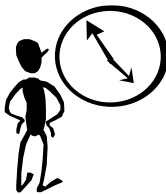


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Time of Assembly



Every other Sunday:

Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.

OR

Bible Study	4:00 p.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study	7:00 p. m.
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Faith is Active

By Floyd Chappellear

"Faith is always active," the speaker declared. "It is never passive, but always indicates a spirit of obedience," he quickly added. He is not the only preacher I have heard who has said such a thing, nor will he be the last. There is something in the concept that gives us a certain degree of comfort when we assert that believers are always Christians. T'aint necessarily so.

The devils believe and tremble, we are told ([James 2:19](#)), yet we would never think of the demons as believers. The thought is just too incongruous to entertain. They, the spirits of the nether world, called him the Son of the Most High God even and adjured him in the name of God ([Mark 5:7](#)), but still, we shudder at the thought of referring to them as believers. After all, "believers are always Christians."

However, we can dismiss the devils as a mysterious anomaly that cannot be easily explained, but the stated maxim still applies. Believers are always Christians because, it is asserted, "faith is always active and implies obedience."

There are others

The parents of the man born blind ([John 9](#)) obviously believed it was the Christ who had healed their son but refused to acknowledge Him because it had been declared that any who would confess Christ would be put out of the synagogue ([John 9:22](#)). Their faith was concealed that their son's faith might be revealed.

Certain chief rulers believed on Him but, likewise, refused to confess Him because the Pharisees threatened to expel believers from the synagogue. Some have argued that they believed **on** Him and not **in** Him, but this distinction is made in English, not Greek. The NASB, the Bible in Basic English, the NIV, and numerous other translations do not fol-

low the form of the KJV and the ASV. These believed in Him, not merely on Him. (See [John 12:42](#)).

When men approach religion from a horizontal perspective (that is, with a view toward this life and the things that pertain to it, [1 John 2:15](#)) rather than from a vertical (looking to the things above, [Colossians 3:1](#)), they will follow their pursuit of the praise of men rather than the approval of God. These men and women although "believers" may never become believers in the more comprehensive and active sense. (Consider such passages as [Acts 5:14](#). And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

Nothing is gained.

Nothing is gained when we deny that those with imperfect faith are believers in the broadest sense of the term. Their faith, not coupled with works of obedience, is dead [figuratively], but they are still believers. Apollos may have been an example of such a one with dead faith. He knew only the baptism of John so had not coupled his faith with obedience (see; [Acts 18:24-28](#)). Two loving disciples took him aside and taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly. Who, however, can deny that he did some (much) good in his bold and eloquent preaching about Christ even before they corrected him? He was a believer who was not yet a believer as we are wont to style one.

The number of Apollos-like believers may be legion today: men who are boldly and eloquently preaching the Christ yet knowing only the baptism of John (or no baptism at all). Will they go to Heaven? (Why do we have such a fascination with whittling on God's end of the stick?) I will not decide for God whether or not He may choose to extend his grace to them, but what I will not do is to decide that He will. God alone is the Judge. He gives no indication in Scripture that any but the obedient will be saved, I refuse to choose for Him certain ones who believe but who do not obey as subjects of salvation. God, alone, is the Judge.

What disturbs me is the reluctance of some to merely acknowledge that there may be some believers today who are not children of God. Yet, interestingly, we are profoundly dependent on many of them for us to succeed in the work of planting and watering that souls might be saved.

The contribution of non-Christian believers

Not one significant translation of the Scriptures is the product of exclusively Christian scholarship, yet we use them unhesitatingly. The lexicons, dictionaries, word studies, and most commentaries are the products of non-Christians, but certainly not nonbelievers. In this many of these believers may be somewhat likened to those in [2 Kings 17:33](#), "*They worshiped the LORD, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought*" (NIV). The fear of the lions leads them to worship God (the Devil as one walks about -- [1 Peter](#)

5:8), however imperfectly, but they have no desire to give up their practices from earlier times.

Like the Samaritans of Christ's day, they serve the Lord without going all the way to Jerusalem (see; "*Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship*" ([John 4:20](#)). The Restoration Movement is about going all the way back to Jerusalem. It is easier to worship God "in this mountain." That many remain in this mountain for their religion, rather than coming to the Mt. Zion of God ([Hebrews 12:22](#)) does not mean that they are not believers. In fact, they may have gone even further in their faith. They may have received Christ and all that such entails.

However, those who have received Him have the power to become children of God ([John 1:12](#)) but are not yet His offspring. Let us therefore never denigrate those who have faith but who have not yet been immersed into Christ. Contrariwise, let us rejoice that they are "not far from the kingdom" and do what we can to help them bridge the chasm that remains (see [Mark 12:34](#)).

In Conclusion

Let us note that there are two kinds of believers whose faith is not dead. They are passive and active. On the other hand, there are two kinds of unbelievers as well. They are passive and active. [Acts 14](#) gives a very good treatment to both kinds. Let us close with the thought that you should read that chapter from the New American Standard Version.

Lord Send Me

By Dixie Bowman

The Scriptures abound with acts of kindness, humility, and love. As always, Jesus is our best example. When He washed the disciples' feet ([John 13:4-17](#)), it first appears as an act of kindness, which, although kind, was intended as a lesson on humility and servitude. "*For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you*" ([John 13:15](#)).

In [Luke 10:29](#), Jesus was asked the question, "*And who is my neighbor?*" He answers the question by telling a story about a man who was traveling, fell among thieves, and left for dead. Three different travelers came by the same road. The last one, a Samaritan, had compassion on the injured man and took steps to care for him ([Luke 10:30-35](#)). When He finished the story, Jesus asks, "*Which now of these three, thinkest thou, as neighbour to him that fell among thieves?*" ([Luke 10:36](#)). "*And he said, 'He that showed mercy on him.'*" Jesus said, "*Go and do thou likewise*" ([Luke 10:37](#)).

In Mark the fourteenth chapter, we have the account of the woman who poured a

precious ointment over the head of Jesus. Some of those present harshly criticized the woman, saying it was a waste. Jesus remarked, "*Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me*" ([Mark 14:6](#)). He concludes in [Mark 14:8](#), "*She hath done what she could.*"

There was a time when I didn't understand what the life of a Christian consisted of. Through time, I have learned that it is a step-by-step process of study, understanding, and making an application.

When my husband and I first began attending services in the Lord's church, I became very ill and had to be hospitalized. It was natural that my absence was noticed. My husband explained what had happened and was immediately showered with offers of help in various ways. Not knowing the Scriptures, my husband kindly declined the offers and said he was managing alright. We had not yet learned that God's children needed to "*Let their light so shine that they might see your good works and glorify their Father which is in Heaven*" ([Matthew 15:16](#)). Nor had we ever "*As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially those of the household of faith*" ([Galatians 6:10](#)).

I was soon visited by some of the women of that Southern California congregation, whom I scarcely knew. They came bearing gifts of fresh yellow daffodils, cards of encouragement, and warm smiles of affection and concern. I wept tears of joy at their love and tears of sadness soon followed, as I missed our children terribly.

When I was dismissed from the hospital and returned home, I don't remember whether the house was straight, or the laundry was done, but I do remember some of the members of the Lord's church brought enough food to last for weeks. As we sat down together that evening to eat our meal, we joined hands and gave thanks not only for the delicious food but the overwhelming overpowering of love we as yet did not comprehend. It was the first time we ever prayed as a family. Although the food was simple physical sustenance, we commented that it was like food from Heaven.

It wasn't long before we were attending services regularly, and involving ourselves in home Bible studies as well. My husband and I were baptized into Jesus Christ that summer and have since grown to understand the importance of doing for others is to the growth of a Christian, both as a giver and as a recipient. Although it has been thirty years, we have never forgotten this expression of Christian love.

I have learned so much from my Christian sisters. One, in particular, I would like to mention. I wish she knew what her simple act of selflessness has meant to me, but God knows, and that's what really matters.

Vera was not a young woman when I came to know her. She suffered from painful crippling arthritis, was a diabetic, and had a serious heart condition. She and her gallant husband, Jim, had cared for his mother until the day she died. Then her own moth-

er, well into her nineties, came to live with them. At night, Vera and her mother slept in the same bedroom. The older of the two women slept very little, therefore Vera didn't get much rest. Jim slept by himself so that he would have the strength to help the two women throughout the day.

Occasionally I had the opportunity to stay with Vera's mother in order that she and Jim could attend services on Sunday night. It was on one of these occasions that I mentioned to Vera that several of the women were getting food together for a family in need. She looked at me with those dark brown eyes, that seemed to penetrate my very soul, and said, "Oh let me." I immediately thought of the words of Isaiah, "*And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I send me*" ([Isaiah 6:8](#)). Those very words seemed to come from her lips. Little Vera, stricken with infirmities of the flesh, but certainly not of the Spirit.

Paul, by inspiration, taught in [I Timothy 2:9-10](#) that women should adorn themselves with good works. A widow who was truly a widow in need and desolate was required to be reported of for good works ([I Timothy 5:10](#)). But good works are needful from all who profess Christ. From [Titus 3:8](#) we learn that if we constantly affirm that we believe in God then we should be careful to maintain good works. It is far more important to be rich in good works than to trust in riches ([I Timothy 6:17-18](#)). Paul wrote in [Titus 2:7](#) that the young men should show a pattern of good works. Titus 2:14 teaches that in order to be redeemed and purified to Christ we must first become a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Good works are many things. They are small things and big things done in the name of the Lord. God doesn't measure our works, but our hearts. Vera couldn't do much, but she did all that she could. We can't do everything in every situation, but we are capable of so much more. We shouldn't allow a day to pass that we haven't done at least one thing for someone else. Jesus never once considered himself. While we will never reach that level of perfection, we need to remember the words of Paul, in that we should consider others better than ourselves ([Philippians 2:3](#)).

Edward Everett Hale once said:

"I am only one,
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something.
And because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."

God, help us to overcome our weaknesses, whatever they may be, and make them our strengths instead. In Jesus' name, Amen.