

## Beginning the Christian Life - 6 - Faith

Scripture reading: Hebrews 11:1-6

"Faith" and "repentance" are inseparable in effecting genuine conversion. Paul sums up his ministry to the lost as "testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, REPENTANCE toward God, and FAITH toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21). The result of such preaching is recorded concerning the Thessalonians who "turned to God (faith) from idols (repentance)" (1 Thessalonians 1:9). To profess to turn to God without forsaking sin in repentance ends in hypocrisy. To attempt to forsake sin without turning to God in faith, ends in failure and despair.

### 1. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE WORD?

The root word from which we get "faith" (noun) and "believe" (verb), and its derivatives are found in the New Testament 619 times.

a. FAITH (pistis) - "Faith, belief, firm persuasion, assurance, firm conviction; honesty, integrity, faithfulness, truthfulness."

b. BELIEVE (pistoue) - "To trust in, put faith in, confide in, rely on a person or thing; have a mental persuasion; to intrust, commit to the charge or power of."

"It is the act by which a person lays hold on God's proffered resources, becomes obedient to what God prescribes, and abandoning all self-interest, and self-reliance, trusts God completely." - W.A. Whitehouse.

"It is a receiving of Christ for just what he is represented to be in His gospel, and an unqualified surrender of the will, and of the whole being to Him." - Finney.

### 2. HOW DOES THE BIBLE DEFINE FAITH?

Hebrews 11:1 - - "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

AMP.- - "Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title-deed) of the things (we) hope for, being the proof of things (we) do not see and the conviction of their reality - faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses."

J.B.P. - - "Now faith means putting our full confidence in the things we hope for, it means being certain of things we cannot see."

Faith links us with God, and is the assurance that the revealed things promised in the future are true, and that the unseen things are real! Faith is "certain that what it believes is true, and that what it expects will come. It is not the hope which looks forward with wistful longing; it is the hope which looks forward with utter certainty. It is not the hope which takes refuge in perhaps; it is the hope which is founded on a conviction. The future and the unseen can be made real for men by faith."

### 3. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

#### a. ONE CANNOT BE SAVED WITHOUT FAITH

Mark 16:16 - - "He that BELIEVETH and is baptised shall be SAVED, but he that believeth not shall be DAMNED.

Luke 8:12 - - "These by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts lest they should BELIEVE and be SAVED."

1 Corinthians 1:21 - - "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to SAVE them that BELIEVE."

Ephesians 2:8 - - "For by Grace are ye SAVED through FAITH..."

#### b. ONE CANNOT PLEASE GOD WITHOUT FAITH

Hebrews 11:6 - - "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."

### 4. WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF OUR INVOLVEMENT IN BIBLE BELIEVING?

#### a. THE MIND IS INFORMED

Romans 10:17 - - "Faith cometh by HEARING, and hearing by THE WORD OF GOD.

John 12:38 - - "Lord, who hath BELIEVED our REPORT?"

Acts 4:4 - - "Many of them which HEARD THE WORD BELIEVED."

Acts 8:12 - - "But when they BELIEVED Philip PREACHING THE THINGS concerning the kingdom of God, and name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

Acts 24:14 - - "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, BELIEVING ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

An informed mind does not guarantee saving faith.

James 2:19 - - "Thou BELIEVEST that there is one God; thou doest well: The devils also Believe and tremble.

#### B. THE EMOTIONS ARE "STIRRED".

In "repentance" one experiences the emotion of "godly sorrow" (2 Corinthians 7:10). This is understandable, since repentance has to do with sin which has estranged us from God and wrought such havoc in our lives. In "faith" we experience "joy" and gladness". This is proper, since through faith we enter into all

rich blessing of God's great salvation.

Acts 2:41 - - "Then they that GLADLY RECEIVED HIS WORD were baptized..."

Acts 8:8 - - "And there was GREAT JOY in that city!"

Philippians 1:25 - - "JOY OF FAITH".

1 Thessalonians 1:6 - - "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with JOY of the Holy Ghost."

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."

An informed mind and stirred emotions do not guarantee saving faith.

Matthew 13:20,21 - - "But he that receiveth the seed into stony places the same is he that HEARETH THE WORD (the informed mind), and anon WITH JOY (stirred emotions) receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself..."

### C. THE WILL IS COMMITTED.

Romans 1:5 - - "By whom ye have received grace and apostleship, for OBEDIENCE TO THE FAITH among all nations, for His name."

Romans 15:18 - - "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles OBEDIENT, by word and deed."

Romans 16:25,26 - - "...the revelation of the mystery...is made known to all nations for the OBEDIENCE OF FAITH."

### 5. WHO IS THE BIBLE EXAMPLE OF FAITH?

There is one man in the Bible who is referred to as "the father of all them that believe" (Romans 4:11) and "the father of us all" (Romans 4:16). His name is Abraham. Christians are those who "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" (Romans 4:12), and are spoken of as "the children of Abraham" (Galations 3:7). "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed." (Galations 3:26).

When Paul wanted to illustrate saving, justifying faith, he recounted Abraham's relationship to God. The manner in which Abraham manifest faith is the manner in which we must manifest faith. We find Paul's reference to Abraham's faith in Romans 4.

1. He heard the Word (vs.13,21)

2. He turned from his hopeless condition (vs.18,19)

3. He embraced the hope expressed in the Divine promise (vs.18)

4. He didn't waver in his commitment (vs.20)

5. He rejoiced in the Word as the accomplished fact (vs.20)

