

Heidelberg Catechism 59-61 – Faith: Hindrances & Results!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: All doctrines have personal benefits if you properly apply them, but the doctrine of faith is one of the most humbling doctrines of the Bible. You might ask: How so? Well, when you study this doctrine you quickly learn how essential faith is to your life, and even though faith is essential to life, you learn that you have no source of faith in yourself. We can say that the doctrine of faith is an ego killer.

May God destroy more of your ego today and make you lean on his gift of faith for your salvation and sanctification!

Our headings are: You must believe that only in Jesus Christ you are right with God, You must know how you are able to believe and be made right with God, and What is the result of being made right with God.

Our goals are: That you will see the need for the gift of faith and that you will use it to receive the full promises you have in Jesus Christ to be saved and to be sanctified.

You must believe that Only in Christ you are Right with God

59 Q. WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO YOU, HOWEVER, TO BELIEVE ALL THIS?

A. In Christ I am right with God and heir to life everlasting.

1. If you say with sincerity "I believe in God, the Father, almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and was buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; I believe a holy catholic church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting," then you are right with God and an heir of heaven. Without believing in Jesus Christ, you are only able to die and go to hell.

You must know how are you able to believe and be made right with God?

60 Q. HOW ARE YOU RIGHT WITH GOD?

A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. Even though my conscience accuses me of having grievously 悲切地 sinned against all God's commandments and of never having kept any of them, and even though I am still inclined toward all evil, nevertheless, without my deserving it at all, out of sheer grace, God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner, as if I had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me. All I need to do is to accept this gift of God with a believing heart.

1. So how are you able to believe and be made right with God? By faith only!

2. What is faith?

Faith is the means – the only means - by which you receive what God offers to you. Faith is like a spiritual hand from God. Faith is a taker – it is a noun. By faith you receive knowledge and assurance of what Christ has done for you and that you continue to have confidence that God will give help you throughout your life.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Galatians 2:16 "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Galatians 3:8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

Since faith, which is essential for your life, is a gift of God, it means you have no right to it. How humbling! You must beg for it. You must show your appreciation for it. You must share it.

3. Faith must have an object. Jesus is your object. You receive what he has done for you.

61 Q. WHY DO YOU SAY THAT BY FAITH ALONE YOU ARE RIGHT WITH GOD?

A. It is not because of any value my faith has that God is pleased with me. Only Christ's satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness make me right with God. And I can receive this

righteousness and make it mine in no other way than by faith alone.

Look at some more scriptural proofs to show that it is only through faith in Christ you might boast.

1Corinthian 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—31 that, as it is written, "**He who glories**, let him glory in the LORD."

Do you see why this doctrine is humbling? The Lord Jesus put this very bluntly.

1John 5:10 He who believes in the **Son of God** has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; **he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

And then...

Habakkuk 2:4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith."

4. By faith, God grants you the credits of Christ's salvation out of pure love. This is from Gen 15.

Romans 4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is accounted for righteousness,**

If you cannot rest in God's credits in Jesus Christ, you cannot rest. How this goes against modern sense of value and ego! There is no thumping of the chest and saying: "I did this."

2Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled and 解 us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation and 解 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, **not imputing their trespasses to them,** and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

1John 2:1b And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus **Christ the righteous.**

2 And He Himself is the propitiation 安 抚, 和 解 for our sins...

5. There are hindrances 障碍 to your faith...which ultimately rob you of being made right with God.

a. Your conscience might make you feel hopeless when you sin. But you are not saved by your own work so you **must reject the temptation to feel hopeless.** Even if you are guilty for breaking all of God's laws, remember that you were saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. So you must not become despondent 沮丧地 when things don't go the way you want. It is the Devil's trap 陷阱 to feel guilty...to make you think you are hopeless...and then you give up...or you try to fix the problem yourself. That is how the sneaky 偷偷摸摸的 snake works.

Romans 3:9... **Are we better than they? Not at all.** For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

If fact, throughout your life you are inclined 屈身 to all kinds of evil.

Romans 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

b. You might be tempted to think that you deserve good things from God because of how special you are or because of what you do. But you do not deserve anything from God. You have no right to faith or salvation. **Faith and salvation is a gift of God; it is from sheer grace.**

Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

You **may not boast of any intrinsic 固有的 ability to earn or merit your salvation.**

Romans 3:24 being **justified freely by His grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **Furthermore,** God does not need anything from you so he has no obligation to give you faith. You need everything from him. You are the one full of sin. How can a sinful man attain 达到 to the heights of God's holy majesty when he is full of sin? When you read Romans 1:18ff, don't you see how God has darkened man? Only he can shine that light again in man to make you receive what he has done. This is why Jesus had to perfectly obey God's law and they die as a pure sacrificial Lamb for you.

c. Some people believe that they are justified when God sees faith working in them and God is therefore compelled to reward them. This is not true faith. No one is saved by covenant faithfulness – by actions. **Faith does not include works.** This is a dangerously false doctrine that is close to the Roman Catholic heresy and it robs Christ of his glory. In fact, **you are not saved by faith itself. It is what you receive by faith...the person and work of Jesus Christ...that saves you.**

Through faith God declares you righteous...and he imputes Christ's righteousness to you. Faith itself is not rewarded...justification (a work of God) is rewarded.

d. Faith is not simply mental agreement with the Word of God as Roman Catholics teach. Those who think this do not have faith.

e. Other things here that can hinder 限制 your faith to be saved and sanctified: Your knowledge of the Bible. Knowledge by itself is meaningless. **Reformed faith.** Doctrines without love and obedience are useless. **Heritage.** Heritage does not give you pass into heaven. It may give you access to the Word of Truth, but you have to receive it for yourself. You are not in partnership with God in your salvation. How humbling.

What is the result of being made right with God?

1. Your perfect salvation that comes through faith makes you indistinguishable 没有什么区别 from the perfect.

Romans 4:24 but also for us. It shall be imputed 使负责 to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised **because of our justification.**

Those who are justified are treated just as if they never sinned.

2Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

So all you do is receive by faith what God has done for you through Jesus.

John 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Acts 16:31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

2. You have peace that starts to grow in your heart. You are left with pure wonder! You know you are a Christian. You have relationship with your heavenly Father. You worship him.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also **we have access by faith** into this grace **in which we stand,** and **rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**

3. You have everlasting life...that begins now and will be completed in eternity.

John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Conclusion:

Only in Jesus Christ you are right with God. You can only be in Jesus Christ by receiving his work of living and dying for you through faith – faith which he gives to you. So salvation is all of the Lord. And the result: You are declared to be perfect and you have eternal peace with God and joy in your soul.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: What an incredible thing! You were totally incapable to do it, but your sins have been removed permanently from you. **Let this humble you.** And since you continue to sin throughout your life and are still forgiven through Jesus Christ, **let this humble you more.** Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Remember Luke 18...boast of Christ, not how good you are. **You must share this treasure with the world,** starting in your home. **Praise him daily for saving you.**

Finally, if you are not a Christian let me say what I can't put simpler: You will go to hell without faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is a gift only God can give you. You need faith to receive the work of Jesus Christ on the cross as your own work. You will get faith if you read God's Word and ask God for his Holy Spirit to help you.