

Examining *Sola Fide*

Habakkuk's famous statement "but the just shall live by his faith [ʿēmûnâ 530]" (Hab 2:4), isn't about faith but faithfulness as rendered correctly in some versions, "but the person of integrity will live because of his faithfulness" (NET), "but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness" (NIV). The Hebrew noun *ʿēmûnâ* appears about 50 times in the Old Testament and without exception, expresses faithfulness. The Greek noun *pistis* in "The just shall live by faith [*pistis* 4102]" (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38) is wrongly translated as "faith" in accordance with the Reformer Martin Luther's bogus salvation message of *sola fide* or faith alone.

The absurdity of *sola fide* becomes apparent when introduced into the context of everyday life. Take the workplace as somewhat of an example of our walk with God. Our time belongs to our employer. We abide by the company rules. We do the work we're told to do while being dependable, honest, and faithful. We don't always know why our employer wants us to do specific things but we trust that they know the bigger picture and how it will positively affect the overall health of the company and the community. We also know that since we're simply doing what we're told, we trust that our employer has our back if we were to experience any repercussions from doing an assignment. If we're doing a good job we'll be rewarded but if we're doing poorly, then it can result in disciplinary action and possible termination. All of that makes perfect sense.

Now, let's interject "faith" or "belief" as the sole requisite for employment. Employees get hired because they express belief in their employer. After getting hired many of them argue among themselves about whether they were hired because they believe the employer, or if they believe the employer because they were hired. Some even dare to claim that their employer gave them the belief they needed to get hired. They also squabble about whether they do a good job because they believe the employer, or if they believe the employer because they do a good job. Of course some claim that performance has a direct bearing on their job security but others claim Once Employed Always Employed. Therefore, when someone quits or gets let go, those that embrace OEAE have to say, "Well, I guess they never really were employed, because if they had been they would have continued to be employed. Therefore, they never truly believed the employer!"

In his letter to the Romans, Paul was expounding the gospel Jesus Christ Himself preached, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom 1:16), "the preaching of Jesus Christ" (Rom 16:25). And the gospel Christ preached is faithful service to Him as Lord: "Who then is a **faithful and wise servant**" (Mat 24:45); "Well done, *thou* good and **faithful servant**" (Mat 25:21); "Who then is that **faithful and wise steward**" (Luk 12:42); "He that is **faithful** in that which is least is **faithful** also in much" (Luk 16:10); "Well, thou good **servant**: because thou hast been **faithful** in a very little" (Luk 19:17); "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luk 6:46).

Paul's statement, "That if thou shalt **confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus**, and shalt believe [*trust*] in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, **thou shalt be saved**" (Rom 10:9), has been turned into a salvation formula—just *call* Him "Lord" from our mouths. However, Paul had already taught earlier, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, **his servants ye are to whom ye obey**" (Rom 6:16). We're servants of whom we obey as Lord, not just call "Lord."

Furthermore, Romans 10:9 must be understood within the context of its preceding quotation: "Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, **that we may hear it, and do it?** Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, **that we may hear it, and do it?** But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, **that thou mayest do it.**" (Deu 30:12-14). Moses was prophesying about Christ's coming as Lord, "**heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth them** ... **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth them not**" (Mat 7:24,26). Confessing Him as Lord is a commitment or pledge to do what He said. The pledge itself doesn't save, faithfully keeping the pledge does.

The apostles and early church called themselves "servants," "Paul, **a servant** of Jesus Christ" (Rom 1:1); "James, **a servant** of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Jas 1:1); "Simon Peter, **a servant** and an apostle of Jesus Christ" (2Pe 1:1); "Jude, **the servant** of Jesus Christ" (Jde 1:1). They never once called themselves "believers" but translations have been doctored to read as though they did.

We've been sold the lie of *sola fide*. And to discourage us even further from obeying the Lord, we're told that anything we do is our own meritorious works and not faith. It's a devious "gospel" message that assures we won't be saved.