

Boldness And Confident Access

"... in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him" (Eph. 3:11). Three times the word "access" is found in the New Testament; here in Ephesians 3:11, earlier in the letter where it is recorded "*for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father*" (2:18). Once the word appears in Romans where Paul wrote, "*through whom also we have our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and we rejoice in the of the glory of God*" (5:2). One who is familiar with the letters of Paul, recognizes that the word is used exclusively by him. Of the meaning of the word "access" Mr. Vine said, "A leading or bring into the presence of ..."

These passages unite in declaring that Christ is the one through whom we have "access." But, what is it that we have "access" to? The Roman passage tells that we have access to the grace in which we stand. Ephesians 2:18 tells that through Christ we have "access" to the Father. The verse here in Ephesians 3:11 is elliptical: that which we have "access" to is not specifically stated, but the earlier verses give us implication of what it is we have "access" to: it is to sharing in the sharing in the "*unsearchable riches of Christ*" whom and of which Paul preached. Although the object is phrased somewhat differently; in the final analysis, Christ is the door through which we have access to the Father, to His eternal purpose which made possible this grace wherein we stand; the unsearchable riches of God through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

And, while Paul makes no reference to faith being the "channel" by the which we come to Christ and through Christ to God; he wrote his Roman readers that they (and we) had access "*by faith*" into this grace wherein we stand. Likewise he expresses the same truth in Ephesians 3:12: we have "*access ... through our faith in him.*" The importance, nay not simply importance, but rather essentiality of faith cannot be gainsaid. The Hebrew writer said, "*and without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is ...*" (Heb. 11:6). Jesus told His generation, "*Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*" (Jn. 8:24). We are fully away that although "*faith*" is the passage door does not mean "faith only" for James makes clear that "*faith, if it hath not works is dead*" and "*ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*" (James 2:10, 24). To the detractor who denies that baptism has anything to do with salvation we respond, baptism is an integral part of faith. So said Paul. For if "*we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,*" he hastened to add, "*For (because) as many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ*" (Gal. 3:26f). Do not forget for a moment that faith validates every act of obedience which man offers to God. We must have faith in order to repent

for if one does not believe in Christ, that he has sinned against Him, how can he repent? What value would a confession of faith be if there was not, in fact, a genuine conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? As to baptism, we are expressly told, "*having been buried with him in baptism wherein ye were also raised with him, through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead*" (Col. 2:12). And we are not only raised from baptism through faith to walk in newness of life; are we not to commence a life in which we "*walk by faith and not by sight;*" are not the wondrous qualities men call "Christian graces" to be added and built upon our faith (2 Cor. 5:7; 2 Pet. 1:5-11)?

So, through Christ we have access to God and the grace He promised for man. We shall not come timidly but rather with boldness. In Hebrews it is written, "*Let us draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help us in time of need*" (Heb. 4:16). And faith in God's purpose for us allows us to have confidence that which He has promised, that will He do!

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