

The Journey of Faith

Investigating Barriers to Belief Part 4

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, April 22nd

Life is filled with choices that require “faith”. Life’s most important choice involves where we’ll spend eternity. Ps. 16:11 reminds us that God wants to show us “*the path of life*”. Jesus is the “Good Shepherd” who seeks to guide us on that path and Satan is the “thief” who erects “barriers” to keep us from recognizing and responding to Jesus’ invitation and direction. (John 10:10)

Some Barriers to belief include: “I Can’t believe!” (2 Cor. 4:4-6; Jn 8:32, 44,45); “I Won’t Believe!” (Romans 1:16-32) and “I Don’t know what to believe!” (Gen. 3:1, 1 Cor. 14:33; James 1:8)

The final barrier we’ll discuss is perhaps the most effective of all.

“I believe, isn’t that enough?”

Most of the Jews of Jesus’ day were devoted to their faith.

Notice how Jesus closed his first public message! (Mt. 7:13-29)

1. It’s about Choice, not chance! Vs 13,14 *“Enter in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many . . . go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”*

A. God’s narrow way (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12) requires:

- 1) Repentance (Mt 9:13) *“I am come to call . . . sinners to repentance”*
- 2) Faith. (Eph. 2:8; Ro. 5:1) *“Being justified by faith we have peace with God”*

B. Man’s “broad” way.

- 1) The Natural Choice. (1 Cor. 2:14) *We’re all born on the broad way! (Ro. 5:12)*
- 2) The disappointing choice. (Pr. 14:12) *“Leads to destruction”* apōl’eia: Ruin, Loss, Waste!

2. It’s about the Nature, not the Name! 2 Cor. 5:17 *“he is a new creature”*

A. Superficial Spirituality is shallow. Mt. 6:15 *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”*

➤ False (pseudēs) Erroneous; Superficial!

B. Nature eventually reveals itself. Vs 16-18 *“Ye shall know them by their fruits”*

3. It’s about the life, not the lips!

A. Faith that costs nothing, does nothing. Mt 7:21-23 *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father.”*

B. Religion – Relationship = RUIN vs 23 *“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not . . . in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you! depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

4. It’s about the foundation, not the facade! Mt. 7:24-27

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

“I believe, isn’t that enough?”

Conclusion: Jesus taught that genuine faith involves:

➤ The **heart**, not the head! (*Trust, not just “talk”*)

Ro 10:9,10 *“if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; (Justification: Ro 5:1) and with the mouth confession (covenant) is made unto salvation.” (rescue, safety)*

➤ **Action**, not just Admission! Ro. 10:13 *“For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Call is a verb!) We must “ACT” on our faith!*

➤ Being “born again”, not just “believing”. John 3:3

“except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven”

1) Nicodemus was a devout believer who was a *“Master (teacher) of Israel.” Jn. 3:10*

2) Many people who “believe” stop short of being “born again”.

That’s why the “strait gate” is so cluttered! Lk 13:24

3) Even the Devils believe in God! (James 2:19,20) *“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”*

John 3:16 *“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him (pisteuō: to credit, entrust, commit to) should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

Application:

Saving Faith (being “born again”) involves:

Believing (*Faith*) + Receiving (*Works*)

= Becoming! (*The children of God!*)

John 1:11-13 *“He came unto his own but his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:”*



Rev. 3:20 *“I stand at the door and knock; If any man hear my voice (Believe) and open the door (Receive) I will come in to him” (Become and Belong)*

Believe + Receive = Become and Belong

1 John 5:11-13

Do you Believe? (*pisteuo: to entrust, commit*)

Have you Received? (*Christ by Faith*)

Then you’ll become (*God’s Child*)

and belong (*in God’s family.*)

John 1:12