

Basic Christian Beliefs (Class 8) –

Salvation: Pt. 2 (Faith)

- **Game:** Divide the class up into two groups. Remind the class that we are studying what the Bible has to say about salvation, and that the various aspects of salvation fit together like pieces of a puzzle. Also, like pieces of a puzzle, sometimes it is hard to understand them individually, but the important thing is that you see the whole piece of the puzzle. Once again, give them a puzzle that the groups have to put together. Tell the groups that you will give candy to the group who completely the puzzle first

Introduction: Faith

- Review & Connect: Effective Calling and Regeneration lead to Faith
 - Ask: Do you recall what we talked about last week? (Effective calling, regeneration)
 - Ask: Do you recall what these two things are? (Effective Calling = God’s calling his people effectively to be saved/Regeneration = God giving his people a new heart/mind/life through his Holy Spirit)
 - Ask: How do you think we respond to God when he calls us and gives us new hearts? (Faith)
- Faith defined
 - Say: Today we are going to consider FAITH
 - Write FAITH on the board
 - Say: Faith is something that the Bible talks about A LOT. In fact, the Bible says the faith is CENTRAL to our salvation. Because faith is so important to the Bible (and therefore to God), we need to carefully consider what faith is. Let’s begin talking about FAITH by looking at how the Westminster Shorter Catechism Defines Faith, and then looking at how the Bible supports this definition.
 - Call on two students to come up to the front of class.
 - Have one students read the Westminster Shorter Catechism Answer #86: *Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.*
 - Say: Say there are three basic parts to this definition. (Note: Have the second student write these three parts of the faith definition on the board, under “FAITH,” as you say them)
 - Part #1: Faith saves us
 - Part #2: Faith = believing and trusting in Christ alone (explain that when the Westminster Catechism says “receiving and resting upon Christ,” they are referring to Belief (receiving Christ) and Trust (resting in Christ). (Note: We will talk later about what this looks like. For now, just explain that Belief and Trust are the same as “Receiving and Resting.”

- Part #3: Faith is a response (explain that we see this from the very last phrase in this definition – “as it is offered to us in the gospel.” Christ is offered to us in the gospel and through effective calling, and our response is faith).
- Say: Let’s now look at these three parts more closely.

Part #1: Faith saves us

- Say: First of all, we understand from this definition that FAITH SAVES US
- Have students read:
 - **Ephesians 2:8-9:** ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, *****THROUGH FAITH*****-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.
 - **Philippians 3:8-9** ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is *****THROUGH FAITH***** in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is *****BY FAITH*****.
 - Say: It is by FAITH that we are saved. Faith in Jesus Christ.
- Ask: According to Ephesians 2:8-9, what is the opposite or alternative to being saved by faith? (being saved by work)
 - **Example: Say: Imagine you are applying to college (remind the junior high students that they will ACTUALLY be doing this one day). When you are applying to college, your goal is to let the college admissions board know all the good things that you have done that would make them want you as a student. You would let them know about your good grades, all your academic honors and awards, all your extracurricular activities like sports and clubs, all your jobs and anything else that would make you look responsible and well-rounded. You would mention any leadership roles or experiences you had. Finally, you would write an essay that would attempt to convey all of your good qualities, to make the college like you enough to accept you. Think about this picture of applying to college. This is a WORKS-based process. Salvation by works would be similar to this. You give God an application with ALL of your good works, hoping that, when he reads over your application, he will think you are good, righteous, or holy enough to get into heaven. This salvation by works is NOT what the Bible says about our salvation. Instead, salvation is through FAITH in Christ. Salvation by Grace through Faith. So instead of giving God an application with all of your good works, you would give your application to Jesus, and HE would fill out the application with all of his good works, including his death and resurrection. FAITH is trusting that Jesus’ application for your salvation is good enough. That’s salvation by faith.**

Part #2: Faith = Believing and Trusting in Christ alone

- Faith = Believing in Christ
 - Say: Basically, this part of the definition tells us clearly WHAT faith is. Faith is two things: (1) Believing in Christ (circle believing on the board) and (2) Trusting in Christ (circles resting upon Christ on the board)

- Say: As we said before, although the Westminster Shorter Catechism says that faith is receiving Christ, we can consider this the same thing as believing in him. Basically, to receive Christ is to BELIEVE in him. To BELIEVE that Jesus is the Son of God who came to save his people from their sins.
 - Have a student read: **John 1:12-13** ¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who ***BELIEVED*** in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—
 - Say: Faith means BELIEVING in Jesus – believing that Jesus is who the Bible says he is.
- Ask: Can you believe in Jesus without hearing the gospel message in the Bible? (No).
 - Have a student read: **Romans 10:14-17** ¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" ¹⁶ But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" ¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.
 - Say: In order to believe you must hear the gospel. In order to believe in Christ you must hear about him. Faith means BELIEVING what the Bible says about Christ.
- Say: Some people say that when you “Believe” in Jesus, you have a blind faith. A faith that basically says, “I am going to believe in Jesus whether or not he really did exist and do all the things the Bible says he did.” In other words, it doesn’t matter so much that what you have faith in is TRUE, it just matters that you BELIEVE.
 - Ask: How would you respond to someone who thinks this way? What do you think the Bible would have to say about this way of understanding faith?
 - Have a student read **1 Corinthians 15:1-6** Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep... **1 Corinthians 15:13-19** ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

- Say: According to Paul, if what he believed about Jesus wasn't true, then he was an absolute fool – someone that everyone should take pity on. For Paul, if Jesus wasn't exactly who the Bible said he was, then he should throw his whole faith out the window. For Paul, it mattered more than anything that what he believed in (Jesus) actually was true. The Bible says to believe in Jesus BECAUSE what the Bible says about him is true.
 - Faith = Trusting in Christ alone
 - Say: So one part of faith is BELIEVING in Jesus Christ. But is that enough? (No)
 - Have a student read: James 2:19: "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder."
 - Say: Belief alone is not faith. Remember part 2 of our definition? What are the two aspects of faith? (receiving AND RESTING). Now let's consider the second aspect of what faith is: RESTING UPON CHRIST. Now, when the Westminster Catechism says "Resting upon Christ," basically this means TRUSTING him for salvation. So whereas the first part of faith is belief, the second part of faith is TRUST.
 - **Ask for a volunteer to help you illustrate faith. Have this volunteer come forward to the front of class. Pull up a chair and ask the volunteer to stand on the chair. Tell the student, "If you fall off of this chair, I am going to catch you." Ask the volunteer whether or not he/she believes that is true. (The student may joke around and say no, but ultimately he/she has to say yes. Otherwise, you need to get another student, because it is crucial that they say "Yes I believe you." Now say: "Okay, so you BELIEVE me, but I want to see if you TRUST me. Tell the student to turn around with their back facing you, and to fall back into your arms. (Teachers Note: Obviously, safety is paramount in this and every activity. You need to make sure that the student volunteer is someone whom you can safely catch. Consider this when you choose the volunteer. Also, if you do not feel comfortable having them fall back from the chair, just have them do the same activity and yet standing on the ground (on the ground, falling back into your arms).**
 - Say: Do you see the different between BELIEF and TRUST? Belief involves knowing in your head and your heart that something is true. Trust involves actually putting your own self and welfare on the line. It involves depending on something. Faith is BELIEVING in Christ and TRUSTING in him for your salvation.

Part #3: Faith is our response

- Say: We have already talked about how God effectively calls us to himself and regenerates us, and that we RESPOND to that calling and regeneration through faith in him. I just want to highlight this point one more time.
 - Ask: Who calls us effectively to himself? (God)
 - Ask: Who regenerates us (God)
 - Ask: Who responds in faith (We do)

- Say: It is interesting to note, however, that even with FAITH, this is something that is GIVEN to us. Without God calling us to himself and giving us a new heart that creates faith within us, we could never respond to God in faith.
 - **Say: It's like this. (call up a volunteer to the front of class). Say (student's name) I am going to give you this dollar (give him a dollar). Ask everybody: "Who gave the dollar just now (you did)? Now say to the student, Please give me the dollar back. (Student gives you the dollar back). Ask the class, who just gave the dollar back? (the student). Ask them: would (student's name) ever have given back this dollar if I had not given it to him first? (No). But did he actually give me a dollar? (Yes).**
 - Say: Faith is like this. God gives us faith by calling us to him and giving us a new heart. Unless he does this, we will never have faith in him. However, once he does this – once he gives us faith, then we respond with that faith that he gave us.
- Have a student read Hebrews 12:2 ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
 - Ask: What does it mean that Christ is the author of our faith? The perfecter of our faith?
 - Say: The point is this: Faith is our response to God. But it is God who actually gives us the faith in the first place. When you understand this, you see how salvation (even our faith) is really all from God. We don't contribute anything to him. Even the faith we put in Christ is a faith that God has given us. Salvation is all from God!

Conclusion: Examples of Faith in Action

- **Split the class into groups of three. Give each group a different passage to study. Have each group read through their passages. Have them answer the following questions: (1) How is this passage an example of faith? (2) Does faith bring about salvation in this text? If so, how? (3) How does this passage demonstrate that faith is BOTH believing and receiving? (4) How is faith in this passage a response to God/Jesus? Give the groups 5 minutes to read and answer these questions. Then have each group share about their example of faith – how it showed faith and what it told us about faith.**
 - **Group #1: Hebrews 11:8-19 (Abraham)**
 - **Group #2: Hebrews 11:23-30 (Moses)**
 - **Group #3: Matthew 8:5-13 (Centurion)**
- Say: Remember what we talked about at the beginning of class – how salvation is like a puzzle with different pieces? What piece of the puzzle have we been talking about today (faith)? What pieces of the puzzle did we talk about last week? (effective calling and regeneration)? The puzzle is now coming together a little bit. First of all, God calls us and gives us a new heart (effective calling and regeneration), then we respond in faith. Next week we will talk about something that goes right alongside of faith in the puzzle of salvation. For now, remember that salvation is through faith in Christ alone. Remember that faith is believing AND trusting in God. Remember that faith is our response to God's work in our lives.
- Close in Prayer

Basic Christian Beliefs

Salvation: Pt. 2 (Faith)

What did we talk about last week? _____ and _____

What are we talking about this week? _____

What are the different parts of the definition of faith

- Part #1: _____
- Part #2: _____
- Part #3: _____

Fill in the Blanks:

"It is by _____ that you have been saved, through _____ and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by _____ so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8)

True or False:

- You may believe in Christ without hearing the gospel message.
- It doesn't really matter whether Christianity is true or not, as long as you really believe in it.

Who is the one who does the following actions? (God, man, or both)

Effective Calling

Regeneration

Faith

How is faith shown in these passages?

Hebrews 11:8-19 (Abraham) _____

Hebrews 11:23-30 (Moses) _____

Matthew 8:5-13 (Centurion) _____