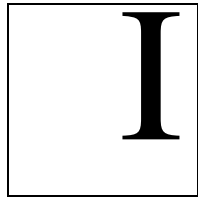


“Faith factor”

RUMC

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How many of you know the show fear factor? It aired for 6 seasons on NBC pitting contestants against each other in physical and mental tests. It is best known for the second test in each show where contestants would usually eat or drink something that in polite company can only be described as “icky.”

Whether it was some kind of bile or bugs or blood the contestants would try to choke down some noxious concoction for \$50,000. For a guy who has trouble choking down a mushroom, or tasting anything he hasn't eaten before, let me tell you \$50,000 was not nearly enough.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not a weenie . . . ok I am, but as a youth leader I enjoyed playing “squid volleyball” and “dodge squid” with a real dead squid one night. I rather enjoyed egg roulette where 12 of us cracked an egg on our head. The 11 loser's eggs were boiled. The winner's egg was raw. I didn't mind condiment twister where we used ketchup, mustard, relish and blue jello for spots in a twister game. But I drew the line at eating things. Even musical baby food was too much for me.

I just don't have what it takes to eat a lot of stuff. Like a lot of parents I spent 18 years of telling my kids they had to at least try everything. When Richie started cooking, it came back to bite me. He told me I had to at least try everything he made. My response was “No, I'm 45 years old and I don't have to eat anything I don't want to.” I figured I had earned that right.

I'm perfectly comfortable with the same "boring" foods week after week. My life is just fine without any new culinary adventures thank you very much.

There are a lot of people who have that same attitude about sin. I'm just fine the way I am thank you very much. I'm 45 years old, or 60 years old, or 15 years old. . . My old ways have served me just fine. I really don't need any religious adventures. I can fend for myself. I will be the judge of what is right and wrong. I will take care of myself just fine.

IIA

And that works pretty well for them . . .until it doesn't.

After 9/11 American churches reported a sudden upswing in attendance because the security many of us thought we had, didn't work after that terrible morning.

I suspect the churches in Parkersburg and New Hampton are full this morning. There are a lot of people who have had to come to grips this week with the fact that their own self-sufficiency doesn't work

I suspect the churches in Myanmar have been full for several weeks. There were a lot of people there who had to come to grips with their loneliness because their loved ones will never be found, their needs are being ignored and their old lives just don't work anymore.

I suspect the Chinese government is having a harder time quelling illegal house churches in the wake of the earthquake because the very foundations of life have been shaken to pieces and the way things were just doesn't work anymore.

Frankly that's why many of us are here today. Maybe your point wasn't an earthquake or tornado. Everyone here, however, has been to the point of having to admit that you can't do it. Their old way just doesn't work any more.

Paul writes "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." He could have listed all our names, but the bible would be a lot longer. Terry has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Who else will say that with me? <<"_____ **has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.**">>
To say that is to admit that our old ways just don't work any more.

B1 So what's the answer? Somehow everything has to be changed- our old ways don't work- we realize that we can't go on this way. Somehow everything has to be put right and we can't do it.

That's the second part of faith- first we realize we have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. And second we have to admit we can't fix it ourselves. Do you suppose there is anyone who has ever been through an F5 tornado who feels powerful any more? Any of you who have been to Parkersburg, or seen the pictures. How big and important and powerful do you feel today? I don't mind telling you, just seeing what the wind did, makes me feel mighty small, mighty weak, mighty inadequate. It is a pretty clear reminder how truly small and insignificant I am.

B2 Except in the eyes of God. I am not unimportant in the eyes of God. I am not insignificant in the eyes of God. You are not insignificant in the eyes of God. You are so important in fact, that God made a way for your life to be made right. That's right, we who have sinned and fallen short of God's expectations for our lives can be made right again.

How? Not anything we can do on our own. Not anything we can earn. Not how much we tithe, or work for tornado relief or our worship attendance patterns. The difference is the faith factor.

C It is the faith factor. Not our faithfulness. Faith in this sense is not a verb. It is a noun. It is not something we do- it is something that is given to us as a gift from God.

Paul writes “The righteousness from God is revealed through faith for faith.” That’s pretty cryptic isn’t it? Let’s turn to the New International Version to sort that out. “Righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ for those who believe”

Remember. I’m a sinner. I will never be good enough to take away my sin. I will never be able to dig myself out of this hole. But Jesus can and Jesus Did. Jesus, who knew no sin, lived and died and rose in faith so that you and I might be made right with God. Might receive righteousness. Might be saved from our sin IN HIM.

III To have faith means that we are in him. We are in him and he is in us.
All we have to do is believe IN HIM. Have faith IN HIM who knew no sin so that we could be free from sin IN HIM.

IN HIM are key words. To me this passage revolves around the words “IN JESUS”

To me this passage speaks about being IN JESUS.

Faith is IN JESUS. Justification is IN JESUS.

Righteousness is IN JESUS. Jews and Gentiles are IN JESUS.

The law is fulfilled IN JESUS.

The gift of salvation is IN JESUS.

There is no shame IN JESUS.

The power of God is IN JESUS.

The price of sin was paid IN JESUS.

If we are IN JESUS then our lives are lived as a result of this.

Everything flows through this. We bear fruit only because we're IN
JESUS.

He in us and us in Him.

That certainly is "good news"