breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love what you love, and do what you would do. Breathe on me breath of God till I am wholly thine, until this earthly part of me glows with fire divine. Breathe on me breath of God, so shall I never die, but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity. In Jesus name, Amen