

# Clippings

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We've been hearing a lot about "walking by faith" in the sermons from 2 Corinthians in the first part of last month. I want to reiterate a point I made along the way on this subject.

Christian faith is not the same as "blind faith" the way some people conceive of the notion. You especially find this with people who, because they are afraid of science or debate, want to remove Christianity from the arena of public discourse. They talk as though there is no evidence for the truth claims of Christianity; as though the search for evidence is hostile to faith, or somehow diminishes faith which (they think) should be "blind"; and the more blind it is, the more pure or holy it is, somehow.

Biblical Christianity is not ignorant of evidences. Jesus' resurrection is testified by eyewitnesses. That testimony is preserved in the documents we call the Bible, and there is solid evidence that the record was written down faithfully and was transmitted accurately. Archeology, history, paleography, and chemistry are just four of the disciplines that help Christians to defend the reasonableness of this claim. It is not a sign of spiritual immaturity to ask if there is any scientific support for the claim that the Bible does in fact date back to the time of the events that it reports. But people who are afraid to hear the answer may protest that "it doesn't matter if the Bible is factually true, so long as we believe its message."

That's hogwash! The message IS about historical events, which either happened, or didn't. If they didn't happen, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:17, if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. If a real man (Jonah) didn't actually get saved from drowning by being in the belly of a big fish for three days, then how can we believe Jesus when He predicts His resurrection after three days (Matthew 12:40)? If God's Word doesn't tell the truth about creation, or the Flood, or history, how do we know He's not lying in John 3:16?

So what does God mean when He has Paul say, We walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7)? Simply this, that although we have our eyes open to current reality, we don't depend on that sight for our motivation or our evaluations. This really is in keeping with Proverbs 3:5 and 6:

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,                      In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
and lean not on your own understanding;                      and He will make your paths straight.*

God's people don't abandon their own understanding; they just don't lean on it! They have something firmer to lean on: the promises of God, His character (i.e., He can't break a promise), and His history (He saved people out of worse jams than this!). Jesus didn't reject Thomas when he demanded evidence that Jesus was raised from the dead. But He did say, *Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*

Faith isn't blind. It's not stupid, either. Christians are not called to "check your brains at the door," as our atheist and agnostic enemies falsely claim. In fact, we are commanded to love God with our minds, as well as with our hearts and souls. If "facts" (scientific theories, or "news reports" of current events) seem to contradict something in Holy Scripture, then either we don't understand the Scripture, or we don't understand the "facts". The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod accepts the Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Don't settle for anything less!

~Pastor Fremer