

Luke 7:18-35 Sola Fide: Faith's Nature and Object

Jesus calls for faith that trusts Him as He is, gladly participating in God's purpose in Christ.

- 1) Faith trusts in Jesus for who is and what He does, not in what we would like Him to be and what we would like Him to do (7:18-23).
 - a) The object of faith is the Triune God as He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ.
 - b) John the Baptist judged Jesus' Messiahship by 'feeble sense' and doubted.
 - c) Jesus reminded John of God's promises of redemption, restoration, and regeneration, which were being realized in Jesus' ministry to the least and the weakest among God's people. Jesus wasn't merely fixing people's problems, He was overcoming the problem of humanity's alienation from God.
 - d) Jesus promises blessing to the one who is not "offended" by Him.
 - e) Our "program" for Jesus, the expectations we may have of what God *ought to be* doing for us and around us, can be misleading for our faith. God's purpose of redemption is not as narrow as our vision, but is so much more glorious than we can conceive. A crucified Christ is a stumbling block to many.
- 2) Faith is a proclamation of and participation in the saving righteousness of God in Christ (7:24-30).
 - a) God's purpose does not seem 'grand' in the eyes of the world. But those who are given the sight of faith identify with God's kingdom, as did those who received John's baptism, and then followed Jesus on John's testimony.
 - b) They "declared God just;" that is "righteous" in the sense of covenantal, saving righteousness.
 - c) The natural man, like the Pharisees and lawyers mentioned here, rejected "the purpose of God for themselves," not willing to identify with the kingdom expressed in the ministries of John and later Jesus. Sinful man imagines that he can bring about his own utopia, his own order of righteousness and peace. "You will be like God, knowing good and evil," was a temptation to build the kingdom without God in Christ.
- 3) Faith is demonstrated in lives that break out of the power structures of man to conform to the structure of the Kingdom of God in Christ (31-35).
 - a) Both John and Jesus operated outside of the world's power structures. Even though they were both quite different, one being rather ascetic, the other being known for feasting, they were living in accord with the purpose of God at the dawning of the Messianic Kingdom.
 - b) "The people of this generation" were so out of tune with God's purposes that they did not recognize what God was doing in John or Jesus.
 - c) But "wisdom," that is, God in Christ, is justified by her children—those who believe. Their lives, conformed to God's power structures, testify to the redemptive purpose of God in Christ.
- 4) Kingdom life through faith in Christ:
 - a) We enter the kingdom and righteousness of God by faith alone in Christ alone.
 - b) We live out the righteousness of the kingdom by faith working through love.

In this way, our lives bear witness to the wisdom of God in Christ.