Believing in Jesus

In previous messages on John 3, I have spoken on the necessity of the new birth and on the amazing love of God. This chapter also shows us a wide range of responses to the Lord Jesus Christ. Where are you in this spectrum of belief?

**1. If you reject faith in Christ—**

A. You are already *judged* by God (3:18)

B. You are living under the *wrath* of God (3:36)

**2. If you have an incomplete faith in Christ—**

A. You may have an *emotional* faith (2:23-25)

B. You may have a *questioning* faith (3:1-2)

**3. If you have saving faith in Christ—**

A. You accept the *testimony* of Christ

(3:11-13, 31-33; 1 John 5:6-12)

B. You confidently *trust* in Christ

(3:14-16, 18, 36)

C. You walk in the *light* of Christ (3:20-21)

**4. If you have devoted faith in Christ—**

A. You testify to the *supremacy* of Christ

(3:27-28)

B. You rejoice in the *joy* of Christ (3:29)

C. You recede before the *glory* of Christ

(3:30)

**For Private Meditation or Family Discussion**

1. How did the Lord speak to you through the message? Did He put His finger on any habits or attitudes that you need to change? Did He encourage you regarding some difficulty, move you to undertake some new challenge, or open your heart to some truth you hadn’t seen before?

2. Faith is *“a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the... promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit”* (John Calvin, *Institutes,* 3.2.7). True faith includes an assured confidence in the promises of God (Colossians 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Hebrews 6:11; 10:22; 11:1).

Nevertheless, *“while we teach that faith ought to be certain and assured, we cannot imagine any certainty that is not tinged with doubt, or any assurance that is not assailed by some anxiety”* (Calvin, 3.2.17). However, *“unbelief does not hold sway within believers’ hearts, but assails them from without. It do*es *not mortally wound them with its weapons, but merely harasses them or at most so injures them that the wound is curable”* (Calvin, 3.2.21). Faith is our shield against the fiery darts of the devil (Ephesians 6:16), so that by it we overcome the world (1 John 5:4-5)—sometimes with great struggle.

3. Why is it right to look forward to sharing in Christ’s glory when He comes again, but wrong to see Christ as your ticket to glory here and now? John said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” What’s wrong with saying, “He must increase, so that I can ride His coattails up to fame and fortune”?

Romans 8:16-18

1 Peter 5:5-7

James 4:6-10