

STEPS OF FAITH

Some time ago, two men from a local Baptist church came by to invite me to “come to church.” We had a cordial visit and, before parting, they wanted to ask me one question: “If you were to die tonight would you go to Heaven?” After giving my answer, the one fellow asked, “Are you 100% certain?” I assured him that I was. “Upon what do you base that?” he asked. What a question! After giving him a 45 second sermon on God's plan of salvation, he then said, “So, you have accepted the Lord into your heart as your personal savior?” “Well,” I said, “as you folks mean that, no, I haven't. I have never been able to find in the Bible where that is taught. No one in the Bible did such a thing. What I have done,” I explained, “is received Christ by following in the steps of that faith of Abraham (Romans 4:12), and now I continue to walk in Him (Colossians 2:6).

Well, if you are at all familiar with “faith only” doctrine, you can well imagine the looks on their faces when I pointed out that their “method of being saved” is not in the Bible. They tried to explain to me that one must understand he is a sinner (I agreed), and that Christ paid for our sins with His blood (so true), and that there is nothing we could do to save ourselves (to which I said, “The apostle Peter thought there was!”). Having ignored this statement, he went on to his final point: we must pray to Jesus and ask Him into our hearts. Really? Where is the passage that so teaches? No matter how I tried, no matter how I reasoned with him with questions, he would not commit himself to discuss what the Bible says about his doctrine. The Baptists used to be so willing to accept most any challenge to their teaching.

“Steps of Faith” is not a pleasing phrase for those of “faith only” persuasions. Yet, when pinned down, even they will admit one is not saved before faith...that they must believe, which involves *something* on their part. Too, they will admit one must repent and confess. But (they hurriedly will point out), there is no “work” that can be done. When they are shown that all of the above are works, that even their starting place (faith) is a work (John 6:28,29), they will say, “Well, that is the ONLY one!” How convenient! Who said it is the only one? The bottom line is, many want convenience, not commitment; they desire salvation on their terms, not God's. Let us not stop with Romans four when we study the faith of Abraham. Let us investigate what God means by these “steps of faith.” Let us also look into Hebrews 11 and James 2. “**By faith** Abraham, when he was called, **obeyed**....and **he went**; By faith Abraham,

being tried, **offered** up Isaac,” (Hebrews 11:8,9,11). “Was not Abraham our father **justified by works?**” [We ask how?] “in that **he offered** up Isaac his son upon the altar” (James 2:21). This action fulfilled Scripture which was spoken **twenty years earlier!**

We learn that faith causes us to “walk” in a certain way, even as it caused Abraham to walk in certain steps. Simply put, faith ought to cause us to obey, or else it is as James wrote, **DEAD!** May we always, as our father Abraham (Galatians 3:7) follow in the steps of faith that we may be justified.



PREACH THE WORD!

Perhaps one of the sorriest sights to behold is a man "claiming" to be a gospel preacher, standing in the pulpit and preaching such tripe as the "smooth things" (Isaiah 30:10) and the "comfortable error" (Jeremiah 5:31) as did the false teachers of old. We know that such men were to be reprov'd, rebuk'd (I Timothy 1:3,4) because of their "uncertain sounds" (I Corinthians 14.8).

Of all the things that God demands in His church, this one thing we must recognize: God demands doctrinal, Gospel preaching (II Timothy 4:2)! Preaching that is strong and full of conviction which points the way for sinners and saints alike to life eternal is that which will please God and insure salvation (I Timothy 4:16).

If there is anything today that the Lord's church *does not* need, it is namby-pamby preaching that would barely pass for an after dinner speech, let alone the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). We need preaching that allows the

weak to grow strong and causes the disobedient to repent (I Timothy 5:20,21).

There is at this time perhaps no other ingredient that is lacking in the lives of some brethren than that of repentance. We must change our thinking on a great many things. We tend to become more and more complacent and less and less willing to grow "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord" (II Peter 3:18). We are many times too comfortable (Acts 24:25), and would rather not have anyone tell us that we are slipping and that we need to get on track again. Comfort tends to lead to thinking that we "have it made" and that God has shown us some kind of special favor. **BE NOT DECEIVED!** God is no respecter of persons. Although we can and ought to be assured of our salvation (I John 5:13), we dare not neglect to maintain that salvation (Philippians 2:12; II John 8; James 2:24).

Where is the fervor for God His church and the brethren gone that you had at one time? Where has the love for the lost gone? Preach the word, brethren, in every action and every word. Let us change our thinking; let us get back to the work and serve God **fervently**. Let us be rekindled and live for God and let all those about us see our light (Matthew 5.16). There is truth to be taught. Truth will make us and those whom we teach free (John 8.32). Let us set them free. We may be the only key to the door that keeps them shut-up under sin (Galatians 3.22). Get involved in the work, both spiritual and physical here in this place. Pray for one another as we seek to work at the task set before us.

RAGER ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

5775 Rager Rd, Canal Winchester, Ohio 43110

Phone: 614-830-0110

Website: www.ragerroad.org



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:

SUNDAY MORNING	BIBLE STUDY	9:30 A.M.
	WORSHIP	10:30 A.M.
SUNDAY EVENING	WORSHIP	6:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY	BIBLE STUDY	7:30 P.M.
Preachers:	Robin W. Haley	614-751-1082
	James Grayson	614-409-0941

March 8, 2009

Weekly Budget: \$1360.00

Weekly Item Needed: Disinfectant Spray

Wednesday's Wisdom:

"Excuse-making is a waste of time; God will not accept them." Jacob Haley

Dana Turpen had her heart implant updated; all is well. Please remember in prayer **Steve Anticoli's sister, Hubert Wiley's sister, Suzie Grayson's mom, Cheryl Haley's sister in law, and Tristen Wiley's** ear has been infected. We hope and pray all the best for these who are suffering.

Please check the bulletin board for information regarding the upcoming wedding for **Whitney & Brian**. (Whitney needs an RSVP so they can prepare accordingly.)

This month has a 5th Sunday. Please get your questions into the box.

We hope all will stay and enjoy **a meal together** today. Men, please stay for the **business meeting** immediately following our noon meal.