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Soteriology

Faith

I. THE PLACE OF FAITH IN THE WORD OF GOD

Faith is the “operative” word in the Christian’s life. The “just [saved] shall live by 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.”

II Corinthians 5:7 “(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)”

A study of the Bible shows that we are saved through faith — Ephesians 2:8,9 – 8. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9. Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

We live by faith — Galatians 2:20 – “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

And we are kept through faith — I Peter 1:5 – “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

The word faith is also used in connection with the whole body of scriptural doctrine — expressed as “the faith” — **Jude vs3**.
“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

II. THE MEANING OF FAITH

The Biblical definition of faith is given in **Hebrews 11:1**.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Faith is:

F — forgetting

A — all

I — impossibilities, and

T — trusting

H — Him

A. FAITH IS NOT MERE MENTAL ASSENT:

A belief in something is not in and of itself faith. A person may believe all the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God and still be lost (James 2:19). Such ‘belief’ is static — real faith is active.

Note: A man may believe a certain chair will comfortably support him — that’s mental assent. Until he puts that belief to the test and actually sits on the chair he has not exercised faith.

Note: This fact is the general thrust of James chapter 2. A faith which is not active is dead — James 2:17.

“Faith without an ACT is not a fact!”

B. FAITH IS NOT FOOLISHNESS:

Faith is not a “leap in the dark.” It is based upon facts. It is actually a “leap in the Book!”

Faith means to believe the facts and to act upon them.

Faith is the “substance” of things hoped for (Hebrews 11:1). It is substantial because we have it in writing.

What is it that we hope for? Answer: Eternal life — Titus 1:2. Notice that our hope is certain and sure because it is based upon the Word of God (not the word of man)! Believing God’s Word is the ‘smartest’ thing we can do.

C. FAITH IS NOT FEELINGS:

Many today want to “feel” saved, and seek a religious experience. This is not faith because it seeks to rest in the tangible — not in the things hoped for.

God’s way in salvation (and the Christian life) has always been... FACT — FAITH — FEELINGS

Acts 8:35-39 — “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. **[FACT]** And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. **[FAITH]** And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. **[FEELING]**”

D. FAITH IS NOT EMBRACING A CREED:

No one is saved because they can say, “I belong to a certain faith.”

E. FAITH IS BELIEVING GOD’S WORD AND ACTING UPON IT:

Faith is the “evidence” of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). What is it that we have not seen? We have not seen:

1. The Creation Of The World.

No man was present when the “Sons of God shouted for joy” — Job 38:4-7. The Bible is all the evidence we have of the fact of God’s creative acts. See also: Hebrews 11:3.

2. The Cross Of Calvary.

None of the Galatians were present to witness the crucifixion of Christ, yet through Paul's preaching it was evidenced.

Galatians 3:1 — "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"

Note: John 20:29.

3. The New Jerusalem — Revelation 21.

Why, then, do we believe these things are so? Because God said it, and faith believes that what He says (the Word of God) is so. This is why the starting point of faith is Hebrews 11:6b — "...for he that cometh to God must believe that He is..." If a man can believe there is an all-powerful, all-present, all-knowing, all-wise God — he'll have no trouble believing anything He says.

"Faith is believing God's Word and acting upon it."



James 2:20



James 2:19

III. THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH

The faith that saves is a personal appropriation of the work of Jesus Christ. This involves four things:

A. KNOWLEDGE:

Knowledge must come first. To be saved, we must KNOW that Christ died for our sins and that His blood will stand as complete

payment for that sin — Psalm 9:10a. This knowledge comes from the Word of God, which is the BASIS of our faith — Romans 10:14,17. However, knowledge alone is not sufficient — II Peter 2:21.

B. ASSENT:

This is the acknowledgment of the truth of God's Word — e.g. Matthew 16:16. "I know what the Bible says, and I believe it is so."

Nevertheless, mental assent is not enough — Mark 12:28-34.

C. CONVICTION:

This is the persuasion that the facts assented to will achieve what they claim. "I know what the Bible says, I believe it is so, and I am persuaded that if I do what it says God will do what He says."

Yet, even conviction is insufficient to save — Luke 18:23-26; Acts 24:25.

D. APPROPRIATION:

This means to act upon the knowledge assented to.

Faith is the consent of the will to the assent of the understanding and the conviction of the heart.

- Knowledge affirms the fact of things.
- Assent accepts the surety of things.
- Conviction agrees to the reality of things.
- Appropriation actuates the surrender to these things.

– "I read in the Bible that Christ died for sinners" — that's knowledge.

– “I understand and believe it to be so that Christ will be accepted by God as payment for my sin” — that’s assent.

– “I am persuaded that if I trust Christ I will be saved” — that’s conviction.

– “I now act upon these facts and accept or trust Christ personally as my Saviour as payment to God for my sin” — that’s appropriation.

Note: II Timothy 1:12

“I know...” “...whom I have believed...” “...and am persuaded...” “...which I have committed...”

Unfortunately, many today do not take the vital fourth step of appropriation. Thus the distance between heaven and hell may be measured as about 15" — the distance from the head to the heart.

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

A. IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO PLEASE GOD:

Hebrews 11:6 — “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Hebrews 4:2. — “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”

B. IT IS THE ONLY WAY A MAN CAN BE SAVED:

John 3:36 — “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

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.”

Ephesians 2:8,9 — “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.”

C. IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO LIVE VICTORIOUSLY:

I John 5:4b — “...and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” I Peter 5:9a — “Whom resist stedfast in the faith...”