

# What is Genuine Faith?

John 7:1-9

Life Group Discussion – October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Today's passage takes place during the Feast of Booths, the holiday where the Jewish people remember the 40 years in the wilderness. During this feast, Jesus is talking with his brothers.

**So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." (John 7:3-4)**

Before they were always in the countryside of Galilee, but because of the feast they were in front of a huge crowd. The brothers believed this would be the best time for Jesus to show everyone who He was. But when we look at verse 5, we see that the brothers didn't believe in Jesus.

**For not even his brothers believed in him. (John 7:5)**

Why does the Bible tell us that Jesus' brothers didn't believe Him? They were with Jesus during His ministry. They saw the miracles that He performed, they saw Him heal the sick and do the supernatural. But they still did not believe. This brings up the true question, "What is genuine faith?"

It says that even the demons believe in the power of Jesus. Just because we know that Jesus exists or believe in His supernatural power does not mean we have genuine faith.

What is genuine faith then?

Jesus tells His brothers that it is not yet His time. His time means His death on the cross. When we talk about genuine faith, Jesus' death on the cross must be at the center of what we believe and what we trust. The values of this world will clash with our faith as Christians, but when we hold fast to what Jesus did, we are able to prioritize rightly. It is not enough to just believe in the power of Jesus. We must believe in His death and resurrection.

Genuine faith is the realization that we are sinners that need a Savior. And we believe that there is only one Savior who can truly save us from our sin, Jesus Christ. When we believe this, it says that we can overcome this world.

**For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. (1 John 5:4)**

Real faith has power. Even if we have faith, if the direction of our faith is wrong, then God's power will not be shown. Our priorities as a church must be correct. The first priority of our church is to save souls. This is why all of our resources go toward missions. If we focus all of our attention on just making people happy and making sure they're comfortable, we are missing our true purpose.

How do we know if we are going in the right direction?

**Genuine faith will produce genuine fruit.**

**You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? (James 2:20)**

James is telling us that we can think we are doing the right thing but if there is no real change, if lives are not being transformed, then the faith and direction we are going in is not pleasing to God. Our faith is about the actions we take today. This is why the more often we come to church, the more often we pray, the stronger our faith becomes. There is no use in talking about how strong your faith was before; it must be something we grow in everyday. Are you trusting in God today?

**You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. (James 2:24)**

Our actions are decided by the amount of faith we have. This is why James talked about the faith of Abraham through his actions of sacrificing Issac.

**Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. (James 2:21-22)**

Do not just say with your mouth that you believe, but work with your actions. Let it be our desire to not only say we care with our mouths but to truly love and seek after one another with our actions.

**Genuine faith will have the Holy Spirit.**

Genuine faith is one that relies on the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (John 7:38-39)**

There are many people who come to church and have been baptized with water, but not many of them have truly been baptized with the Holy Spirit. We enjoy coming to church and listening to the sermon, but we live our daily lives as we always have. Our lives, and the lives of those around us will never be transformed this way.

But for those who strive to live in genuine faith, for those who want to experience the Holy Spirit, then their lives will be transformed. There will be no fear in what they do and how they proclaim the gospel. In whatever situation or circumstance they are in, whether it is good or bad, they will understand that it is for their good. Sickness will not overcome them, financial problems will not destroy their minds, and they will always rely on the Lord.

My brothers and sisters,

What is most important in our lives? Our faith must align with our actions to be considered the type of genuine faith that Jesus wants us to have. Anyone can believe in who Jesus is and the power that He has, but do we really believe that He died and rose again for our sins? If we truly believe this, then we can overcome all things.

## **SHARING-----**

1. Genuine faith is the understanding that we are sinners and that only Jesus Christ, through His death and resurrection, can save us. Please reflect on this statement and discuss with one another if there are times you struggle with having this type of faith.
2. Genuine faith is one that produces genuine fruit. Can you look back on your life and see the fruit that your faith has produced? Please share with one another.
3. Genuine faith is one with the Holy Spirit. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we become courageous. Is there a place in your life where you can be more courageous in living our your faith? Please share.