



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

February 8, 2015

So Sweet

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! —Psalm 34:8

It's the debate of the ages. For almost 500 years now, people have struggled with the book of James, because he talks about being justified by works, while Paul insists we are justified by grace alone though faith alone. It would help us all to realize there's no real contradiction, if we understood that James is from Missouri. While Paul talks of our salvation as an internal (and eternal) reality, James says, "Show me."

James echoes the words of our Savior, when He says, "*You will recognize them by their fruits*" (Matthew 7:16). Faith makes a difference others can see, because God makes a difference we can count on. He sets us free from sin, so we can find all we need in Him. We show our faith when we let God be God, say "No" to earth's perverse pleasures, and obey Him. Faith puts God to the test and proves He is true to His Word.

Since I first turned from sin to follow Christ, He has given me every reason to trust and obey. He's provided a life full of good things—family, career, a church home where we worship, fellowship, and receive support in the Christian life. He will be faithful in the future to provide for my children, retirement, old age, eternity.

God proved faithful to Martin Luther when his teaching brought him into confrontation with powers of his day. Bishops and cardinals hung on his words, intent on destroying him and his teachings, which defied church dogma. When they insisted he recant, he put his faith on display, refusing with the famous words, "Here I stand. I can not do otherwise."

God was faithful to David, as he clung to the promise that one day he would become king. For years, he hid in caves from Saul, who sought his life. The book of 1st Samuel portrays David's consistent refusal to trust the expediencies of sin, confident that God would make good His promise. Twice he could have killed Saul but refused to take the life of God's anointed. Once he avoided death by acting like a mad man and turned his deliverance into an opportunity to give praise.

Billy Graham's legacy rests on his decision to trust God's Word and proclaim it faithfully for the rest of his life. Joni Erickson Tada lost her ability to move but found her call from God, who has proved faithful ever since. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, watching his beloved country torn apart by Civil War and grieving his wife's death, undergirded America's faith with the words of the old carol, "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep."

God is faithful. Trusting in Him brings a sweetness beyond explanation. Louisa M. R. Stead wanted to be a missionary, but her health prevented her. Shortly after giving birth, she lost her husband when he tried to save a drowning child. Still she trusted Jesus, later remarried, and ultimately went to the mission field. Her testimony to God's faithfulness still rings in the words of the old hymn:

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His Word,
Just to rest upon His promise and to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er;
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! Oh, for grace to trust Him more!

The faith James talks about is faith that proves God is faithful. His message is that faith leads to action. Along with David, James urges us to "Taste and see that the Lord is good."

Prayer for Northpoint: Ask God to speak effectively through His Word, change lives, and move us to act in faith.

Prayer for the United States: Pray for Christian leaders to take a stand for Christ at every level of our society.

Prayer for the World: Pray for a movement of the Holy Spirit across the globe that rallies the people of God to pray, stand by faith, proclaim God's truth, and uphold His standards of righteousness.

Prayer Supporting Ministry:

- *Tuba City:* Ask God to protect and use our team this weekend, as they go to give support to God's work.
- *Women's Conference:* Ask God to speak to the women who attend the upcoming conference, as they learn to trust God to bear fruit in their lives.
- *Grief Share:* Ask God to turn the hearts of those who are hurting to Him to find hope and healing.

