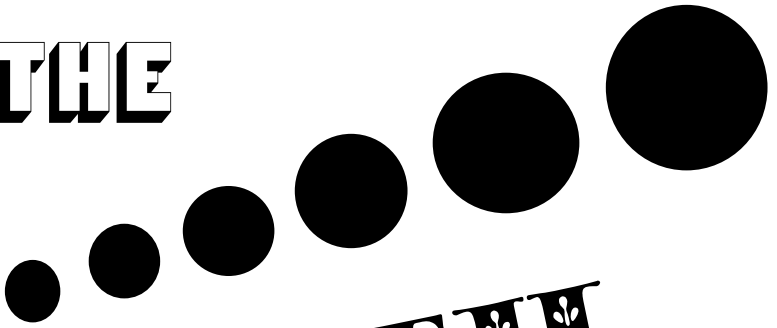


THE



FAITH

THAT

JUSTIFIES

farnsworth

The Faith That Justifies

“This book, authored by Barry A. Farnsworth (now Pastor Emeritus at VBC Kingfisher) and originally created on a typewriter and spiral bound on a manual binding machine, has now been reproduced with all the modern conveniences to further share its’ timeless doctrine. We also sincerely love the author and appreciate his service to God our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ these many faithful years. This book is now made further available by those who hold this same faith, desire to give glory to the same God, know the same Savior, and share the same Spirit. We pray it will be a blessing to you as you read and study.”

- Isaac W. Farnsworth
Pastor

The Faith That Justifies

Dedication

To the precious people who sit in the pew and pray for the preacher, for without them he would be of no use to his Lord, his calling, or his people.

- Barry A. Farnsworth
Pastor Emeritus

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Poem for the Spiritually Inclined

*Lord, I need a break today. I'm here another week.
I said hello to sister Jones, even though she wouldn't speak.
I suffered through the Sunday school, it didn't seem to me
That deacon Bliss prayed long enough to suit the Reverend Lee.
They changed the flowers while I was gone - didn't even ask my
view;
And some obnoxious visitor was sitting in my pew.
I listened to the choir sing "Amazing Grace" once more,
But the tenor section's off again - flat just like before.
Lord, I've heard you had it rough while you were here below,
But I'll bet you never had to smile at people you don't know.
And I doubt you had to listen to some windbag groan away
Of grace and faith and other things - as if you had all day.
And surely you did not expect much money out of me.
The price of perms is going up, and pantyhose aren't free.
But I'm glad you went to Calvary and died there for my sin,
So that you could have the honor of my service now and then.*

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To Begin...

Recent surveys have shown that, although there is more Christian literature produced now than ever before, the average person who calls himself a Christian knows less about his beliefs than ever before. A recent survey by a local television station proved the point. When asked if they thought that the influence of religion was declining in America, 54% said “yes”. But when asked if they met up to the standard of their particular faith, 91% answered in the affirmative. We are a nation that does not want religion to interfere with our lives, prefer its decline, and feels that we measure up anyway.

The church membership of most major denominations is declining. Surveys show that religion is not considered relevant to modern man. Religions that are growing, in large part, are emotional religions whose adherents do not see a direct relation between their religion and their daily lives. In other words, we have adopted a religion of convenient vanity. Surveys also show that the average church member cannot define

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the terms of his or her religion adequately. Terms such as “faith”, “justification”, “grace”, and “worship” no longer hold much meaning for those who reside in the pew.

The purpose of this little diatribe is not to bemoan the fate of religion, however. The purpose is to get us to take a new look at some old terminology that is still valid as far as God and the Bible are concerned. Well did the Savior ask, “When the Son of Man returns, shall He find faith on the earth?”. Another good question might be whether he will find anyone who even knows what it is.

Whoever it may be who is reading this treatise, rest assured it is for you. Use it as a workbook, a reference, a point of attack, or a dart board, but please consider the points that we are trying so feebly to present. Perhaps the Lord can use it in some small way to renew a failing interest in our eternal destiny. I hope and pray that you may profit from it.

B. A. Farnsworth

The Faith That Justifies

Introduction

The Faith that Justifies was originally presented as a series of Wednesday evening Bible studies at the Victory Baptist Church of Kingfisher Oklahoma. The folks seemed to find it interesting enough that I decided to try my feeble hand at printing it up so we would have a work for future reference and instruction.

In this day and time, when “evangelism” means so many things to so many different people, it is still important to try to determine what God means by such terms as “faith”, “belief”, “repentance”, and the like. Since our eternal destiny depends on these things, we should certainly be willing to examine ourselves and our doctrine to see if we are truly in the faith.

This treatise is not intended to represent any kind of dogma, and we do not pretend to have a lock on truth. We do present it, however, for your thought, to stir up your pure minds, and to see if what we say is true.

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Everyone seems to have some sort of faith today. Some have faith in good works, some have faith in ceremonies, some have faith in baptism, some have faith that they went forward, some have faith in a prayer, some have faith in endurance. What kind of faith do we have?

If the just shall live by faith, what kind of faith is it?

If we are justified by faith, what kind of faith is it?

May God help us as we seek to find out!

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Catacomb

*His clothes were torn and ragged, but he seemed at peace
within the grey stone walls that were his home.*

*The interviewer asked if he might find a place to rest his mortal
soul within the corridors of peace that formed the smile he kept alone.*

*His reading light was from within, his conversation from above,
though soldiers seeking him close by.*

*He knew those travelled paths so well, the hidden turns of
fortune saved; Although he could not dance or sing, his spirit still could
rise.*

*Welcome whispers from old friends; a quiet time at peace to-
gether. Watching for his soon return.*

*Repeating all the promises, remembering the daylight hours
that will free us once again soon; meanwhile, we have things to learn.*

*It is not a mighty price to pay, or something grand to trade for
a passage so elect and sure.*

*Just a pilgrim in a catacomb, awaiting wedding garments pur-
chased by a flowing stream, from wounds so deep, and love so pure.*

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Chapter 1 – Faith in Scripture

If the pastor gets up in the pulpit on Sunday morning and introduces his text by telling the congregation to turn, in their bibles, to Hebrews chapter 11, most people who have been in attendance on a regular basis for more than a year or so can tell what the subject will be – FAITH. Yes, Hebrews 11 is the “faith chapter”. It tells us about people of faith, it tells us what they did, and it even gives us a type of definition – it is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

Most often, I am afraid however, that we go into the scriptures to study more ABOUT faith, or about what it does, than about what it is. We proceed with our study based upon preconceived ideas to see if we can discover some new exciting truth about the faith of our fathers. We’ve heard the term all our lives and we don’t need any instruction as to the meaning of the term. When we read verse 6 of Hebrews chapter 11, we define faith ourselves as we read. So when we read that “without faith it is impossible to please him”, we

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automatically include ourselves in the category of those that have faith, based upon our own definition. How convenient for us.

I have often illustrated the subject of faith by stating that if I place a small child on the podium (mine are too large to suffice for this purpose in my advanced years) and tell him to jump, he will jump if he believes that I will catch him.

Is the jumping what should be called “faith”? Certainly not. Faith must exist before the jumping begins. The jump is an act PREDICATED upon a pre-existent faith. The jump is not faith itself. There is a fine line between where faith ends and stupidity begins. If the child weighs in at 350 pounds, he should be careful about putting his faith in dad to catch him when he jumps.

Let’s put this in understandable terms. It’s time for a building program, or so some of the folks think. There is no money in the treasury, but that doesn’t matter. We have faith. The pastor announces that we want

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to have a new auditorium 6 months from now. We will do it by faith. All it requires is for you, by faith, to give all your money. He, by faith, will ask you for it. You may say “that’s ridiculous!”, but it happens all the time, especially on television. Now there is no question that collecting money is an action, but is it faith? The person doing the asking seems to be telling us that faith is in the action, and that if there is no action on this one thing, there is no faith. After all, what is the first accusation made about you if you have sincere doubts about the wisdom of the building program? You, sir, have no faith. So there.

The simple fact is that some folks who have no faith (of the Biblical variety) give lots of money. Some folks who have lots of faith have to have faith that God will provide their next meal because they don’t have any money.

Paul was in prison once upon a time in Rome. He didn’t have a coat, and it was cold. Now let’s suppose that he had gone to the prisoner’s lounge and turned on the tube some evening to watch his favorite

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evangelist, Dr. Ispend Freely. The evangelist is carrying on about his next big project (remember when you could actually hear the gospel on TV?) and tells his audience that god will bless them if they will give all they have.

Do you think Paul would be impressed? He would probably be thinking “you don’t know the half of it, friend.”

Ministries have been built by churches spending money they didn’t have. Ministries have also crumbled the same way. When this happens, it more often indicates a lack of common sense and money than a lack of faith. They don’t give “sinking funds” that name for nothing.

People get the idea these days that faith has most to do with money. Actually, faith has very little to do with money. It has MOST to do with an individual’s relationship with his God. If you HAVE faith, God will instruct you about money. He will, however, also instruct you about a lot of other things that affect your life. He

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will instruct you about your family, your church, your faithfulness, your habits, and a host of other things too many to mention. People can give money and have no faith at all.

The Bible talks of at least a couple of different kinds of faith. First of all, there is saving faith. It takes some faith to facilitate the salvation process. This faith originates with God. Fallen man has no faith to commend him to God, so God always must make the first move. Paul preached “to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance to ward God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” There is faith necessary for salvation.

There is also a faith that is necessary for living. We might call it living faith. The disciples asked for more of it

Luke 17:5 – “And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.”

We are supposed to live by it.

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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.”

And it is supposed to increase.

2 Corinthians 10:15 – “Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,”

The scriptures have much to say about faith:

We are sanctified by it.

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.”

We are justified by it.

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Romans 5:1 – “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”

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.”

Galatians 3:8 – “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

We are to live by it.

Habakkuk 2:4 – “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”

Romans 1:17 – “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

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Galatians 3:11 – “But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”

We are to walk by it.

2 Corinthians 5:7 – “For we walk by faith, not by sight”

Christ dwells in our hearts by it.

Ephesians 3:17 – “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love...”

We are to continue in it.

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;”

We are to examine ourselves, to see if we are in it.

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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?”

We are to understand through it.

Hebrews 11:3 – “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

We get patience by having it tried.

James 1:3 – “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”

We overcome the world by it.

1 John 5:4 – “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

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If it does not affect our lives, it is dead.

James 2:17 – “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

If we were to attempt an exhaustive study of all of these areas of faith, we would need more volumes than Matthew Henry. We will simply say that there is much study to be done in the area of faith, and there is much faith to be exercised in our lives that we might grow to live it. We are going to limit ourselves, for now, to the faith that saves – saving faith. What kind of faith does it take for salvation? Some would tell us that it takes none at all. Does it take something else? Does it take belief instead? Is faith different than belief? Well, let's just have a look.

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*I didn't have no money. I didn't have no suit.
I came like I was used to, my trousers tared to boot.
They looked at me thru glasses. They looked at me thru frowns.
They looked at me thru dimund rings an felt an velvet gowns.
The choir was shore dress'd purty. Ladies' skirts flowed so nice.
A few had wore their hare poofed up to add a little spice.
The sanktiary sparkeld, right proud it seemed to me.
The brass was polished, Navy like, could almos' feel the sea.
The usher, he tore by me to fire Miss Dilly's seat.
Brushed it off and helped her in. Smiled at her real sweet.
Seemed like he musta miss'd me, but I spect he's real confused.
Life is tuff a' seatin' folks in padded velvet pews.
The folks was all real busy. No one ast my name.
Who I wuz, or war I'ze frum, or why on eath I came.
I kinda get the feelin' that God had left me go.
The kinda folks is comin' here don' need me in their show.
Didn't get to hear no preachin' cause there wasn't no more place
For sinners in the congregation of the human race.*

Chapter 2 – Narrowing It Down

Romans 5:1 - “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”

We are going to spend some time looking at the “faith that justifies”. That will give us the ability to concentrate our efforts in one area and not have to chase so many rabbits, as preachers are so fond of doing.

We must realize in this, as in any other study, that the Bible does not contradict itself – it only expounds upon itself. That is our major rule for Bible study. God is not the author of confusion, but of exposition. When we look at the Word of God in this fashion, we can make an attempt to enlighten ourselves rather than contradict someone else.

The question we ask ourselves then, as we look at our scripture (Romans 5:1) is “what is necessary for faith?”. What are its components, if there are such things? We know that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God

Romans 10:17 – “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”

It seems however, that a lot of people who claim to stand on the same Word of God have a lot of different ideas about faith, and some seem to have no faith at all. It seems that a lot of people who hear the Word, the same Word that I hear, have a very different faith than I have. I must find out where I am wrong. My eternal well-being depends on it.

Some claim to cling to the historic, Pentecostal faith, but history goes a long way farther back than Pentecost. Abel, Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, all had faith, and that is historical too. Some claim that faith is in a newly discovered religion, but surely the Abelite faith is not new. What happened to all the folks between Abel and the founder of the correct religion?

OK. Back to our question. Can we find some ear marks or components necessary to faith? Yes, we can. These can be called by any number of names and can be

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made into any number of groups. We are going to look, however, at what we believe to be a good division of the components of faith. We will divide faith into three components;

- Knowledge
- Belief
- Confidence

These things are necessary for the faith that justifies, as we will attempt to show from scripture. From our scripture (Romans 5:1), we see that we have peace with God because we are justified and that we are justified through faith. Faith, then, is necessary for salvation. Are there some things that we have to KNOW before we can be saved? Certainly. Are there some things we have to BELIEVE before we can be saved? Definitely. Do we have confidence before we can be saved? This is perhaps a point of contention in evangelical circles today, but we are going to show that there must be confidence in order for there to be salvation. At least, we are going to present some evidence for your consideration.

The Faith That Justifies

Just once again to be there

Just once again to stand

Just once again to walk across

That rich and promised land

Just once again we tremble

Just once again we sigh

Just once again He's coming

To meet us, by and by

Chapter 3 – Coming & Calling

“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.” – Hebrews 11:6

Salvation begins by coming to God. Yes, it is true that God really comes to us, but this scripture speaks of us coming to God, so the wording must be valid. We could perhaps liken it to being on the bridge of a ship and watching the radar scope. It gives a display for the related motion of the targets on the screen. If you see two targets approaching each other on a relative motion display, all you know is that they are approaching each other. You don't know which one is moving how fast without some additional information. At the point of salvation, the important thing is that man and God come together. We can worry about how this happens afterward.

We could also use the scripture itself to explain this phenomenon.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. - John 6:44

So here we find that it is God that is doing the drawing, but it is the man who is coming.

What we want to notice for the moment is that there are some prerequisites to coming to God. The scripture says that in order to come, an individual must “believe that He is”. He is also required to believe that “He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”. So we do, in fact, have some requirements for the individual who comes to God.

Another very interesting scripture in this regard is Romans 10:14. Most of the 4-point soul-winning plans have Romans 10:13 as their final resting place.

Romans 10:13 – “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

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The emphasis is usually on the call which, according to their incorrect interpretation, consists of getting the candidate to say a prayer. If this can be accomplished, we pronounce the individual saved and move on to the next prey.

It would be profitable to look at the VERY NEXT VERSE in this chapter of Romans.

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? – Romans 10:14

Does it not seem reasonable, then, to look at this verse in a logical fashion and say that:

- There must be the preached Word
- The candidate must believe something (that God is, and that He will reward those that seek Him)
- Then the individual may begin a relationship of calling on God

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Nowadays, we have people “saved” who don’t even believe there is a God, because they are told that salvation is in the “call”, even if they don’t believe – that will come afterward. They want to believe they are going to heaven, so they say the prayer and take a chance.

We see according to the scripture, that the people must have some information (knowledge) about which to give mental assent (belief), before they can come and put their confidence in the Lord. So here we have our three points. People must have knowledge (information) upon which to make a mental decision (belief) that will translate to the heart and result in confidence (trust) in the Savior. Now we are going to look at these things a little more closely.

Chapter 4 – Substance of Faith

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” – Hebrews 11:1

Now we are going to DO things by faith. We are going to USE God. We are going to go into debt by faith. We are going to decide what will be done and use God to do it. Isn't that the modern view of faith? But what saith the scripture? Yes, the Bible does say we can move mountains by faith, but it is true as well that if God doesn't want the mountain moved, we're not going to move it. God does not give us faith so that we can oppose Him. Our hope should be that God can use us, not that we can use Him.

First, we see that faith is a substance. That means it is real. Today, we are told that we cannot question anyone's faith because faith is mystical. I don't want a mystical faith made of fancy. I want a scriptural, real faith with some substance to it. We can judge our faith, whether we would like to believe it or

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not, by scripture. Paul said we should examine ourselves to see whether we are in the faith.

**“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?” –
2 Corinthians 13:5**

There must be, then, some standard of measurement. That standard is the Word of God.

The Bible is full of ways to judge right from wrong. It will tell us whether our faith is the right kind, whether it glorifies God or man, whether it lifts Him up or lifts us up, whether it is on a sure foundation or sinking sand.

Next, we see that faith is the substance of things HOPED FOR. The object of our faith, then, is what is hoped for out of the scripture. WE might say it is what WE hope for, but our ways are not God’s ways. We may find ourselves hoping for things that God has said He would not provide. Then our faith is weakened

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because we don't get what we want. People who teach others that they can have whatever they want by faith, do their students no favors.

Faith, then, has substance. Also, faith has evidence. This evidence is of things not seen. It is not evidence of things that are NOT THERE. This evidence is of REAL things, but we just can't see them. Building a new gym is having faith in something that is not there. The faith of God is faith in REAL things.

I have faith that:

- My soul is saved through the blood of Christ
- Christ is my advocate
- Christ sits at the Father's right hand
- Christ makes intercession for me

All of those things are true. I believe them by faith. I have evidence from the Word of God applied to my heart that those things are REAL. The evidence is of things not seen, yet it is still evidence to those who have spiritual eyesight who have tasted of the waters of life.

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My faith is in real things, not in things that may never come to pass.

“For by it the elders obtained a good report.” – Hebrews 11:2

They did not obtain bankruptcy or bills they could not pay, or a ruined testimony.

“Through faith we understand...” – Hebrews 11:3

Our faith, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, enables us to understand some things. We understand:

- That the worlds were framed by the Word of God
- That righteousness comes from God, not from the works of man
- That Christ was crucified for our sins
- That salvation is through His blood

**“But without faith it is impossible to please Him”
Hebrews 11:6**

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Then we find that, predicated upon faith, the child of God can perform those things which God has for him. The remainder of the chapter tells us of those who subdued kingdoms, obtained promises, were tortured, were imprisoned, were destitute, afflicted, and tormented THROUGH FAITH. That's not much like what we hear about faith today, is it?

The sacrifice of Abel was a sacrifice of faith – it was what God wanted; not what man provided. This sacrifice still speaks for us today. Enoch pleased God by faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please Him.

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"I'll go" and it was done

Before the world began.

The race secured; the victory won

To make a place for man.

"I Go" and it was given

a life to ransom pay

The freedom of a choice to live

In Him to find our way

"You Go" to tell the story

Of purchased liberty

From law and fear to grace and glory

Risen, to live in me

Chapter 5 – Components of Faith

“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:” – Romans 5:1

“... for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” – Hebrews 11:6

We are justified by faith. To be justified means that God has pronounced us positionally righteous. He will not impute sin to our account. In order to come to God, we must have some knowledge. We must know that:

- God is real
- God is righteous
- God is a rewarder

We must know that:

- Man is hopeless
- Man is helpless
- Man is heartless

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But what is the faith that justifies?

We know how it comes. It comes by hearing.
And we know that hearing comes by the Word of God

Romans 10:17 – “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”

But just what is it that comes? Does everyone who listens to the Word of God get faith? If it is faith that gives us peace with God, can't we just get it by reading the Word? If not, why not? It seems that a lot of people have faith today who are not necessarily justified.

People claim to have faith. People claim to use the Bible. People claim to study the Word of God. But there is a big difference between studying God's Word and letting Gods Word study us.

Paul said we were to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. That is letting God's Word study us. It is not using our preconceived definitions to place

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constraints upon the Word of God that will require everyone who believes the same as we do to be justified.

The Word of God examines us. Many people read the Word of God, but it doesn't examine them. They do the examining to see what things in the Bible meet their approval. Those things are accepted. The other things are dismissed.

We need an Abelite faith. Abel believed it was God that justified, and that God would do it just as He said. Consequently, he brought a sacrifice that pleased God.

Cain believed it was man's responsibility to justify himself before God. Consequently, he brought what he perceived in his own eyes would be the most attractive sacrifice. All differences on the doctrine of soteriology (the salvation process) have their roots at this very point. Religion says that it is man's responsibility to please God. Christianity says that no man can please God – only God can please God. God decided upon the method of justification, and He decided that it would be

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through faith. Therefore, it is extremely important that we find out what this faith is.

If good works justify, then good works equal faith, because the scripture says we are justified by faith. Does giving to the poor equal faith? Does helping your brother equal faith? Does jumping from the podium equal faith? Does giving \$25,000 to the building fund equal faith? A thousand times, NO! Faith must be pre-existent to action. That is why good works will follow faith. That is why faith without works is dead.

James 2:17 – “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

Many people get confused by Brother James statement that we are justified by works, but he did not say that we are justified by works without faith. He was battling an argument that still exists today; namely, that we can have faith that never results in works. That cannot be.

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Again, we see there are three components of this faith in Christ:

- We must KNOW who we believe
- We must BELIEVE who we know
- We must have CONFIDENCE in Him

Ephesians 1:12 – 13 – “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...”

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*Go softly, favored pilgrim
Afraid to sing no more.*

*Voice of times in many waters
Anthems ring to rest and welcome
Victors from a distant shore.*

*Herald trumpets sound the charge
Chariot riders four.*

*Silver maned and ringed with fire
Neck clothed with Orion's thunder,*

*Battle scarred, but five depart
Safe, forevermore.*

Chapter 6 - Knowledge

1 Samuel 2:3 - "... for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed."

Proverbs 11:9 - "... but through knowledge shall the just be delivered."

We are looking at the faith necessary for salvation. Romans 5:1 has told us that we are justified by faith; that is, we are made positionally righteous in God's sight by faith. Some say that "justification" means that you are "just as if" you never sinned, but that is grossly understating the case. We are a purchased possession, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, cleansed by Calvary's flow, and presented spotless before Him in love. We can be placed in this position because we sinned, and now have the opportunity for salvation. No righteous need apply. Our position is better than Adam's position before he sinned. He could lose his relationship with God, but we are told we cannot if we are redeemed.

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John 10:27 – 28 – “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

When God looks at Christ, He sees the redeemed – those that are “in Christ”. He sees a holy, separated, perfect people. But He can only view us in this fashion if we are in Christ – if we belong to Christ – if we are justified. And we are justified by faith.

The first element of faith that we choose to investigate is knowledge. Faith is based upon knowledge. If we do not have facts, we do not have any foundation or basis for our faith. Many people try to place their faith in something without adequate basis in knowledge, but they become ship-wrecked because they have no security for their faith. They never KNEW what it was they were attempting to believe.

Let’s suppose you want some extra spending money. You saunter into your local financial institution and ask to see the loan officer. You’ve worn your best

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pair of patched up overalls and your best straw hat – the one with the six-year-old feather in it. The loan officer notices your arrival and switches the nicely upholstered client chair for the plastic one, so he can have it swept out easier after you leave. You are asked to sit, and the gentleman (or lady) inquires as to the meaning of your presence.

“I’d like a loan”, you reply assuredly.

Yes, sir. And how much of a loan do you need?

“Well, I figure about \$735,000 should do the job. That will give me enough to do some things I want to do and have a little left over,” you state.

If the loan officer can contain himself long enough, he will probably hand you a form and tell you that you should fill out this financial statement telling them how much you are worth.

“Worth?” you say. “IF I was worth anything, I wouldn’t need the money”.

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You fill out the financial statement, the bank officer then turns to his computer and runs what is called a credit check. Any financial dealings that you have had since the age of three will be on his computer, all nicely categorized.

Why does he do these things? Because he needs some facts on which to base a decision as to whether to extend you the loan. The bank wants to know whether they can have FAITH in you – whether they can TRUST you. They may find they can trust you, but not that much.

An individual must be presented with some facts if he is to have a basis for faith. He must have some knowledge in order to stimulate the mind. God uses MEANS to save. It pleased Him by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe

1 Corinthians 1:21 – “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

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Preaching provides people with information. We know what has happened in history because someone wrote it down. We have the facts. God is the author of history. In large part, the Bible is a history book. It was written that we might have the facts. Even the gospels, which tell us of the ministry of the Lord, are actually history. They are factual accounts of the things that happened.

The preaching of the gospel is in large part, the proclamation of the facts. If we look at the first gospel message after the church received power at Pentecost, we find it very simply a dissertation of the facts. Surely this must be a good model for gospel preaching. Peter begins his message:

Acts 2:14. - “Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this KNOWN unto you, and hearken to my words.”

Peter was concerned that the people know some things. There must be knowledge in order to have faith. He then proceeds to state the facts of the case

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and concludes with “let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” This knowledge applied by the Holy Spirit, pricked them in their heart, and many were saved. If we are to effectively preach the gospel, we must give out the facts. With the fact, people will have knowledge, which is necessary to faith.

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Payment due at the city gate

A refugee stands bowed.

The fathers will decide his fate or pass him to the crowd.

Accusers stand, by judgment found his best was not enough.

And claims of innocence are waived in favor of pure love

Payment due at the city gate

Avenger brings his plea.

Justice patiently to wait the prisoners decree.

Chosen race of royal seed, disarmed by nature's pride

Takes upon himself to plead no self-redeeming guide.

Payment due at the city gate

The throne room's firm demand.

The verdict passed; the question raised before the world began.

The answer of a dying lamb the father's bond to son

Of millions given as his own - this refugee but one.

Chapter 7 - Information

“Therefore, let all the house of Israel KNOW assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” – Acts 2:36

Knowledge is necessary in order to have a foundation for faith. When Peter preached at Pentecost, he laid a foundation in the facts. He wanted the people to have the information that was necessary to their salvation. He told them that:

- Jesus had lived (v. 22)
- Jesus did miracles (v. 22)
- Jesus was approved of God (v. 22)
- Jesus was crucified (v. 23)
- Jesus was raised (v. 24)
- The prophets spoke of Him (v. 25 – 31)
- There were witnesses to His resurrection (v. 32)
- Jesus was the Christ (v. 36)

This should be a good model for the preaching of the gospel. If it is the gospel Peter preached, how

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wrong can it be? After all, what is the preaching of the gospel?

1 Corinthians 15:1 – 4 – “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”

The gospel is the preaching of the death of Christ because of our sins, His burial in the place of the dead, and His resurrection in victory over death ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES. There is no good news if all is not done according to the scriptures. The good news is that God keeps His Word, just as He proclaims it. It shall not return unto Him void.

What better preaching, then, than the preaching of the facts. It seems to be the thing to do, according to scripture. Faith has its foundation in knowledge. People must have the facts if they are to get the faith.

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Proverbs 11:9 – “... through knowledge shall the just be delivered.”

2 Corinthians 4:6 – “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Many times our soul-winning efforts based on our four-point, say – a – prayer plan are successful in getting a prayer, but not in getting a convert because there is not the knowledge present as a foundation for a belief which will result in trust and faith.

Hosea 4:6 – “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge....”

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If Adam Had Behaved

If Adam had behaved himself no one would ever know

The freeing power of God's pure grace displayed in Calvary's flow

No blood-washed robes, no joy in heaven for sinners turning home.

No crown of life, no pilgrim's walk, no "even so, Lord, come".

No sowing precious gospel seed, no wait for harvest time.

No "well done, faithful servant", no gold to be refined.

No tears of Christian martyrs, shown in flames of faith's short trial

No need to bear the heavy load or walk the extra mile.

No Lamb of God, no advocate, no joy of being saved.

No everlasting gospel light if Adam had just behaved.

Chapter 8 - Belief

1 John 4:16 – “And we have KNOWN and BELIEVED the love that God hath to us ...”

Hebrews 11:6b – “... for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

You pick up the paper on Sunday morning and you notice that the sports scores indicate that your favorite football team lost their homecoming game by 86 points. You know what the paper says, but you will probably want a second opinion before you believe such a thing. After all, it might be a misprint. You hope the team was better than that. You don't take a liking to being embarrassed in such a fashion.

Just as you don't believe the paper story, although you know what it said, neither do people believe the gospel just because they know what it says. Knowing is not always believing. Just because some people give you some facts doesn't mean that you are going to change your mind and believe them.

You may go to the doctor for a medical problem. He may tell you that if you take four teaspoons of

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castor oil every day, you will recover from your problem in three months. Of course, you may have a lot of other problems by then. Anyway, you may know what the doctor says. The question is “do you believe him?”. Just because you know what someone says does not mean that you believe him.

It is the same way with the Word of God. We may know what the Word says, but that does not mean that we believe it. As 1 John 4:16 states, we must KNOW AND BELIEVE. That’s two different things. We pray to God, not just because we know God or know how to pray. We pray to God because we believe that prayer changes things. If we do not believe, it does very little good to pray.

James 1: 6 – 7 - “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”

What must we do to come to God? We must believe. Most soul-winning plans end with Romans 10:13. The call of Romans 10:13 is equated with a prayer for salvation and the candidate is encouraged to pray whether he knows or believes anything or not. But let us proceed to the next verse. I know we have been here before, but this is important.

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?”

Is salvation in a call? Or is it in a belief?

Romans 10: 10 – “For with the HEART man believeth unto righteousness....”

Belief is with the heart and must be present in order for there to be an effectual call. We should be very careful not to give anyone the impression that salvation is in a call or prayer. Salvation is in a heart response to God. Prayer may take place at the same time. Certainly, the heart is reaching out, but the call is not salvation. Belief must be present for the heart call to be made, otherwise, it is a call only with the lips which does not please God.

Mark 7:6 – 7 – “He answered and said unto them, well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Certainly, we should be extremely careful not to teach doctrines of men in the most vital matter of our

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lives – our salvation. If a believing heart is not the originator of the call, there will not be any resultant salvation. We may have another notch in our belt, but the Savior will not have another sheep in His fold.

We find, from these scriptures, that there must be:

- The proclamation of the gospel
- The knowledge of the gospel
- The belief in the gospel

These things result in a call from the heart to God. We should not try to get a “call” before we get knowledge and belief. To do so is to violate the order of scripture.

Romans 4:3 – “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”

Paul put things in perspective when he told Timothy:

“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.” – 2 Timothy 1:12

Paul did not just have some facts. He knew a person and BELIEVED a person. He was PERSUADED of some things about that person. He had a real faith.

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Is your faith real? Has there been a time when your heart has reached out for God's salvation? Did you mean business with God when you prayed? Are you a child of the King?

*Oh, what a tangled
Web we weave
When first we practice
To believe*

Chapter 9 – Knowing Faith’s Author

1 Peter 2:7 – “Unto you therefore which believe he is precious...”

A lot of people these days say that they are “saved” and that they believe in Jesus. But is He PRECIOUS to them? Do they serve Him? Do they pray to Him? Is He the most important person in their lives?

Certainly, information about Jesus is not lacking. Belief is lacking. People sit in church for years and are not saved – they are just religious. Some may hear the gospel for years and still not respond to its invitation to repent because they are convinced that they already believe in Jesus. They have information, but don’t really believe it.

Some say they believe in the Word of God. Paul believed in the Word of God too, but he believed in something else.

2 Timothy 1:12 – “... 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 believed the AUTHOR of the Word of God – the incarnation of the Word of God, if you will.

John 1:14 – “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

Paul’s faith was in a PERSON. If we believe the person who wrote the book, we’ll have no trouble believing the book. It is very difficult however, to say that we believe the book without believing the author. The scripture says if we believe in the author, He is PRECIOUS to us.

Today, we can believe or not believe anything. There are many sets of “truth” in religious circles today. We have come to the place where we simply accept it if someone says “well, I just don’t believe the way you do”. Is that some sort of excuse? If I don’t believe the world is round, does that make it flat? Many have come to believe that their beliefs are more important than God’s beliefs. There may be a heaven and a hell for you, because you believe in them, but there is most certainly no heaven or hell for them, because they do not believe in them. Is our belief really that powerful? I realize that the mind is a powerful thing, but I don’t think we’ve yet managed to change reality with it.

God says there is only one truth.

Isaiah 40:8 – “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

John 17:17 – “Thy Word is truth.”

John 1:14 – “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”

John 3:18 – “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Man can believe or not believe anything he wishes, but that will not change the truth of God. We may say “well, you believe your way and I’ll believe mine”, but that will not satisfy the Judge of the universe. There are not many sets of truth. There is just one, and it is God’s. God has provided us with the information, but we have a choice as to whether to believe it or not. It is one thing not to have the correct information. It is quite another to have the correct information and refuse to believe it.

Our belief, then, is in a person – the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible does not say “He who believes the Word shall be saved”. It says, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved”. If we believe the Word, it will point us to the Lord, where we are to put our faith. The Word will lead us to Christ, but we don’t have to accept the gospel we read. Many refuse it, to their eternal damnation.

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There are some things in the Bible that we, as fallible human beings, can disagree on and still be saved. But there are some things that we CANNOT disagree on and still both be saved. When it comes to the way of salvation, there is only one and it is God's.

There is only one Way, one Truth, and one Life

John 14:6 – “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life...”

There is only one Lord and one faith.

Ephesians 4:5 – “One Lord, one faith...”)

There is only one gospel, and that is everlasting.

Revelation 14:6 – “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,”

God has never lied to us. He does not “put us on”. He tells it like it is. It is the Truth.

The Holy Spirit must take the knowledge we obtain and apply enough of this knowledge to the heart that the sinner will believe some things before he comes to God for salvation. He must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of those that diligently seek

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Him. He must believe the promises of God in order to come – or at least one of them – “He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).

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*I did not know what he was called
The day I called his name.
But He had known me long ago,
And so, I humbly came.*

*I had no faith to pay the price -
No gift to give a King,
No righteousness to satisfy,
No fruit that I could bring.*

*The only thing I had to give
That He did not give me
Were wages reaped from years of sin
And now, praise God, I'm free!*

Chapter 10 – Man’s Responsibility

James 2:19 – “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”

1 Corinthians 15: 1 – 2 – “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”

On Halloween of 1990, there was a man in California who considered himself to be somewhat of a Houdini. He could escape from anything, or so he said. To prove his point, he had himself bound in chains and placed in a clear, strong casket. He was then lowered into the earth and the casket was covered with concrete. He believed he could escape. He was wrong. He failed to take into consideration one small detail – reality. The concrete weighed more than the casket could withstand, and unsympathetically crushed the magician and his high hopes. He had believed – in vain.

God’s Word says there are some folks who are going to believe some things in vain. Their beliefs will not do them any good. A local television station recently did a series of reports on what people believe about God. They interviewed many people about their beliefs and seemed to conclude that whatever you may believe must be right for you because you believe it.

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Unfortunately, they did not interview God. Had they done so, they would have discovered that it matters not what man believes. Man's beliefs do not change reality. They will not sway the Lord from keeping His Word.

You may say that you must be safe because you believe in God. Most people, when they say that, mean simply that they believe there IS a God. They do not know Him personally, and they do not know how He expresses Himself. As the scripture indicates, the DEVILS (demons) believe in God in the very same fashion. There will be no demons in heaven, however. The Lake of Fire is reserved for the Devil and his angels (messengers).

Matthew 25:41 – “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”

Human beings are responsible before God, not just to believe that He exists, but to repent and believe the gospel. God commands all men everywhere to repent.

Acts 17:30 – “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:”

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That is an unregenerate man's responsibility.
The saved man is a new creature. Old things are passed away and all things are become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

It is the responsibility of the new creature, the man or woman saved by God's grace, to declare the gospel to every creature

Mark 16:15 – “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

It is NOT man's responsibility to save people.
That is the responsibility of God

1 Corinthians 1:21 – “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

Working through the Holy Spirit and His Word

Hebrews 4:12 – “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

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1 Peter 1:2 – “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

Has there been a time when you turned away from the things of the world and turned to God, placing your hope and trust in Him alone?

Humans are responsible to God, because humans have all offended God.

- There is none righteous - **Romans 3:10 – “As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one:”**
- All have sinned - **Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”**

And because of that, we are far from God. But fortunately, for us, we do not have to be righteous to find salvation.

- Jesus came to save sinners, not the righteous – **Matthew 9:13 – “But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”**
- He died to justify the UNGODLY – **Romans 5:6 – “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”**

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Not those who think they are OK because they believe there is a God. The only thing a human being has to be, in order to repent and believe the gospel, is a sinner. And guess what? We qualify!

How does God justify the ungodly? Through FAITH!

Romans 5:1 – “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”

The kind of faith that we are discussing in this book. It is not the kind of faith that simply says, “I believe there is a God”. It is the kind of faith that needs more than information and mental assent. It needs a Biblical style of belief – one that makes a difference, creates a new heart, turns from sin, and lives the more abundant life. Biblical belief produces a blood-washed, heaven-bound, homeward-looking child of God.

When the gospel is preached, some will believe. Some will not.

Acts 28:24 – “And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.”

But our responsibility is to preach it. The sinners’ responsibility is to accept it. God’s responsibility is to apply it. It is the system that God designed, and it will work. It works through faith!

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Everyone who hears the gospel gets the same information. Some believe. Some do not. There is such a thing as believing in vain. There is also such a thing as believing to the saving of the soul.

Hebrews 10:38 – “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.”

We must be sure that our belief is the right kind of belief. Mental assent will not get the job done.

A lot of people will stand before the judgement seat and say that they believed. They will say a lot more than that. They will say they served.

Matthew 7:22 – 23 – “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

If devils believe God and tremble, should we do less? Will we hear God say that He NEVER knew us? Notice that He does not say that He knew us once, but we managed to lose our salvation. He says that he NEVER knew those who work iniquity.

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What happened? They may have believed some things, but they did not believe to the saving of the soul. They did not have the faith that justifies.

We will now turn our attention to the final element of faith. It is the lock that finishes the security of our belief. It seals the matter. It is CONFIDENCE, or TRUST. The faith that justifies is completed by placing our confidence in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ to keep our eternal soul. Do we HOPE we're saved or are we CONFIDENT that we are saved, TRUSTING Him to the end? Have we believed to the saving of our soul?

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*I am a modern Christian. My savior's not my Lord.
He's not my master, not my King,
and not my living word.*

*He died upon a cross of shame, so I could keep my sin.
The love of Christ constrains me not -
I pay no mind to Him.*

*No light do I shine forth for Him. No fruit do I display.
Repentance means I changed my mind
But did not change my way.*

*To wonder if I'm in the faith, is not for me to do.
I walked the aisle and said the prayer -
They told me that would do.*

*The Lord has saved this precious sheep
From what I am not sure.
He brings some back into the fold.
I wander as before.*

*I do not read the scriptures much.
Can't comprehend a word.
That tells me without holiness,
No man shall see the Lord.*

*Could it be that God forgot the wages of my Sin?
Or could it be I'm still without
While I believe I'm in?*

Chapter 11 - Confidence

Mark 4:3 – 8 – “Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.”

Mark 4:14 – 20 – “The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good

ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.”

Because the definitions of terms like “faith”, “repentance”, and “perseverance”, have gradually changed over the last 100 years or so, the interpretation of parables such as this one has changed, as well. Our modern commentators are prone to acknowledge the salvation of almost anyone who hears the word and says he believes it. Fruit does not matter. The “Christian” may or may not grow in grace, turn from sin, serve the Lord, witness for his “faith”, or do any of the other things he is commanded by scripture to do. He is “immature” and may very well stay that way for the rest of his life, unless he has another “experience”, now defined as “making Jesus Lord”. This self-induced experience, we are told, may happen at some indefinite point in time after salvation.

Because of this modernistic, and spiritually hazardous view, we now claim that all categories addressed in the parable of the sower may be saved. The last three categories are most assuredly saved, and anyone who would claim otherwise is preaching works for salvation. Let’s do a little investigating.

We could make this little treatise about a hundred pages longer if we wished to investigate each of the categories and reference scripture for each circumstance.

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This, however, is not necessary for our purposes. We will simply notice a few facts about the situation.

- All the categories had the Word sown to them
- The Word was sown in the heart
- The first three categories produce NO FRUIT
- The first three categories do not endure

Now let's look at a few scriptures.

1 Corinthians 15:1 – 2 – “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain”

We who believe in eternal security have no use for the word “IF” in most of scripture. It is disruptive to our theology, troublesome to our exposition, and hazardous to our spiritual well-being. But we must face it, because God uses it several times in scripture. The scripture says we must receive the gospel, we must stand in the gospel, and we are saved by the gospel, but only if we keep some things. If we do not, Paul indicates that we have believed IN VAIN. That means our belief is no good – ineffectual.

What is the difference between a belief that is no good and one that will save the soul? It is an enduring trust and confidence. If heart-sown information

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does not progress to CONFIDENCE and TRUST, it is no good. The Bible tells us to “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved”. It means exactly what it says. But we must let scripture define its own terms. When we impose our own definitions upon scripture, we get into serious trouble. We need to find out what the scripture means by belief and faith. Eternity is at stake.

People say, “But I believe the Bible, so I am safe”. Using our definition of the word “believe”, i.e. mental assent, we cling to an unsure foundation. Giving mental assent to facts does not mean that we believe to the saving of the soul. It does not mean that we have turned to Christ. It does not mean that we have trusted Him with our lives and eternity. We must still be born from above, must we not? We must still be made new creatures. Old things must still pass away. All things must become new. Giving mental assent to the facts of the gospel is not salvation. Salvation is trust in a living Lord and Savior.

Some people’s belief does not result in confidence enough to work repentance, but repentance is necessary to salvation. Funk & Wagnall’s used to define repentance as “a turning, with sorrow, from a past sinful course of action”. That’s a pretty good definition. But modern theology has done better than that. In this one instance, we wish to be so technically correct, and define the term strictly as “change of mind”. The

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problem is that this newly defined change of mind does not seem to result in any other type of change at all. If you change your mind about something, does it not mean that your thinking, and thus your actions based on that thinking, will change as well? If you loved sin, but you change your mind, will it not result in an attempt to turn from sin? If you are disobedient to God, and you change your mind, will it not result in a wholehearted attempt to obey God?

We have watered down faith by teaching that it simply means to believe, and “believe” means mental assent to the facts. We then water down repentance by stating that if you have believed, you’ve already repented, and we base our assumption on our redefined terminology of “believe”. Consequently, neither faith, repentance, or belief require a change of will in our modern-day, enlightened theological vernacular.

Unfortunately for us, our modern definitions are not binding upon God. He says our faith affects our walk, and repentance will bear new fruit – the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

Hebrews 9:14 – “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

Matthew 6:24 – “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else

he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Romans 6:2 – “God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

Lordship Salvation

An old conflict is rearing its' head once again in theological debate. The "Lordship salvation" controversy has been sparked this time around by John MacArthur's book *The Gospel According to Jesus*. But we should all be aware that the arguments have been around for a long time.

There are always folks around who want to deny the power of the gospel. They want to have an outward form of religion but deny the power of it. They wish to have easy methods for "getting people saved". This day of the quick fix, fast food, and programmed success is fertile soil for the "raise-your-hand, walk-the-aisle, say-the-prayer" salvation crowd. When salvation does not seem to save, instead of finding out why, we redefine our terms and change our expectations. Our theology suffers in the process.

Instead of giving any more of my own arguments (which are plenty), I would like to present the following material, which was preached on April 17th, 1864 and February 1st, 1872, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon:

"There are some who seem willing to accept Christ as Savior who will not receive Him as Lord. They will not often state the case quite as plainly as that (times have changed! BAF), but as actions speak more plainly than words, that is what their conduct practically

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says. How sad is it that some talk about their faith in Christ, yet their faith is not proved by their works! Some even speak as if they understood what we mean by the covenant of grace; yet, alas! There is no good evidence of grace in their lives, but very clear proof of sin (not grace) abounding. I cannot conceive it possible for anyone truly to receive Christ as Savior and yet not to receive Him as Lord. One of the first instincts of a redeemed soul is to fall at the feet of the Savior, and gratefully and adoringly to cry, "Blessed Master, bought with thy precious blood. I own that I am thine – thine only, thine wholly, thine forever. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" A man who is really saved by grace does not need to be told that he is under solemn obligations to serve Christ; The new life within him tells him THAT. Instead of regarding it as a burden, he gladly surrenders himself – body, soul, and spirit, to the Lord who has redeemed him, reckoning this to be his reasonable service.

It is not possible for us to accept Christ as our Savior unless He also becomes our King, for a very large part of salvation consists in our being saved from sin's dominion over us, and the only way in which we can be delivered from the mastery of Satan is by becoming subject to the mastery of Christ. ... If it were possible for sin to be forgiven, and yet for the sinner to live just as he lived before, HE WOULD NOT REALLY BE SAVED.

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It is sheer mockery for me to say, "I honor Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, but I refuse to be washed from my sin and uncleanness in the fountain filled with His blood."

Just now, some professedly Christian teachers are misleading many by saying that "repentance is only a change of mind". It is true that the original word does convey the idea of a change of mind; but the whole teaching of scripture concerning the repentance which is not to be repented of is that it is a much more radical and complete change than is implied by our common phrase about changing one's mind. The repentance that does not include sincere sorrow for sin is not the saving grace that is wrought by the Holy Spirit. God-given repentance makes men grieve in their inmost souls over the sin they have committed and works in them a gracious hatred of evil in every shape and form.

If I could keep on living in sin, and loving it as much as I ever did, and yet have remission of it, the accusation of the blasphemer that Christ is the minister of sin would be a just one; but it is not so. On the contrary, we must loathe sin, and leave sin, and have an agonizing desire to be clean delivered from it; otherwise, we can never expect the righteous God to say to us, "Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven".

Besides, if remission could be obtained without repentance, the sinner would be left very much as he was

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before; indeed, he would be in a worse condition than he was in before. If God could say to him, "I forgive you" and yet he remained unrepentant, unregenerate, unconverted, he would still be an enemy of God for "the carnal mind is enmity with God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be". Forgiveness would only make such a man a more impudent, hardened, self-righteous enemy of God than he was before. If there is not such a thorough spirit-wrought change in him that he flings away his weapons of rebellion, and casts himself penitently at the feet of his offended sovereign, I fail to see in what sense we can call him a saved man".

Rock of Ages, cleft for me
Let me hide myself in Thee
Let the water and the blood
From thy riven side which flowed
Be of sin the double-cure
Save me from its GUILT & POWER

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*My will, I fear, is too bizarre
To try to understand,
I've spoken with it several times
to lend a helping hand.*

*I do the things I want to do
Of that there is no doubt.
It's how to will for something else
I cannot bring about*

*I feel like Jambres, Moses' foe
When all across the land
Were bugs and frogs and lice and blood,
And I made more - quite grand!*

*I've tricked myself from here to there
My self-control to sway.
My free will running madly wild,
My will I will obey.*

*Oh, could it be that I should boast
To be one so well-versed
My will would will to will to live
And I remain accursed?*

*No will, no way, no wong, no wight,
Will never change my will.
A man convinced by will of self
Will will to wander still.*

Chapter 12 – Man’s Will

Hebrews 10: 38 – 39 – “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

The title of this little treatise is taken from Romans 5:1. We are justified by faith. We had no faith of our own. In fact, when Christ died for us, we were ungodly (Romans 5:6). It is for the ungodly, not the righteous (or self-righteous) that Christ shed His blood. He died for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8), our will enslaved in the bonds of sin. Some teach that man has a free will by which he can accept or reject Christ. Perhaps they should reconsider. Before salvation, we are dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). A dead man has no free will. He cannot respond to overtures of righteousness. It is the Spirit of God that quickens dead men (same scripture). He does this by His own will, not according to the will of man (John 1:13). By this process, this gift of faith, we are justified by His blood (Romans 5:9) and saved from wrath. He gives us His Spirit, who gives life to our mortal bodies (Romans 8:11), so that we need not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Romans 8:4). We are new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17), not walking after the old man, but walking in newness of life (Romans 6:4). Those that are saved

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have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts (Galatians 5:24). We are to WALK by faith.

All of this does not take away from man's responsibility before God. Man is a free, moral agent, and is responsible for his actions – for the decisions of his will. But a lost man, under his own influence, is bound by chains of sin. His will is not free. He can only make choices that reflect his nature, and his nature is spiritually dead.

1 Corinthians 2:14 – “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Man's will cannot transcend man's nature. If it can, then man is not depraved, God truly is the father of the wicked, and those who believe that there is a spark of life in lost man are correct. We thus have no need of the new birth. We must simply fan the spark that is in every man by the gift of God until it bursts into flame. Man, therefore, has the capability to save himself.

When did man get this free will? Adam had a will of innocence, but when he chose to do wrong, he died spiritually. He became immune to righteousness within himself. He did not seek God. He hid from Him. At what point did God restore the ability to will spiritual life?

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I defer to the “prince of preachers”, Charles H. Spurgeon:

“Man ought not to direct his way according to his own will, because his will is naturally evil.... He who is his own guide is guided by a fool. Man is quite incompetent (to choose that which is right) because he has a natural bias toward that which is evil. The doctrine of the depravity of the human race, is not merely an article in the creed; it is a matter of everyday experience. I charge you, sons and daughters of Adam, to remember that, since your father Adam, even in his state of innocence, could not direct his own way aright, but lost paradise for us all, there is no hope that, in your fallen state, you can find your way back to paradise. Nay, but you will keep on wandering further, and further, and further from the way of peace and holiness for ‘it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps’.”

Preached June 22nd, 1876

“Man can rebel against God when he wills; but he can only be saved when Christ wills.”

- Samuel Rutherford

It is this modern-day, free-will exercise of self-wrought salvation that has given rise to the necessity of the new “second blessing” – that time after salvation when the “convert” makes his “decision” to make his savior his Lord. The fight over Lordship salvation would

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be totally unnecessary if we understood the purpose of salvation in the first place.

Matthew 1:21 – “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall SAVE his people FROM their sins.”

The scripture does not say we are to TALK about faith, but that we are to WALK by it. A walk is one step at a time. It is a constant, on-going process. It begins at salvation. But the proof of salvation is in the walking.

Galatians 6:4 – “But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.”

If we draw back, the Lord has no pleasure in us. OK, you say, that simply means that we can displease God by our walk, but we are still saved. Well, certainly we can displease God with our walk, but the child of God does not stop walking when he displeases God. God chastises him, he confesses his sin, God forgives his sin, the relationship is restored, and they go on together.

But notice that those who draw back are not described as “carnal” or “back-slidden”. They are described as drawing back unto perdition. Perdition is a very strong word.

Revelation 17:8 – “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into PERDITION: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

Perdition is no joke. Judas is called the “son of perdition” by Christ.

John 17:12 – “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the SON OF PERDITION; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”

Those that draw back are likened, then, to Judas. Do you really think that Judas will be in the glory-land band? He pretended to love the Lord but betrayed Him. In Philippians 1:28, perdition is portrayed as the exact opposite of salvation.

Philippians 1:28 - “And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.”

So, we see that perdition is NOT salvation, and that no saved people are going to draw back unto perdition. Saved people are going to endure.

Matthew 10:22 – “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”

We are not of them that draw back, the scripture says, but of them that BELIEVE TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL. These are exact opposites.

We can say, then, from our study in the previous chapter, that there are some who are going to believe in vain, and there are some who are going to believe to the saving of the soul. Paul felt it necessary to contrast drawing back with true belief, because he understood that there would be unbelieving believers in the last days. There would be folks who honestly believed that they were children of God, but who were honestly wrong. The difference is that the just shall LIVE by faith. The very scripture tells us that the life is affected. It is not the same life that we lived before salvation. We do not walk the same way that we walked in time past.

Ephesians 2:3 – “Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

We are different now. We walk differently now. We act differently now.

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If our faith does not reflect a belief that results in repentance and trust, it is not to the saving of the soul.

Hebrews 10:39 – “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

And does not “effectually work”.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 – “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which EFFECTUALLY WORKETH also in you that BELIEVE.”

Faith begins with knowledge, leads to belief, and results in trust and confidence. This will create a new creature, a child of God, one who can be perfect as pertaining to the conscience.

Hebrews 9:9 – “Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;”

And has crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

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Galatians 5:24 – “And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

We either believe to the saving of the soul, or we draw back unto perdition – destruction.

2 Thessalonians 3:3 – “But the Lord is faithful, who SHALL stablish you, and keep you from evil.”

Hebrews 3:14 – “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our CONFIDENCE stedfast unto the end;”

Philippians 2:13 – “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure.”

2 Corinthians 1:9 – 10 – “But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we TRUST that he will yet deliver us;”

We trust that God not only delivered us at salvation, but that He delivers us now, as our intercessor with the Father.

Hebrews 7:25 – “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

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And that He will deliver us until our salvation is complete.

Romans 13:11 – “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”

This faith is not even a solely new-testament faith. We find that the same kind of faith was required in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 26:3 – 4 – “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:”

Faith, then, consists of knowledge, belief, and confidence or trust. It must have all of these components or it is not saving faith. It must result in a new life, new birth, new habits, and a new relationship with God. Saving faith does not bind us; it frees us so that we can truly serve God with our will.

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Big Plans

*I planned to go to church last week
To show the Lord I care,
To sing the songs of Zion
Feel His Spirit in the air;
To catch a glimpse of heaven
As His Word was preached on Earth;
To hear of love and truth again,
His gift to man - new birth*

*I planned to go to church last month.
How time just flies on by!
I remember that I couldn't go
But I don't remember why.
He doesn't seem as close today.
Perhaps He doesn't really care.
But rest assured if I should need Him
He'll still be waiting for me there.*

*I planned to go to church last year
But things got in the way.
It used to bother me sometimes,
Back when I tried to pray
But I don't think about it anymore.
Perhaps it's just as well.
There's no meaning to it anyway,
As far as I can tell*

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I still plan to go back sometime

To see the folks, I knew.

I'm sure they'll all still be there

And would like to see me too.

But perhaps I've come to far now -

I'm afraid of telling Him.

And things seem to be turning grey,

And the light is growing dim.

Now what is that? It's blinding me.

Is there thunder in the air?

Is it a voice of many waters

Coming from the golden chair?

Is that a crown of life upon His head?

And a Lamb that has been slain?

Is that the blood I took so lightly,

Shed before the world began?

Is the throne-room quiet just for me?

Must I stand before Him now

As His voice makes Heaven tremble

And the mighty angels bow?

Must I answer, when He asks me

Why I spurned those blood-stained hands,

"Oh, Lord, please let me go back home

And change some of my plans"?

Chapter 13 – Faith & Grace

Romans 5:15 – 17 – “But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)”

No discussion of faith will be complete without a small dose of instruction on the grace of God! The term “grace” is variously defined today, but a look in a good concordance will inform us that it is a gift that is charged to someone else’s account – on account of, for the sake of. The grace of God that is given to us is wholly on the account of Jesus Christ. We had nothing to do with it. We cannot help God provide grace. We can do nothing to earn it, because it has nothing to do with our account. It only has to do with Christ’s account.

2 Corinthians 9:15 – “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”

Ephesians 2:8 – 10 – “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift

of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

There is nothing we can do, in and of ourselves, to earn or obtain salvation. We must believe, but God grants belief.

Philippians 1:28 – 29 – “And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.”

1 Peter 1:18 – 21 – “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”

We must have faith, but God grants the faith.

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Romans 12:3 – “... according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

We must repent, but repentance comes from God.

Acts 11:18 – “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”

None of these things diminishes the responsibility of man, but man, who is dead in trespasses and sins, and does not seek God of his own will, cannot be saved apart from the grace of God.

Romans 3:11 – “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”

Repentance, faith, and salvation are in the divine province of the God of the universe.

Men must preach the gospel for folks to be saved, but it is not the men that save.

Romans 1:16 – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

John 1:13 – “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

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One of the greatest proofs of the power of God is that people are saved despite the unlearned and ignorant vessels that He employs to preach the gospel. No preacher can save. God will call His people to Himself by the use of the means He has chosen, no matter how poor or inadequate that means may be. The foolishness of preaching will be the means of salvation, despite the foolishness of preachers.

Because the salvation process is not up to man, neither is the sanctification process up to man. The power of the gospel is to SAVE people FROM their sins. That was the purpose of Christ's coming.

Matthew 1:21 – “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

He did not come to exercise His power to take people to Heaven without saving them from their sins. Salvation has a practical effect, or it has no eternal effect. That is a part of the grace of God. Notice the scripture:

Ephesians 2:10 – “For we are his WORKMANSHIP, CREATED in Christ Jesus unto GOOD WORKS, which God hath before ordained that we should WALK in them.”

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If God has ordained that His people should walk in good works, can he be thwarted in His purpose? I realize that God did not ordain sinless perfection, and that we would still have struggles, but the COURSE of our life after salvation is determined by the power of God, and it is to walk in good works. That is not preaching works for salvation. That is preaching salvation that works. How can we be sure of our salvation? We can examine our fruit.

1 John 1:5 – 6 “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:”

How many liars about salvation do we have today? If salvation is by grace, and grace extends to our lives, then we must walk in the light. It is the power of God. It has nothing to do with us. The grace of God is one of the most misunderstood terms in the Word of God today. It has a practical effect. Has it had an effect on your life?

Salvation is all of grace, or none of grace. There cannot be anything in between. To add any requirement to saving faith is to frustrate the grace of God. We cannot stand with one foot on the solid rock of Christ, if our other foot is in the shifting sand of human endeavor. Salvation is in Christ’s finished work. It

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cannot be found in a church, an ordinance, a prayer, or a preacher. It is Christ's work and only His. We are a by-product of an eternal covenant between God and God, and God cannot lie. If He saves, He saves by grace and He saves to the uttermost. He saves practically, and He saves eternally. Has He saved you? Have you turned to him? Have you rested in His completed work? Is your life a testimony to others that God can save?

Ephesians 3:10 – 12 – “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.”

Romans 4:16 – “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,”

Romans 11:5 – 6 – “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

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Jude 1:24 – 25 – “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

May the Lord richly bless you as you serve Him.

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