

A STUDY OF FAITH

By

Buddy J. Duncan

Table of Contents

Introduction page 3

Chapter One

The objects of faith are page 5

In the one God sent page 6

The writings of Moses page 6

The writings of the prophets page 7

We must have faith in the gospels page 7

Chapter Two

We have faith in Christ because

Because faith is a gift from God page 8

Because faith is a work of God page 9

Because faith is the wisdom and power of God page 9

Because faith in Christ is fruitful page 10

Faith in Christ is accompanied with repentance page 11

Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith page 12

The scriptures produce faith page 13

Preaching produces faith page 14

Chapter Three

The results of faith page 16

Faith is the beginning of justification page 16

Salvation made possible by faith page 18

Faith results in sanctification page 19

Faith can result in eternal life page 20

Through faith we are edified page 22

Faith can bring our adoption page 23

Chapter Four

Faith is essential page 25

Impossible to please God without faith page 26

Essential to the Christian warfare page 26

Chapter Five

What are the benefits of having faith?

Faith produces hope page 28

Through faith you can be joyful page 28

Through faith you get confidence page

Through faith you can have confidence page 30

Chapter Six

By faith saints will

Saints will live by faith page 31

Saints will walk by faith page 32

Saints will resist the devil by faith page 33

Chapter Seven

Saints should be

Saints should be sincere in faith page 34

Saints have full assurance in faith page 36

Saints will do all things through faith page 37

Conclusion page 39

In December, 1964 I preached my first sermon; it was on the subject of “faith”. I spent weeks preparing for it. I practiced for it standing before a mirror, preached to a Warm Morning heating stove. When the time finally arrived to present my lesson I intended to preach for twenty minutes; I got up and told them everything I knew about “faith” in sixteen minutes. Since that day I have no idea how many lessons and sermons I have given on the subject of “faith”. It was my favorite subject then and continues to be yet today.

I begin this writing by defining “faith”; rather than giving my definition we will refer to the word of the Hebrews writer. By inspiration he wrote that faith is “the substance of things hoped for”: (Hebrews 11:1) *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,”* The definition that he gives contains two parts and this is the first part; the faith described here is not a mere profession of faith as this may only be temporary. The “faith” referred to here is the various promises given in the gospel and the blessings of grace. “Faith” of a Christian is nothing less than possessing a confident persuasion, expectation and assurance of receiving the promises of God. What is it that Christians hope for? Is it not forgiveness of our sins; do we not hope for eternal salvation? That my friend is the substance of faith! The second part of the definition of faith is: (Hebrews 11:1) *“the evidence of things not seen.”* Faith is believing in things done by God in the past; such as creation, miracles, the birth, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. I have never seen God but I do believe that He exists. What makes me believe in the existence of God? I would answer that question in this fashion; “I have never seen George Washington but I do believe that he once existed and was the first president of the United States because I believe the testimony of others given concerning George Washington. It is upon the same principle that I believe God exists; I believe the testimony of others given about God that are found in the Bible.

How important is it for us to have faith? I feel it is important because we are commanded to have faith: (Matthew 11:21-24) *“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. ²³And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be*

brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.” Although Jesus does not give a direct command here to have faith it is clearly shown what will happen to those who do not have faith; I tell you the truth that scares me!

The apostle John does give a direct command to believe: (1 John 3:23) *“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.”* Here John informs us of a commandment coming from God and that commandment is that “we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. What is the difference between believing and having faith? Here is one definition that Webster gives of “believe”: **BELIEVE**, v.i. To have a firm persuasion of any thing. In some cases faith is to have full persuasion, approaching to certainty; in others, more doubt is implied. It is often followed by in or on, especially in the scriptures. To believe in, is to hold as the object of faith. *“Ye believe in God, believe also in me.”* John 14. To believe on, is to trust, to place full confidence in, to rest upon with faith.” Next I looked up Webster’s definition of “faith”: **FAITH**, n. [L. fides, fido, to trust; Gr. to persuade, to draw towards any thing, to conciliate; to believe, to obey. 1. Belief; the assent of the mind to the truth of what is declared by another, resting on his authority and veracity, without other evidence; the judgment that what another states or testifies is the truth. I have strong faith or no faith in the testimony of a witness, or in what a historian narrates.” Since both “faith” and “believe” are mentioned in both of Webster’s definitions I conclude that they can mean the same thing and can be used inter-changeably. Therefore, when John tells us that God commands us to “believe” it is the same as saying God commands us to have faith.

Chapter One

THE OBJECTS OF FAITH ARE

It would be impossible to have faith in nothing; so what are we to have faith in? Jesus said we must have faith [or believe] in God and himself: (John 14:1) *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in*

me.” Believing in God is the foundation of our faith. Jesus says if you have this belief there is no reason for them to be uneasy. If we believe in God we should also believe in Christ. This is one of the ways that Jesus points out his deity. Remember that Jesus is speaking to Jews who did believe in God; so if for no other reason since they believed in God they should also believe in Jesus as the Son of God.

We Have Faith In The One God Sent

Jesus said we should have faith in the one God sent: (John 6:29) *“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”* There are other works that are pleasing to God; but believing on Jesus is the chief work that is required of us. We can perform other works that are pleasing to God as long as they are performed in the name of Christ. If we believe on Jesus we can be assured that this belief is acceptable to God and it is something that must be believed to be saved.

Both Jews and Gentiles are required to have faith in Jesus: (Acts 20:21) *“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Paul testified both to the Jews and Gentiles that he had faith in Jesus and through this testimony he encouraged them to have the same faith that he had. Paul revealed Jesus as God’s Son and God’s way of salvation.

We Have Faith In The Writings of Moses

We are to have faith in the writings of Moses: (John 5:46) *“For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.”* The books that Moses wrote often speaks of Jesus; Moses wrote of Jesus as the seed of woman, that he should bruise the serpent’s head and the one in whom all the nations would be blessed. Moses also wrote that the people of Israel should hearken. If they had only believed Moses they would also have believed [or have faith] that Jesus was the promised Messiah. This being the case it would be Moses who would be an accuser of them and a witness against them. We too must believe

the writings of Moses; without believing Moses we could not believe that God created all things; without believing Moses we cannot believe the prophecies of Moses and we would be no better than the Jews of Jesus' days.

We Have Faith In The Writings of The Prophets

We must have faith in the writings of the prophets. (2 Chronicles 20:20) *“And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.”* The people of old were to believe the prophets and so are we. (Acts 26:27) *“King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.”* Paul asked King Agrippa if he believed the prophets; he then stated that he knew Agrippa believed the prophets and since he believed the prophets he should believe that Jesus was the Son of God because Jesus fulfilled all the prophets foretold of him. Believing the prophets will strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ.

We Must Have Faith In The Gospel

And of course we must have faith in the gospel: (Mark 1:15) *“And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”* Not only did Jesus tell his hearers [and us] to repent he added “believe the gospel”. I must ask; “How important is it that we believe the gospel about Jesus?” Jesus once said this: (John 8:24) *“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”* It boils down to this; unless you believe the gospel that states that Jesus Christ is the Son of God you will most certainly “die in your sins”. This of course make it the responsibility of each individual to believe the gospel.

CHAPTER TWO

WE HAVE FAITH IN CHRIST BECAUSE

Because Faith Is A Gift of God

We have faith in Christ because faith is the gift of God: (John 3:16) *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* Jesus said that God “gave his only begotten Son” is it not true if someone gives you something that it is a gift? I know that we treasure gifts our parents, friends or children give us; how much more should we treasure a gift from God? And the gift of faith in Christ that God has given us is indeed a precious gift: (2 Peter 1:1) *“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:”* Peter states that those who have obtained faith have obtained a “precious faith”. Our faith is precious because of the price that both God and Christ paid so that we might obtain faith. We are all aware of how someone obtains faith: (Romans 10:17) *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Not only has God given us a precious gift; He has also given us His inspired Word whereby we who are living in these “last days” may also believe. Would you believe the gospel without the Bible? Would the gospel have been correctly passed down from generation to generation without the recorded word of God? We have seen how the words of a witness gets changed every time someone different tells the story; what if the gospel was handed down from person to person would it remain to be true to the facts? I doubt it; therefore, since the gospel that we have today is the same as it has always been it is indeed a precious gift.

Faith Is the Work of God

We have faith because we believe that faith is the work of God: (Acts 11:21) *“And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.”* Luke the writer of the book of Acts tells us that certain

men went to Antioch and preached Jesus: (Acts 11:20) *“And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.”* As a result of that preaching of Jesus the “hand of the Lord was with them and a great number believed.” Whenever the truth about Jesus is told it is the work of God; that is God approves of that which is spoken; this in turn causes some to believe.

Faith Stands In The Wisdom And Power of God

Our faith stands in the wisdom and power of God: (1 Corinthians 2:5) *“That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”* Paul did not want the Corinthians to think that their faith was based upon the words of men; he wanted them to understand that their faith stood in the wisdom and power of God. This was true because Paul did not speak his own words instead he spoke the gospel as he was directed [or inspired] by Holy Spirit. While men who preach or teach today are not inspired by God but we do have the words of inspired men in the New Testament and we can preach the same thing that they preached and the faith of men and women today can also stand in the wisdom and power of God!

Faith In Christ Is Fruitful

Faith in Christ is fruitful: (1 Thessalonians 1:3) *“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;”* The phrase “your work of faith” does not mean the principle of faith because our faith is the work of God and our faith is a product of God’s grace. Don’t you believe that Paul is making reference to the work of God that they are performing because of their faith; after all faith without works is a “dead faith”: (James 2:20) *“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”* When we die the spirit departs from the body: (James 2:26) *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”* This is known as death; James by inspiration says if you faith is not accompanied with works your faith is “dead”. Faith without

works is not a living active faith; we must be busy doing “good works”! If you have received salvation through the grace of God you will want your relatives and friends also to receive this wonderful blessing and you will be working toward that end. Do you have faith? Is it an active faith? Or is it a dead faith? The elders and preachers are busy trying to save souls; but there are some who only you can reach. Is your faith fruitful or is it a dead faith?

Faith In Christ Is Accompanied By Repentance

Repentance Was And Still Is Required

Jesus said because the kingdom was at hand we should “repent and believe the gospel”: (Mark 1:15) *“And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”* Jesus called upon them to repent of their former sins and their belief of a temporal kingdom of the Messiah. The time was fulfilled and they should now repent and believe in the kingdom that he was about to establish. If they truly had faith in him as the Son of God they should repent and believe the gospel. This would indeed be a blessing to them as the gospel would free them from the law and give them peace and pardon of their sins. By believing the gospel they would be made righteous through the blood of Christ and they would receive salvation and eternal life by the grace of God.

Repentance and remission of sins is to be preached in his name: (Luke 24:47) *“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”* This is the sum of the gospel ministry: (Acts 20:21) *“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Salvation has been purchased by the blood of Jesus and through him the gospel is preached. Tears of repentance will not wash away sin; but neither is there any salvation without repentance. Whenever “remission of sin” is preached so must “repentance” also be preached; the two cannot and must not be separated. Not even the tears of Christ could take away sin; his blood had to be shed. This verse also assures us that we have the proper authority to preach “repentance and re-

mission of sins; because to preach “in his name” is to preach by the authority of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Is The Author And Finisher of Our Faith

You and I need to look to Jesus as “the author and finisher of our faith: (Hebrews 12:2) *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* Christ should be looked upon as a Savior who was appointed and sent by God to be Savior of all who will believe and obey! Those who look unto him as their savior will be saved if they obey the rest of the gospel’s commandments. It is useless to look any further than Jesus because no one else is able to supply the salvation that we so desperately desire. He and he alone is able to supply the salvation that we desire since he and he alone is the “author and finisher of our faith, anyone who looks to Jesus in faith and obeys his will shall be saved. The word “author” properly means the source or cause of anything; or one who makes a beginning. In Acts 3:15 and Acts 5:31 it is translated “prince” and in Hebrews 2:10 “captain”. Here in Hebrews 12:2 it is translated “author” indicating that Jesus is the source of our faith.

The Scriptures Produce Faith In Christ

In the latter part of the gospel according to John he states that what he wrote was written so that we might believe in Jesus: (John 20:31) *“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”* John did not record everything that Jesus said or did: (John 20:30) *“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:”* We may yearn to know more about Jesus as a child, as an adult man and more of the teachings and miracles of Jesus; but John assures us that he did write enough that we “might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”. Verse thirty one gives us

a very good clue as to why John wrote his gospel record. John's intended purpose in writing was to give evidence of Jesus' true identity as the Son of God; and the truth of his record will produce FAITH! There are two intended purposes to the gospel of John: #1. that readers of this gospel might come to believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah and # 2. That those who read his words might be convinced and have eternal life. Although the other three gospels are very valuable to us they did not make the same conclusion that John makes; John who was the last of the apostles alone concludes his writings telling us that what he wrote was done in an effort to produce faith to those who read his words.

The scriptures produced faith in Timothy at a young age: (2 Timothy 3:15) *"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* Of course the New Testament had not been completed or compiled when Timothy was taught the scriptures by his mother and grandmother; therefore we must conclude that the Old Testament can produce faith as well as the New Testament. There are those who teach that you must have complete understanding of the Old Testament before you can become a Christian; I believe this is a false doctrine, but I am convinced that by studying the Old Testament that the New Testament will be confirmed. There are many children today who are deprived of the teachings of the scriptures because their parents fail to teach them and we wonder why so few are accepting the Lord as their savior. The only way faith can be developed is to study the word of God; if you want to be approved by God you must study and develop faith: (2 Timothy 2:15) *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* May I remind you it is impossible to be pleasing to God without faith: (Hebrews 11:6) *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* Study that good book brother, study.

Preaching Produces Faith

Jesus prayed for those who would hear the preaching of the apostles: (John 17:20) *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;"* What encouragement this should have given these early gospel preachers! I cannot imagine that Jesus discontinued the

thoughts of this prayer; I feel our Lord is still praying that those who hear the gospel proclaimed will come to believe on him as the promised Messiah.

Jesus' prayer was answered: (Acts 8:12) *"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."* With the help of the Lord Philip's preaching was so convincing that both men and women came to believe. What did Philip preach? He preached "things concerning the kingdom of God; that no doubt would include the kingdom that Jesus established [I.e. the church] which we might properly refer to as the gospel dispensation. From the context of this verse we can also determine that he taught about baptism for the remission of sin: (Acts 2:38) *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."*

Without preaching there would be very few who would be saved: (Romans 10:14) *"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"* Paul's argument was that faith is essential to salvation and that there was no way for those who had never heard the gospel [I.e. the good news concerning Christ] to be saved. This fact remains true until this very day. Few there are who will pick up a Bible and study by themselves. Most people need to be encouraged to believe and to call upon the name of the Lord and this is why Jesus sent his apostles out on the great commission and this is why we must continue to preach today. It is through hearing the word of God preached that faith is produced: (Romans 10:17) *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

Many came to believe through the preaching of Paul and Apollos: (1 Corinthians 3:5) *"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?"* We can expect the same results that Paul and Apollos had as long as we preach the same gospel that they preached.

Chapter Three

The Results of Faith Are

Through faith comes the remission of sins: (Acts 10:43) *“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”* “That through his name” was applied to what the prophets had said. It was not expressly confirmed that they who believed in Jesus should be pardoned but it was implied in what they said; the prophets had promised a Messiah and their religion consisted in believing that a Messiah would come. We know from other scriptures that just believing in Jesus will not provide remission of sins; we must confess his name, repent of our sins and be baptized in order to have our sins forgiven. But it is a sure thing if you don’t believe you will not keep the rest of the gospel’s commandments.

Faith Is the Beginning of Justification

Paul stood up and beckoned with his hands to get the attention of those who were present and he tells them among other things if they “believe in him they are justified from all things: (Acts 13:39) *“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”* Justification is the opposite of condemnation. It is a judicial act of God by which he pardons all the sins of those who believe in Christ and when they obey the rest of the required commandments God treats them as righteous in the eye of the law. In addition to having our sins pardoned, justification declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied.

Both the circumcised and uncircumcised are justified by faith: (Romans 3:30) *“Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.”* Those who can be justified by faith are the circumcised Jews and the uncircumcised Gentiles. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision affects the grace of justification that we receive.

Those who are justified through faith have peace with God: (Romans 5:1) *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”* We need to take note of how we are justified which makes peace

with God possible; Paul wrote by inspiration that it is made possible “through our Lord Jesus Christ”. We are not justified by any good works we may do; justification is made possible by Jesus and he alone justifies us through grace. The plan of salvation by Christ reveals that God is willing and ready to pardon our sins and to be at peace with those who believe, will repent, confess the name of Christ and be baptized for the remission of their sins.

Paul states that we are not justified by the works of the Law: (Galatians 2:16) *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”* We need to understand that not everyone knew this; in fact there were Jews who were strictly opposed to this teaching. Paul is making reference to those who had heard the gospel and had professedly embraced the gospel. Our justification comes to us through the righteousness of Christ; and from the gospel in which this truth is clearly revealed.

Salvation Is Made Possible By Faith

Jesus himself said that those who believe will be saved: (Mark 16:16) *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* Just giving assent to the truth of the gospel is not enough and Jesus tells what else is required; he adds that one must be baptized or else they will be “damned”. Faith must always precede baptism; this is the very reason that baptizing infants is wrong. An infant cannot understand nor have faith.

While being imprisoned Paul and Silas was praying and singing at mid night: (Acts 16:25) *“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”* Suddenly they were freed by an earthquake: (Acts 16:26) *“And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.”* When the keeper of the prison saw the doors open he was about to take his life: (Acts 16:27) *“And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had*

been fled.” But Paul stopped him: (Acts 16:28) “But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.” Then the jailor asked: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). Paul and Silas replied: (Acts 16:31-32) “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. ³²And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.” It was necessary for them to speak the “word of the Lord” else he would not know what to believe without being told. What happened after they had received faith? (Acts 16:33) “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.” Whenever someone realizes they are sinners and believes the word of God they want to have their past sins washed away: (Acts 22:16) “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” When the Philippian jailor and his household believed they took the final steps to wash away their sins!

Faith Results In Sanctification

Easton’s Bible Dictionary makes these comments about sanctification: “Faith is instrumental in securing sanctification, inasmuch as it (1.) secures union to Christ (Gal. 2:20), and (2.) brings the believer into living contact with the truth, whereby he is led to yield obedience “to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come. “The more holy a man is, the more humble, self-renouncing, self-abhorring, and the more sensitive to every sin he becomes, and the more closely he clings to Christ. The moral imperfections which cling to him he feels to be sins, which he laments and strives to overcome. Believers find that their life is a constant warfare, and they need to take the kingdom of heaven by storm, and watch while they pray. They are always subject to the constant chastisement of their Father’s loving hand, which can only be designed to correct their imperfections and to confirm their graces. And it has been notoriously the fact that the best Christians have been those who have been the least prone to claim the attainment of perfection for themselves.” In simple terms “sanctification” is to make holy or to purify which is accomplished when our sins are washed away in baptism (Acts 22:16). Scriptures references are: (Acts 26:18) “*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among*

them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Here Luke records the words of Jesus. Notice how Jesus says their “eyes are opened” in other words they through faith come to believe that they are living in sin and that faith causes them to “turn from darkness to light”; they stop living for Satan and begin to live unto God. Those who are “sanctified by faith in Jesus” have their sins forgiven and they shall receive an inheritance of eternal life in heaven. It is their hearts that are purified: (Acts 15:9) *“And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”*

Faith Can Result In Eternal Life

If you follow through and obey what your faith has led you to believe and fully obey the gospel you are a candidate for eternal life: (John 3:15-16) *“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* I say a candidate because after obeying you must remain faithful until death: (Revelation 2:10) *“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”*

It is God’s will that those who believe on the Lord Jesus shall have eternal life: (John 6:40) *“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”* Just seeing Jesus was not sufficient to receive “everlasting life” because Jesus added “and believeth”. This simply means that you must have faith to receive “everlasting life”. Many of the Jews had seen Jesus but few believed on him; so it is safe to assume that they will not receive “everlasting life”! Jesus had said in the previous verse that “all that the Father had given him would “be raised up in the last day”: (John 6:39) *“And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”* Jesus states here that it is necessary that a person must believe on him and that is the evidence that that person was given to Christ and would be saved. If this doctrine had always been properly attended to there would never have been the abuse that we now see in the false doctrine of election. Those who believe on him will have evi-

dence that they were given to him; this being the effect of a humble, penitent, believing and obedient heart. Jesus said in the same context: (John 6:47) *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”* Jesus declared “verily, verily [or truly, truly] if we believe on him we will be blessed with eternal life. Not only may the believer have eternal life as John 6:40 states but Jesus here states that they “hath everlasting life” [I.e. they have the promise of “everlasting life] if they remain faithful (Revelation 2:10).

Along this same thought is the idea of having “rest in heaven”: (Hebrews 4:3) *“For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.”* Some Bible commentators say that the rest that is referred to is rest from the Law; and this is certainly true; but it is my belief that the rest referred to here is the rest that will be enjoyed in heaven. Just think; there will be no temptation in heaven, no wicked or vile persons in heaven, no death or sorrow, no more becoming tired; there will be rest from every known sin and all sinners will be absent from heaven. Isn't this the rest that all Christians yearn for?

Those who have faith are preserved: (1 Peter 1:5) *“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”* This is a description of those whose inheritance in heaven is kept or preserved. To state it differently their inheritance is kept safe in heaven; of course again I must insist that this is assuming that they remain faithful. We must realize that as long as we are alive on this earth there will be temptations and snares along the way; therefore it is important that we resist temptations and avoid being caught in the snares of the devil.

Through Faith We Are Edified

To be edified is to be built up and faith can do this: (Jude 20) *“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,”* We are very dependant upon God for our salvation [which no one would deny] but this inspired writer says; “build up yourselves on your most holy faith”. By this is meant that Christians are to act and live as good moral and responsible children of God. So we find that it is proper and expected that we do

the work of God and build ourselves up in the doctrines and by practicing the doctrines of God's word. The written words of the apostle Paul express the thought I wish to convey: (Philippians 2:12) *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."*

Paul wrote about "godly edifying" and he indicated that it comes through faith:(1 Timothy 1:4) *"Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do."* The fables referred to here are probably the idle superstitions of the Jewish rabbies. The word that has been translated "fable" here means properly speech or discourse and then fable or fiction or a mystic discourse. To such fables Paul warns Timothy not to pay any attention to. These consisted largely of unfounded stories and they were regarded by many Gentiles and Jews to be very important. Furthermore, they tended to incorporate these into the teaching of Christianity. These fables do nothing to promote true religion in the soul. "Godly edifying" is the intended end of our Bible classes and preaching. It is through these efforts that our faith is built up or our edification comes about; personal Bible study is also a very important avenue to "godly edification".

Faith Can Bring Our Adoption

Wouldn't you like to be assured that you are a child of God? Well you can have that assurance through faith: (John 1:12) *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"* To be a daughter or son of God is the desire of every responsible person. Faith can make that possible! Those who believe [have faith] in God have long been called "the sons of God: (Genesis 6:2) *"That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."* To be a child of God is a very special favor, a great blessing and a high honor. Through grace God has provided adoption and puts those who obey as His children. We may not fully appreciate this but it is truly a blessing to be a child of God. It is a far greater privilege to be a child of God than it is to be a child of any man or woman! When we are redeemed we are then in a position to become children of God. To have the "power" to become the children of God is to have the right to become the children of God. In obedience we become united

with Jesus and he actually calls us “brethren”: (Matthew 25:40) *“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”* It is by grace that we are saved: (Ephesians 2:8) *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”* It is through this same grace that we are adopted as God’s children.

In no uncertain terms Paul says we are “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”: (Galatians 3:26) *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”* Everyone who bears the name Christian regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles is a child of God: (John 1:12) *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:”* When does one receive Jesus? It is not when we believe the gospel and obey the commandments of the gospel? My friends just believing the gospel is not enough to become a child of God; believing only gives you the power to become adopted by God. Obedience is also a requirement to becoming a child of God.

Through Faith We Gain Access To God

When we are “justified by faith” we then have “peace with God” and this is provided by Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1-2) *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: ²By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”* According to verse two we now have access to God. The only way we can gain access to God is through Jesus: (John 14:6) *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* The word rendered “access” occurs but in two other places in the New Testament, (Ephesians 2:18; 3:12). Just as the word “access” is limited in the New Testament so is our “access” to God limited and it is only through Jesus Christ that we gain access to God.

Not only do we have “access” to God through Jesus we also possess “boldness and confidence”: (Ephesians 3:12) *“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.”* There is no need to be shy about calling God your Father as we have complete liberty to go to our heavenly Father in prayer. This is a privilege that we can use every time we sin and are in need of

forgiveness: (Hebrews 4:16) *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

Chapter Four

Faith is Essential

Impossible To Please God Without Faith

If you want to be pleasing to God you must have faith: (Hebrews 11:6) *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* To be “without faith” is to not have any confidence in God, in His fidelity, His wisdom or His promises. Indeed this is a very sad description of any person. We are all aware that it is impossible for a child to please his father unless they have confidence in each other. Perhaps this illustration will help us to better understand this passage. If you are married maybe this will enlighten you; it is impossible for a wife to please her husband, or a husband his wife unless they have faith and confidence in each other. If there is distrust and jealousy on either party discord or misery is sure to follow. The same is true to of God; He will not be pleased with anyone who has not confidence or faith in Him to do what He has promised to do. Do you believe God? If you have faith in God to do what He has said He will do then He will be pleased with you. The requirement of faith or confidence in God is the same thing that you and I require of our children, our partners in life and our friends. It is and indispensable condition of our being pleased with them; never forget that God requires the same of you that you require of others.

Faith Is Essential In The Christian Warfare

That the Christian is at war must be realized and faith will see you through that war: (1 Timothy 1:18-19) *“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them might-*

est war a good warfare; ¹⁹Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:” Paul wanted Timothy to understand the seriousness of what he was about to write so he “charges” Timothy. To “charge” someone is to command them and this is exactly what Paul did. The “charge” that followed was that Timothy would fight “a good warfare”. Paul even instructed Timothy as to how he was to do this in verse nineteen. Timothy was to hold to or cling to his faith. Paul knew that there were some who had “put away their faith” and had “made shipwreck their faith”. Holding to or clinging to our faith is necessary to fighting a “good warfare” in our Christian lives.

Paul again reminds Timothy: (1 Timothy 6:12) *“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”* Some infer that this is only a suggestion; but I believe that it should be considered as a “charge” [or commandment] just as it was in chapter one, verse 19. Why would Paul “charge” Timothy to “war a good warfare” in one place and then only suggest that Timothy “fight the good fight of faith” later in the same epistle? Timothy faced the same conflicts that you and I face; he was tempted by Satan and he was to battle against false teachers the same as we must battle.

Chapter Five

What Are The Benefits of Having Faith?

FAITH PRODUCES HOPE

If a doctor tells you that you only have a few days to live you have no “hope” for the future [unless you are a faithful Christian]. Faithful Christians do have “hope”. But a question that should concern everyone is; “where does that ‘hope’ come from”? According to Paul our hope is through faith: (Romans 5:2) *“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”* through faith saints can live a happy and peaceful life because they have “access” to God’s wonderful grace; therefore,

they “rejoice in hope”. This is a future blessing not only of “peace” but also of “grace”. What is hope? I cannot tell you where I heard this definition of hope, nor can I tell you who said it but it is my favorite definition of faith; “Hope is desire plus expectation”. Don’t you desire to go to heaven? Well you can expect to go to heaven because of God’s grace! This is exactly what “hope” is and this “hope” may be yours through faith. The Hebrews writer also defines “faith” wherein he used the word “hope” can be found: (Hebrews 11:1) *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* Doesn’t this agree with the definition I gave? If you want to be happy and be at peace with God you must have faith.

Through Faith You Can Be Joyful

If you have faith you have reason to “rejoice”: (Acts 16:34) *“And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.”* This Philippian jailor had just heard the gospel proclaimed to him and his household; upon hearing the truth he and his household believed [had faith] and were baptized. After his baptism he took those who had led him to salvation and set a meal before them; but we are also told that he rejoiced because he had come to “believe in God”. We should not think it strange that those who believe and obey can rejoice because as already stated they now have access to God and are at peace with Him.

A similar record of one who rejoiced when he believed in Jesus and was baptized is recorded in the book of Acts also; (Acts 8:35-39) *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. ³⁶And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? ³⁷And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. ³⁸And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. ³⁹And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”* So we find the same result that faith brings to those who believe and we have seen that result repeated time and time

again in this present age when someone believes the gospel and obey by being baptized; they often come up out of the watery grave with tears of joy.

The apostle Peter confirms this idea: (1 Peter 1:8) *“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:”* Through the words of Peter we can understand why people like the jailor, the eunuch and people of today can rejoice! Even those who have never seen Jesus nor witnessed any of the miracles he performed can be joyful when they come to have faith.

Through Faith You Can Have Confidence

Those who possess faith not only have hope and are joyful they also have “confidence”. It is good to go about any task with “confidence”. God has laid a foundation so that we may have “confidence”: (Isaiah 28:16) *“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”* In this passage God informs what the true foundation of hope and trust is. This foundation provides security from death and hell. Too many today have a false confidence; trusting in themselves. By having faith in the foundation that God has provided we can have “confidence”. Jesus Christ is that foundation or cornerstone that God has provided for all believers: (Ephesians 2:20) *“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;”* What a wonderful Creator we have that has even supplied us with the means to have “confidence”.

To avoid confusion believe in the foundation that God has laid: (1 Peter 2:6) *“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.”* To be confused is senseless since God has given us a foundation that can be trusted, relied on with confidence. If you trust in the foundation and cornerstone that has been laid there will be no confusion by anyone; not even Satan can confound you. That brethren is real confidence.

Chapter Six

BY Faith Saints Will

Saints Will Live By Faith

Perhaps you have noticed that Christians are different from other people; there is a good reason for this because Christians live by faith: (Galatians 2:20) *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”* Paul was not literally crucified with Christ as only two thieves were crucified with Christ. However, Christ was crucified for Paul as well as for you and I since we are all sinners and Christ died that we might have forgiveness of our sins. We are said to be crucified, buried and rising from the grave when we are baptized: (Romans 6:4) *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”* It is through baptism that each of us who have been baptized has been crucified with Christ. Paul wrote that he “lived by the faith of the Son of God” not meaning the faith that Christ had when he lived as a man upon this earth; rather Paul means that he lived by the faith of which Jesus was the author and object of. Just like us Paul looked to Jesus for pardon, righteousness, peace, joy and comfort. This is how Paul lived by faith and you and I must do likewise.

Saints Will Walk By Faith

This is closely related to “living by faith” as Christians live and walk by faith; the children of Israel walked in the steps of Abraham’s faith: (Romans 4:12) *“And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.”* This simply means they tried to imitate the faith of Abraham.

With very few words Paul states that saints “walk by faith”: (2 Corinthians 5:7) “*(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*” This may sound strange but faith is the eyes of the soul. It is through faith that we look to Christ for righteousness, pardon and salvation. It is through faith that we receive Christ and it is through faith that we know how Christ would have us to live and walk. Faith is not a one time thing or act; we continue to live and walk by faith each day of our lives. The phrase “to walk” in the scriptures often denotes to live, to act or to conduct our lives in a certain way. As the children of Israel attempted to imitate Abraham’s faith Christians are to imitate the faith of Jesus. I am well aware that this is a hard commandment; one which can never be fully accomplished, but if we never make any attempt to imitate the faith of Jesus nothing will ever be accomplished. There is one thing that we can do that is of reading great benefit in trying to imitate the faith of Christ and that is to pray. If you recall the apostles once asked Jesus to “increase our faith: (Luke 17:5) “*And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.*” We can do likewise! I believe that God hears our prayers and I also believe that God answers our prayers.

Saints Will Resist The Devil By Faith

Once we have become Christians is when Satan is going to become our enemy and will make every attempt to win us back: (1 Peter 5:8-9) “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: ⁹Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*” Peter reminds his readers that they have an “adversary the devil”. When you read these passages did you think of them as being written to you? You should have! Did you notice the advice that Peter gives to his readers? His advice is to “resist [the devil] stedfast in the faith”. Faith comes by hearing or reading the word of God (Romans 10:17). If you never hear or read your Bible you will not have any faith with which to “resist” the devil. This is why we should stress everyone to study: (2 Timothy 2:15) “*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” If you don’t study you won’t even know when you are being tempted and you will not have the means to resist the devil.

Your faith is a shield by which you are able to overcome the devil: (Ephesians 6:16) *“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”* At the time the Bible was written warriors carried a shield with which they were able to protect themselves from the arrows and swords of an enemy. Christians are also provided with a shield by which they are able to protect themselves from the “fiery darts” of the devil. The word “darts” is plural indicating that there are more than one and these darts can come upon us suddenly and when we least expect them, therefore it is needful that we protect ourselves at all times with “the shield of faith”. I would encourage everyone at this time to read the great chapter of “faith” found in Hebrews eleven.

Chapter Seven

SAINTS SHOULD BE

Saints Should Be Sincere In Faith

If sincerity is to ever be required it is in sincerity to God and our faith. (1 Timothy 1:5) *“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:”* By looking to Strong we learn this about the word “unfeigned”: “it is a negative particle and presumed derivative of undissembled, that is sincere, without dissimulation (hypocrisy).” Referring to the latter part of this passage we learn that our faith is to be sincere and without any hypocrisy.

In his second epistle to Timothy Paul recalls that Timothy’s faith was unfeigned: (2 Timothy 1:5) *“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.”* Timothy’s faith was genuine and sincere; he believed with all his heart and did not waver from what he believed. Timothy’s faith was no accident; his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice also possessed faith and they taught Timothy what they believed. All too often we find parents dropping their children off at the church building; making no effort to teach their children what they believe. What this world needs in more women

like Lois and Eunice. Neither would it be a bad idea for men to tell their children and grandchildren what they believe. Regardless of how you obtained your faith you must be sincere and remain true to what you believe.

Once you have obtained faith you must continue in that faith: (Acts 14:22) *“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”* Paul along with Barnabas exhorted them “to continue in the faith” because they knew that they would be confronted with persecutions. Even in persecutions we are to remain true and sincere in your faith.

Paul exhorted the Corinthians to “stand fast in the faith”: (1 Corinthians 16:13) *“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”* The Corinthians are exhorted to “watch”; this is excellent advice as saints have many enemies and they must constantly be on guard. Some of the things we should be watching for are: watch out for evil, watch for opportunities to receive good, watch for opportunities to do good, watch over each other in love and watch that no one draws you aside from the truth and unity of the gospel. Then Paul wrote by inspiration that we are to “stand fast in the faith”. Do not waver from that which you have been taught and believe. To do this you must be aware that there are many false teachers in the world: (2 Peter 2:1) *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”* We must also be aware of the “antichrists” (1 John 2:18-19) *“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. ¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”* False teachers and antichrists are enemies of Christians and they will do everything they can to draw you away from the truth; and we should ever be watchful for such. This is why it is so important to know and be grounded in the word of God: (Colossians 1:23) *“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;”*

Saints Will Have Full Assurance Through Faith

Regardless of whom you are or what you are doing or seeking you like be assured that you will be successful; saints have “full assurance”. Paul had this assurance: (2 Timothy 1:12) *“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”* Paul told Timothy that he was “persuaded” [had full assurance] that Jesus Christ was “able to keep that which he had committed unto him”. Paul was well acquainted with the power, goodness and mercy of Jesus and this gave him “full assurance”. The more you study the four gospels and become more acquainted with Jesus the more assurance you will have. I cannot overstate the importance of personal Bible study. Paul had committed his eternal well being to Jesus Christ and in this commitment he gained “full assurance” that Jesus would deliver him to his desired destination.

Although the Hebrews writer does not identify himself I am convinced that Paul was the writer of this epistle. One of the reasons I am of this conviction is we find virtually the same message in Hebrews that we find that Paul wrote to Timothy: (Hebrews 10:22) *“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”* Again to have “full assurance of faith” means to have unwavering confidence; a full faith without any doubt in God and His Son to do what they have promised to do. As a parent don’t you want your children to have complete confidence in you? Our heavenly Father desires that we have this confidence in Him! God has revealed Himself through the Bible in such a manner that we can have “full assurance of faith”.

Saints Will Do All Things In Faith

Anything that is not done in faith is sin: (Romans 14:23) *“And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”* The verse preceding this verse informs us those who do not condemn himself is happy: (Romans 14:22) *“Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he al-*

loweth.” If you do allow yourself to do that which is contrary to your faith you shall not be happy. The warning here is if you do that which you do not believe is right you condemn yourself. We can only enjoy peace and confidence by doing that which you are fully persuaded that will be approved by God. If you do that which allows you conscience to condemn you, you will be most miserable in this life and the life to come. This is something that every Christian should be careful to give heed to. If you do not have peace in your heart you cannot be happy. If your passions allow you to do that which is contrary to your faith you are guilty of self condemnation; surely no one would want to condemn himself or herself.

For this very reason I also believe it to be very important that we examine ourselves: (2 Corinthians 13:5) *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”* This verse should be considered in connection with 2 Corinthians 13:3 *“Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.”* Every dedicated Christian should desire to know whether or not Christ approves of what they are saying or doing; therefore it becomes essential that we examine ourselves. The reason that Paul calls upon them to examine themselves was that he feared that many of them had been deceived. It is very possible that you and I can be deceived today by false teachers so it is of utmost importance that each of us examines ourselves. If we don’t examine ourselves how will we know whether or not we are doing “all things in faith”?

Through faith all difficulties can be overcome: (Mark 9:23) *“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”* Please notice that Jesus put an “if” before he said “canst believe”; we should never put an “if” on the power of Christ. We need to have the attitude of Paul: (Philippians 4:13) *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”* Through reliance upon Christ we can do all things; including doing “all things in faith”.

Conclusion

I will conclude by illustrating the faith of those who we have a written record of that is found in the Bible.

I will start with the faith that Caleb exhibited: (Numbers 13:30) *“And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.”* As you will recall Caleb was one of the spies who was sent out to spy out the enemy. Those who went with him brought back a different report: (Numbers 13:31-33) *“But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. ³²And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. ³³And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”* Why is it that we have two different reports that are so opposite of each other? Caleb remembered and had faith in the promise that God had made to them that they would go into this land and possess it; those who brought back an unfavorable report seem to have forgotten the promise that God made; or to put it another way is to say that they had no faith in God. While Caleb believed that all things were possible with God.

Job is another man who had faith: (Job 19:25) *“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:”* Job had suffered severely; first he lost his home, his children, his livestock and then he lost his physical health. Many would have forsaken God and their faith in Him but Job’s faith hung tough and he said that he knew his redeemer lived and would remain until the latter day of the earth. Job’s faith remained and he did not cry to any man of bone and flesh for help.

Daniel is another man who had faith; Daniel was well aware of the decree that had been made with the king: (Daniel 6:6-9) *“Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. ⁷All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of*

lions. ⁸Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. ⁹Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.” This did not phase Daniel in the least bit: (Daniel 6:10) “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.” What a surprise the king got when he went to the lion’s den: (Daniel 6:19-22) “Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. ²⁰And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? ²¹Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. ²²My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.” See what the Lord will do for those who have faith!

Peter openly confessed his faith: (Matthew 6:16) “And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Anyone who wants to be saved must make this same confession of faith: (Romans 10:9-10) “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” A perfect example of someone making what we sometimes call the good confession is found in Acts 8:26-37 “And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. ²⁷And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, ²⁸Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. ²⁹Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. ³⁰And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? ³¹And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. ³²The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: ³³In his humilia-

tion his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. ³⁴And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. ³⁶And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? ³⁷And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” If you do not have enough faith to openly make this confession you have absolutely no hope of salvation. A woman by the name of Martha had enough faith to make the good confession: (John 11:27) “*She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.*” This woman believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah and the “Son of God”. Disciples of Jesus also had faith: (John 16:29-30) “*His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. ³⁰Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.*” They said they believed that Jesus came from God and that he was the true Messiah, I am sure that they believed this before this event but this instance of Christ’s omniscience was strengthening proof of it.

Some even required physical proof; I’m thinking of Thomas: (John 20:26-29) “*And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. ²⁷Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. ²⁸And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. ²⁹Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* He probably deserves the nick name that has been given to him [I.e. doubting Tom]. But the important fact is he did come to have faith and made the good confession. Jesus did not want Thomas to be “faithless” neither does he want us to be “faithless”.

In the early church trouble and murmuring arose because some were being neglected: (Acts 6:1) “*And in those days, when the number of the disciples*

was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.” The solution to the problem was to choose seven men to take care of this need; all seven are named but one man in particular is said to be “full of faith”: (Acts 6:5) *“And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:”* If Luke were to write about us what would he write?

If we were to turn to the faith chapter of the Bible we would also learn of the faith of Abel [Hebrews 11:4], Enoch [Hebrews 11:5], Noah [Hebrews 11:7], Abraham [Hebrews 11:8, 17], Isaac [Hebrews 11:20], Jacob [Hebrews 11:21], Joseph [Hebrews 11:22], Moses [Hebrews 11:24, 27], Rahab [Hebrews 11:31], Gideon [Hebrews 11:32, 33, 39].

Regardless of where you read in your Bible you will read about someone who had faith and put that faith to work. There are those who have faith but it is no good to them or those around them as they won't put their faith to work: (James 2:14-26) *“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? ¹⁷Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ¹⁸Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. ¹⁹Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? ²²Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? ²³And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. ²⁴Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. ²⁵Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? ²⁶For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”* If you claim to have faith prove it.

Written and published by
Buddy J. Duncan
church of Christ evangelist
Email: bdduncan01@charter.net
Published June, 2009