

themselves feel certain that their beliefs are right. He's rather a God who simply wants us to trust him, in the face of uncertainty, by lovingly laying down our lives for him in response the way he has lovingly laid down his life for us.

When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted (Matthew 28:17).

News:

October 25 is the Fall get-together at the Cunninghams. Around 6 P.M. until they're tired of us.

Today is \$1 Million Sunday in which participating churches will have special contributions for the support of Eastern European Mission (eem.org). We too will have a special collection.

Ben Atchley has a pet-scan on Monday.

Prayer List:

Healing: Jerry Robinson's mother Norma. Mike and Sandy Cavasos, Ben Atchley, Faye Atchley, Nicolas and Annie Self, Jonda Gardner, Dave Morse, Richard Tuey.

Travels: John and Sharron Cunningham.

Back issues are posted at
<http://saffordchurchofchrist.org>



Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

29 September 2013

Topics

A.M. Bible Class: Holy Spirit as a Down Payment

A.M. Lesson: Jesus Loves Me!

John 3:16

P.M. Lesson: There is No Other God

Isaiah 44:6 ff

Wednesday: Singing Night

Notes

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Ben Atchley: 428-2246

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Services

Sunday Bible Class 10:00 A.M.

Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 A.M.

Sunday Evening Worship 6:30 P.M.

Wednesday Evening Class 6:30 P.M.

Thursday Ladies Bible Class 10:00 A.M.

Doubt?

Greg Boyd recently wrote a book called *Benefit of the Doubt*. Boyd rejects the idea that a person's faith is as strong as it is certain. He makes the case that doubt can enhance faith and that seeking certainty is harming many in today's church. I have not yet read the book so I cannot fully endorse it; but I have read a lot of Boyd's work and I find myself agreeing with quite a lot of it. Some of his stuff I have read I can fully endorse. Below are some comments Boyd made in a recent interview. -NS

Excerpts from <http://rachelheldevans.com/blog/greg-boyd-interview-doubt>

I don't know if I can say when I first had doubts about my faith, because my faith has pretty much always been accompanied by doubt. But it was a prayer meeting I attended twenty-some years ago that first got me questioning the very concept of faith that most Christians embrace today. A dozen or so other people and I had gathered to pray for a young man who

had been diagnosed with brain cancer. At the beginning of the meeting the lady who owned the house we were in stood up and read Jesus' statement, "according to your faith it will be done to you." She then told us that if our faith was free of doubt, this young man would be healed. The implication was that if we doubted, he would not be healed.

As we entered into prayer for this young man, everyone in the room felt pressure to try to make ourselves certain that this man was in fact going to be healed. As I share in my book, after a couple of minutes of praying the image of the Lion on the Wizard of Oz suddenly popped into my mind and I saw him saying, "I do believe, I do believe, I do, I do, I DO believe!" just as he does in the movie. It occurred to me that this was exactly what we were doing. We were trying to talk ourselves into becoming certain, as if faith was a sort of psychological gimmick. And it made me wonder what kind of God would leverage the life of a young man on how well we were to perform this psychological gimmickry, and about a matter that, if we're honest with ourselves, we can't be certain of. It seemed like we were caught in a cruel, twisted joke!

This motivated me to begin to seriously question whether the notion that our faith is as strong as we are free of doubt is really an accurate understanding of faith. *The Benefit of the Doubt* is really the outcome of that line of questioning that began in that prayer meeting so many years ago.

"Certain-seeking faith" is the sort of faith that people were trying to exercise in the prayer meeting. It's the assumption that a person's faith is as strong as they are free of doubt and that striving to have a "strong" (viz. doubt-free) faith somehow pleases God. I've found that this is how most Christians today think about faith, and it causes far more damage than most people realize (I spend two chapters in my book fleshing out these problems). In fact, I argue that this misguided model of faith is at the root of most of the struggles believers have with the Christian faith and behind most of the negative things non-believers associate with the Christian faith.

Among other things, this model reduces faith to a psychological gimmick in which people try to convince themselves that their beliefs are true beyond what the evidence warrants. Thoughtful people legitimately wonder why God would consider this ability virtuous, to the point of leveraging people's eternal welfare on it! So too, this model makes thoughtful people who have perfectly reasonable doubts feel guilty and rewards people who either lack the concern or the intellectual curiosity to question their beliefs by making them feel like they have "strong" faith.

On top of this, those who embrace "certainty-seeking faith" tend to become narrow-minded, for honestly trying to see things from other

OCTOBER 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Norma Robinson's birthday	2 Singing Night	3	4	5 Ladies' Tea @ Tempe c.o.C. 480-968-7847
6 Eric Kramer's birthday	7	8	9	10	11	12 Singing: Canyon c.o.C 6:30-7:30 canyonchurch.org
13	14 Columbus Day	15	16	17	18 Stacy Kramer's birthday	19
20 Potluck	21	22	23	24 United Nations Day	25 Fall Social at The Cunninghams 6 P.M. Ff	26
27	28	29 Mike Cavazos' birthday	30	31 Halloween		

peoples' point of view might lead them to question their faith and thereby jeopardize their "salvation." In fact, this model can easily lead people to develop learning phobias, for if you dare to read broadly and learn to see things from other people's point of view, you might uncovering facts that could shake your certainty and thus displease God. I'm convinced this explains why Christians, especially conservative Christians, have a well-deserved reputation in the broader culture for being narrow-minded.

The only way to get free from this without falling into some other form of idolatry is to realize that biblical faith isn't about feeling certain, but about a willingness to commit to living for God *in the face of uncertainty*. We need to accept that uncertainty is simply part of what it means to be human and to trust that God's love for us, revealed most perfectly on Calvary, isn't dependent on how certain or uncertain we feel. The God revealed on Calvary isn't a God who is impressed with people's ability to make