

46 - Facts and Fiction About Faith (Part 6)

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Misconception # 6: Faith, a matter of personal preference, can rest on one belief as well as another. It really doesn't matter as long as I believe strongly in something!

This popular position holds much appeal, saying that everyone will eventually win the race and receive a prize no matter what they happen to believe. Yet, belief itself will not create fact. Simply trying hard to believe something will not necessarily make it true.

Although believing in something has gained wide acceptance, faith must be grounded in a trustworthy object. Millions trusted Hitler with full confidence, but their hopes were shattered. Tens of millions trusted in Communism but ended up terribly disillusioned. Some have died after placing their trust in faith healers. Others put their trust in games of chance only to find that "Lady Luck" can be heartless. Obviously, then, not everyone or every belief can be worthy of trust.

A frequently heard remark – "It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you are sincere." With all respect, I don't think anyone making such a statement really means what they're saying. Surely, they don't mean that it is okay to follow Jim Jones, the crazed cult leader, who sincerely believed that his sincere followers should join him in sincerely drinking poisoned Kool-Aid, so they could go to heaven together sooner rather than later. The object of their faith proved untrustworthy. It is possible to be sincere but wrong, dead wrong! If space permitted, I could list many similar examples of misguided faith.

Suppose you are walking on a lake that's covered with one centimetre of ice. No matter how sincere you are in believing you can cross over, you're in for a cold bath. Conversely, if the ice is 25 centimetres thick, even if your faith is weak, you will be upheld. The issue is not the intensity of your faith but the trustworthiness of the object of your belief.

The value of faith is not in the one believing but rather in the one who is believed. Since Christ is the object of our salvation and hope for the future, that faith is valuable because Christ is trustworthy. The basic question is not, "Do you have faith?" instead, "In whom do you put your trust?"

To know the Lord in a personal, saving relationship, you do not need a strong faith, but you do need a strong Savior. Jesus himself promised, "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37). Don't dwell on the weakness of your faith. Focus instead on the promises of God's Word and the power of your Savior. Our striving won't save us, but the Hand that holds us will.

"It is by grace we are saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). Grace is God's part, reaching down to us in Christ. Faith is our hand, reaching up to Him. Our Lord does the saving, but he wants us to trust Him.