WEEK OF

JANUARY 8, 2012

SMALL GROUP

BIBLE DISCUSSION

TOPIC: SAVING FAITH – Roman Treasures III (Revisiting Old Truths in a New Year)

Lesson in a Line:
We cannot be saved by works, only by faith. Faith, however, is not just believing. 'Saving Faith' demands obedience to God's word.

Points to Make

- **Justification** means we are **acquitted** of our sins and **declared righteous** by God.
- Justification comes by faith, not by works.
- Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). God speaks and tells us what He wants us to do. Faith precedes obedience.
- True, saving faith is demonstrated by our obedience to His word, not just by SAYING we believe!
- Examples of saving faith:
  - Abraham was circumcised and circumcised his household (Genesis 17:9-14).
  - Israelites applied blood to their doorposts (Exodus 12:21-23).
  - Rahab tied a red ribbon in her window (Joshua 2:12-21; 6:22-25).
  - Christian believers were baptized (Mark 16:16).
  - Philippian jailer and his household were baptized (Acts 16:30-34).
- Let's take a close look at Abraham as Paul describes him in Romans 4:
  - Abraham's faith in God was accounted to him as righteousness BEFORE he did any works (v. 3).
  - He received a sign from God (circumcision), and sealed his righteousness through obedience (v. 11).
  - He received the promise of God because of his faith, NOT because of his adherence to the 'law'.
  - (In fact, the 'law' had not yet been given to men by God (v. 13). The law was given over 400 years later.)
  - Faith gave him to access the grace of God (v. 16).
  - Abraham and Sarah, BY FAITH, did what was necessary to conceive a child! (Isaac did not come through "immaculate conception".)
- Romans 5 outlines what this means to *us*.
  - *We* also are justified by Faith (v. 1).
  - Faith allows *us* to access the grace of God, just like Abraham (v. 2).
  - Access to God's grace gives us strength to endure and glory in tribulation (vv. 3-4).

Key Scriptures:
Romans 4, 5; Genesis 17:9-14; Exodus 12:21-23; Joshua 2:12-21; 6:22-25; Mark 16:16; Acts 16:30-34

- For us, it all begins with Jesus.
  - He died for us while we were still sinners (v. 8).
  - Now that we have been justified by His death in our place, we will be saved from the wrath of eternal judgment (v. 9).
  - He reconciled us to Himself through His death and saves us forever through His life (v. 10).
- Here's the bottom line:
  - Through the righteous act of Jesus - His death in our place, His free gift of salvation - we are justified (v. 18).
  - Though we were sinners, living in a dark and sinful world, God's grace abounded toward us through the righteousness of Jesus, giving us the opportunity to have everlasting life (v. 21).
- To receive the benefits of righteousness, grace and justification, we must have faith in the finished work of Jesus.
- We demonstrate "saving faith" by obeying His word as Peter instructed the crowd in the first gospel message preached in the New Testament church:
- "… Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Discussion Tools
- **Discuss the following questions.**
- Has God ever directed you to do something that seemed impossible? What was it?
- How will you benefit from obeying God's word.?
- In what areas of your life do you have the most difficulty obeying God?
- What did you learn from this message that you can apply to your life this week?

Prayer Time

Father, we thank You that we are guided not in our own strength or wisdom but in our faith and obedience to you. In Jesus' name we pray.

ICE-BREAKER: Describe your favourite place in the world to vacation without mentioning the name and have group members guess where.

NOTES