

## Faith is hard. By Thailer Jimerson

This past Wednesday marks the first time I've taught the adult auditorium class in a while. The class is over the gospel of Luke and we started by introducing the gospel, particularly the inherent differences from the other gospels. One of the apparent differences is Luke's audience which were probably mostly composed of the non-Jewish Christians. Luke was a gentile speaking to gentiles in a first century context where many Jews believed that for gentiles to be accepted into the church they needed to abide by Jewish ordinances contained in the mosaic law instead of relying wholly on Jesus's power and promise to save them by faith. This was an intense debate in the early history of the church.

Luke was teaching, as Paul taught before him, that what made one a Christian wasn't their **pedigree** (I'm a Jew), or **power** (I'm moral and follow the law) – but **propitiation** (because Jesus went to the cross for you, in your place). It was that you stopped trusting in your own aptitude and instead put your faith in the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice in your place. In short, you became a Christian by faith.

Faith is a funny thing. Because of our context, when we see the word our minds naturally drift towards some nebulous definition of "belief". Faith means believing, we say. But it's more than that. The New Testament idea strays away from believing in a list of facts, a mere head-knowledge, if you will – and leans more on the idea of trust. To say I trust in something means you are willing to stake a lot on the thing, means you are willing to cast your full weight upon it and *trust* it won't collapse.

Faith, like this, is hard. There's a lot of people frequenting church pews that agree on paper with a list of facts about the Christian religion, and that have even been baptized because that's something good to do – who don't have faith. There are a lot of people who don't actually, functionally, trust that they are saved by the grace of God in Christ, that trust that their goodness originates wholly with him.

Let me tell you why it's hard. Faith is hard because we're all pretty good at doing things. We're good at our jobs, good at our hobbies, efficient at taking care of business. We're all pragmatists that live under the illusion that the only person who can be trusted is me, myself and I. "If you want something done right, do it yourself." We're not often placed in situations where we need to trust in the strength of another. And it's all a grand deception – a delusion.

Here's the truth: we're not good at what we do, and we're even worse at saving ourselves. We can't do it. Our resume doesn't stack up in a pleasing way to God. And any good we do have was given by him to begin with: "What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" **1 Corinthians 4:7.**

When things get difficult, when you're asked to live worthy of the gospel, it's very hard to trust in Christ. Like Peter, we see the waves around us and our un-reality settles in with this headline: "What are you doing walking on water? Impossible!" and we sink, then Christ comes to us saying "Oh you of little faith – why'd you doubt?"

Meditate on the following poem from John Piper:

*May every cry, "I can't,"  
When yet, in fact, "I must,"  
Become by grace, "He can,"  
And then, in Him, "I trust."*