

Where the Rubber Meets the Road! Part 2: "Faith That Works!"

By Cere Muscarella

Pauline Writings... 14 of 27 NT "books" of the Bible... written by Paul that have become the foundation of our doctrine... Ten 'Church' epistles! **Romans, 1&2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1&2 Thess, Hebrews** Three Pastoral letters: **1&2 Tim, Titus** And one private letter: **Philemon, where the rubber meets the road!** Doctrinal concepts turn to daily realities! Spiritual truths gain traction!

What we say we believe becomes what we do, in the flesh!

Philemon! Somewhere our faith has to put money in its right place! Has far too much attention/affection and too many "barbs!" **Someplace faith has to bear disappointment with grace/composure!** "Impossible but that offenses will come!" **Sometime faith, which works by love, has to forgive! Mt 18.21-35 6.14,15** We give "sips" of what we have received! **Someone has to initiate faith to restore!** Can't ignore the blind spots if we love!

In Jesus, "nothing matters" but the new creation we are... demonstrating faith that works by love... as the result of keeping His commands!

Paul's Working Faith... "...For love's sake I rather beseech you, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ..." **v9**

Less than thirty years have passed from his life as Saul, the persecutor of faith... To Paul the aged "prisoner of the Lord!" In the gap is a revolution not an evolution! He had become one of the "prisoners" he formerly sought out! He had faced "the end" so many times, death had no power over him!

Faith that works... A life of transformation! Paul had come from trusting in systems... to a life of faith in Jesus... immediately! It was not a "bad boy" conversion... It was his vision of Jesus, that he was 'not disobedient to...' **Acts 26.19** It was "What will You have me do?" that opened the depths for him... **Acts 9.6** But a "No longer I that lives but Christ alive in me..." **Galatians 2.20 REVEAL-UTION!**

His world burned to the ground with the revelation that he was wrong about God!

"Don't you know that those of us baptized in Jesus were baptized into His death? We are buried with Him in baptism and raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so, we should walk in newness of life! Our old man is crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be destroyed and that we shouldn't serve sin any more... Now, if we are dead with Him we believe that we also live with Him... So, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" **Romans 6.2-11** (the revolution, abridged)

Faith that works... A settledness with "godly suffering!" Not suffering as a wrong-doer! "What glory is it if you suffer patiently for wrong doing?" **1Peter 2.20** Not "substitutionary" suffering! "He suffered once for all!" **Heb 7.27 10.10 Isaiah 53.4-6 Rom 9.3 1Pet 3.18** Most will never know anything like it! **But not squeamish about godly suffering!** "Dying" for Christ was his breakfast of champions, the start of a new day!

"We are joint heirs w/Christ and we suffer and are glorified with Him!" **Rom 8.17** "If we suffer with Him we will also reign with Him, if we deny Him He will also deny us!" **2Tim 2.11-13** "Let those that suffer

according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing!" **1Peter 4.19** "In the world you will have trouble, be of good cheer, I have overcome it!" **John16.33**

Unafraid of what men could do to him! Caring only for God's will!

"To the present hour we hunger and thirst, are poorly clothed, beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the refuse of all things until now." **1Cor 4.11-13**
"Troubled but not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed... delivered to death for Jesus sake that His life made show in our lives!" **2Cor4.7-11**

"So, if I need to glory I will glory of the things that concern my infirmities!" **2Cor 11.30** "My grace is sufficient for you for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Gladly, I will glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest on me! Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neediness, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong!" **2Cor 12.9,10** "We who are weak in Him will also live by the power in Him!" **2Cor 13.4**

The result of "godly suffering!" Standing before kings to testify! Singing in prison at 'midnight!' The saving grace of many others! More than a conqueror through Christ! Inward man renewed as outward perished! Contentment in any/every state! A man who felt compassion to the end! A confidence of his life with Christ and the crown that awaited him! A sharing of the death and resurrection power of God in Christ!

Rightful Suffering... Can be wrongly defined... And almost always refers to the war of our soul and spirit! I want what I want vs. Your will be done! Doing good for others sometimes at the expense of ourselves! Living a sober, sound, tempered life in a society of justified self-indulgence/excess! Speaking up when we would rather be silent! Standing out when we would rather blend in!

Faith that works... A life that transforms others! All of us should arrive at this place where we are dialed into the people around us... And we are at work for their best!

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." Phil 2.3,4 PHILEMON! If you see something, say something!

How can we say we have faith that is real if it has no intervening works?