

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 8/1/2022

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, August 2 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for those who are suffering from weather conditions in our country and around the globe. Pray for favorable weather and ask GOD to send aid through donations and workers.*

So, if we are to place the emphasis on GOD and seek to always give credit to GOD, what about *my* decision to believe? If it is faith that saves us, isn't that *my* faith that *I* developed over the years? Don't *I* have a role in *my* relationship with GOD and therefore, *my* salvation?

Well, sort of yes and sort of no. You see, faith itself is a gift from GOD. Faith is given to everyone by GOD, but it has to be awakened. Everyone needs others to tell them about JESUS, teach them about faith, and bring them to the places and the people who can help that faith become activated, if you will, and to grow. There are many for whom faith never becomes a reality because no one tells them. So, in this respect, we still have no role in our salvation, other than to continue to grow in faith once it has become stirred.

But we can have a role in salvation by rejecting it. We can choose not to believe, to say, "No," to what is offered to us by GOD, or by walking away from faith when it is awakened. We can never be the ones to initiate faith, but we can be the ones to cast faith off.

Imagine that faith is a big, beautiful gift in your living room, but you don't know that it is yours until someone tells you. Then what you do with it is up to you. You can ignore it or say that it isn't yours. You can even throw it out the door and have nothing to do with it ever again. Or you can set aside to be appreciated later, if you get around to it or remember. You can passively look at it and think about it from time to time. But until you full claim this gift that is already yours, it really does nothing for you.

Until you claim this gift, you can never really know how special it is. It is faith that brings you into that wonderful relationship that we have with GOD and GOD'S people. Faith guides us in the ways that our best for our lives. Faith brings us that sense of peace that helps us through the most troubling situations. Faith tells us the truth about GOD'S unconditional love for us and the freedom that love brings from the need to try to do things "right." It is faith that also assures us of the promises that come in the resurrection. All who believe in JESUS CHRIST and trust in HIS death and resurrection can live in the hope of life eternal with GOD. All this and so much more is ours through the gift of faith once it is awakened and we live in the joy and promise it brings.

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey