

"Faith=Motion"
Gen 12:1-4a; Romans 4:1-5,13-17
Rev. Dennis Howard
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What gets you out of bed in the morning?
Perhaps it is a sense of duty;
 the kids need clean clothes, breakfast, and a lunch
 so they can get through their school day.
Or maybe you love your vocation
 and you cannot wait to get at it
 for another day.
Or perhaps you are retired
 and the hobby bench is calling.
Regardless of which thought process
 moves you from the mattress to the kitchen
 or out the door to the bus stop, or the shop,
 that thinking,
 the thoughts that move you
 are based on
 what you believe to be best.
It is the belief that you are doing the right thing,
 the needful thing,
 that moves you into
 your daily activities.
If you believe that your children need your support,
 that belief moves you to provide it.
If you believe your vocation matters,
 if only to put food on the table,
 that belief moves you out the door
 and off to the work place.
So, what we believe in
 moves us.

PAUSE HERE

What we believe in can also be named in another way.
 That other name for belief is faith.
 What we believe in

is what we have faith in.
We can have faith in abstract concepts,
like democracy.
Or we can believe in scientific theories,
like the theory of evolution.
Believing that democracy is the best form of government,
even with all its warts and blemishes,
moves us to take political action,
like voting for
or otherwise supporting
a political party
that we believe best shares
our values.
Believing in the theory of evolution
can move us psychologically.
Such belief can create a spiritual tension in our Christian walk
if we hold a literalistic interpretation
of the creation stories in Genesis.
So, belief in the abstracts of life
and the affect that belief has on our lives.

PAUSE HERE

We can also have faith in the mundane matters of life.
We can believe that if we take care of our children,
then they will be best equipped
to do well in life.
Or we can have faith that
if we perform well at our chosen vocation,
then we will succeed in our career
and be better able to provide for
those whom we love.
So, we have examples of how our beliefs,
even in the mundane aspects of life,
move us to action
in our daily lives.

But what about Christian faith?

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Is Christian faith,
specifically belief in Jesus

as Son of God, Messiah,
is this particular belief meant to move us,
to lead us into a life of service?
The reformed tradition has **as** a fundamental tenet
the belief that we are justified before God
by faith alone.
And rightly so.
We can do nothing more
to enter a state of justification before God
than accepting in our hearts
God's gift of faith in Jesus
as Son of God, Saviour.
No amount of attendance at church,
or showing up at session or presbytery meetings,
or laboring away in the local soup kitchen
will make God love us more
or be more apt overlook our shortcomings.
So.
Faith is it.
The be-all, end-all.
But is it?
The answer is yes.
The answer is also, yes **and**.
Here's what I mean.
Did Jesus call us to **a** faith,
a belief system
that is stagnant,
that is fulfilled and fulfilling
the moment we first believed?
In a sense yes,
he did.
But in another way
no he didn't.
We are indeed saved when we first believed.
We are also being saved,
or if you will sanctified,
each day of our Christian life
as through the power of the Holy Spirit

we are being transformed into
the likeness of Christ,
for the good of others.

Our Lord calls us to a faith that is lively,
to a faith that is enlivening,
to a faith that in loving response to God's gift of faith,
moves us out beyond the doors of our church,
out beyond our personal comfort zones
into the mission field of God's creation
that is your daily life in Christ?

Our Romans reading told us that Abraham believed God
and this faith was his righteousness.

Genesis also told us that once Abraham believed God
he packed up his tent,
got the wife and kids together
and headed out.

He did not say, "Thank you God, praise the Lord!"
and hunker down and wait
for God's blessing to appear.

No, he left his ancestral home,
stepped well out of his comfort zone,
and took on the challenges
of the new life of faith
that God had blessed him with.

Pause here

And people,
that is God's call for us today
and everyday.

We are indeed saved by faith
at the moment we first believe.

We are also being saved by faith
as we move through each day;
being formed into the likeness of Jesus
for the good of others
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And when Jesus returns in glory,
at our resurrection at his coming
we will be saved,

the consummation of our faith
will be complete.

PAUSE HERE

That glorious day is not yet.

Today we are in the “being saved” portion
of our salvation journey.

Moved by the gift of faith in Jesus,
empowered by the infilling of the Holy Spirit at our baptism,
we grow daily into the likeness of Jesus,
doing so for the good of others.

Our loving response to God
for the gift of faith in the Son,
moves us to love
even as we are loved,
moves us to step out of our comfort zone
into the works
that God has ordained for us to do.

Hear the words of Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not
your own doing; it is the gift of God— ⁹not the result of works, so
that no one may boast.

¹⁰For we are what he has made us,
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand
to be our way of life.

To be our way of life.

A life of movement.

A life of action.

A life of blessing others.

A life moved by faith.

All praise glory and honour to our gracious God.
Amen.