

Faith For Salvation?

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What kind of faith do you need for salvation? And what is faith in the first place? And why do you need it? And how intense must you have faith? And under what circumstances must you have faith? And how is it going to work in your life? And what is it going to produce? And how is it going to affect your salvation? Now there are a lot of “good-time Charlie’s” out there that, sure, as long as everything is going nice, and smooth, and wonderful, and good, and fine, and you have all the physical things, everything is great. You can have faith.

Let’s go to Matthew 6 and let’s see what Jesus said. And let’s see what He said about that kind of view point, or attitude, or outlook, however you want to phrase it. And especially in this world we have several things that we need to consider, which come in and take away faith, which come in and rob us of faith, or which give us a shallow faith, or a weak faith, or not really comprehending what God wants us to have. So let’s begin here in Matthew 6:24. Jesus said, “No [one] man can serve two masters:...” And that is the whole key concerning faith. You can’t have faith whenever you want to turn it on and off. You can’t have faith when you come to church, and then you don’t need it the rest of the week. You can’t serve two masters. Now either God is your master, as Jesus said, or you have the world and you have Satan as your master. And even though there may be some, what you might call “middle ground” in between, from the depths of Satan to the conversion of Christ; however, in reality there is a sharp line of difference. Either you belong to God or you don’t. It’s that simple.

So that’s why you can’t serve two masters. Now you think of this when you’re on the job. How about if you had two bosses? And one would come along and tell you, “Put the package on the table.” The other one comes along and says, “I told you not to put it on the table. Put it on the floor.” So you put it on the floor. And the other boss comes back and says, “What’s it doing on the floor? I told you to take it off the floor and put it on the table.” It’s an impossible thing. And likewise, when you get to marriage too. That’s why God said that the man is the head of the wife. And he’s the head of the family. You can’t have two bosses. You can’t 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.” (Matt. 6:24). And mammon means material things, and so forth.

So then He said concerning the material things, so we would get the lesson, He says, “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought...” That means, don’t be worried, or anxious concern for your life. Or that is, the things of living. “...For your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than [food] meat, and the body than [clothes] raiment?” So He says, “Now look. You go out and look at the birds, the fowl of the air. And they don’t plant, they

don't sow, they don't hoe, they don't dig." They don't do anything that we would do in trying to raise a crop. "...Neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" (vs. 25-27). Or change one hair to another color? It's an impossibility. You can't do this by thought. God has to provide it for you.

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; [they don't work] they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field,..." And you go out and look at it, there are beautiful flowers, and beautiful creation in the grass, in the trees, in the land, and it's magnificent. And if God made that so beautiful, "...which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, *shall He* not much more *clothe* you,..." Notice this phrase: "...O ye of little faith?" (vs. 28-30). Because when things are going good then people can have faith. But when things are going bad... Now Jesus did not say that we're going to have it easy in this life. Because life is hard. Life is difficult. Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation" (John 16:33, paraphrased). So, in tribulation can you have faith?

Let's go to John 6, and let's see how everyone did when they were fed of Jesus. Oh my, did they not want the food? This is the account of feeding the 5,000 in John 6. And this was a fantastic thing that was done. And so they came running after Jesus and said, "Boy! Let's make Him king!" So Jesus slipped away, got in one of the boats, went across the Sea of Galilee, and was on the other side. And then when they came to the other side looking for Him, He had already gone by night back to the other side. And they came back over and said, "Lord, how did You get here? Oh, we want You, Lord! Oh, we desire You, Lord!" And so Jesus told them in verse 27, and this is the... Let's go back to verse 26. "Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." All they wanted to do was have their belly filled. So Jesus said, "Labour not for the [food] meat which perisheth, but for that [food] meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed" (vs. 26-27). So He's talking about, that what you have to do is then search after Christ.

So they were a little puzzled on this. So they said to Him, and this is a good question. We could probably give fifty sermons starting from this as a lead-out scripture. "Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Because, after all, "We're good people, and You fed us. And You gave us these things. Oh, now tell us what we may do to do the works of God?" So, "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent" (vs. 28-29). Now I have a little bit more to say about the word "believe on," because it has a much more profound meaning as we really understand it in the Bible and as the Greek reveals it to us.

Now let's come on here, and I'll just summarize much of the rest of the chapter, where Jesus said He was the living bread, which came down from heaven. He came down to do the will of the Father; and that no one could come to Him except the Father

draw him to Jesus; and none can go to the Father unless they go through the Son. Then He told them, let's go clear down to verse 53. "Then Jesus said unto them,..." Now these are all the ones who were there. "...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." Now this is kind of a crazy thing to say, isn't it? Is God advocating that we become cannibals, and we become blood drinkers? We become like vampires and Dracula's? Is that what Jesus is saying? It is kind of a little difficult thing to understand, but that's all encompassed in understanding about the New Covenant. You see, the very body of Christ, and the very blood that He shed for the crucifixion and the forgiveness of sin through His shed blood. That's what He's talking about.

So He continues on, and He says, "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." And oh, we're going to see this was really pounding in on the ears of these so-called disciples who were following Him. It even says, "And they believed on Him." But this was a difficult thing to understand, even though Jesus explained it. He said here in verse 57, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (vs. 54-57).

Now let's stop here and think about this for a minute. In order to have faith you're going to have to live by Jesus Christ. And that faith is going to have to be always active and in motion, and a living thing within your life. So we might even entitle this, "What Kind of Faith Is Required For Salvation?" And how do we get it? And where does it come from? And all of these things are all involved in it. And once you have faith, then, is that the final, final, final answer? Now that's also something we need to understand, which we'll cover in this sermon.

Now continuing on in verse 58, "This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." And of course, that was kind of strange for them to hear. "These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum." Now verse 60, a very key verse: "Many therefore of His disciples [that is, followers, learners], when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can [understand this] hear it?" Difficult. "When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Doth this offend you?" In other words, "This is so basic, and yet this offends you?" The disciples were upset. "*What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" And that's a very interesting scripture too. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:..." (vs. 58-63). Now let me repeat that: "It is the spirit that quickeneth;..." And that means, gives life. The flesh profits nothing. The physical things profit nothing. They are all going to perish with the using. They are all going to change with time. Every one of us are going to be older.

How many of you have had the experience when you where a child - I know I did. We lived out on a farm. And I had to walk a tenth of a mile to go to the bus stop to catch the bus to go to school. And when I was in the third grade that was the longest, it just

was terrible to walk that tenth of a mile. That seemed like forever. And everything was so big. We lived on twenty acres. We thought, “Man. That’s a lot of land.” Well, I had the experience of going back there when I was about 40. And that tenth of a mile appeared to be nothing. And the house that we lived in was small. And the twenty acres where the farm was looked teeny. And the highways were narrow. You know, everything changes with time. The flesh profits nothing. Whatever you may be as a person, without God, you’re nothing.

Notice what He says here: “It is the spirit that [gives life] quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life” (vs. 63). And Jesus Himself was the living Word that came down out of heaven. And He gave us His truth. He gave us His word. He gave us what the Father taught Him to give us, and so forth.

Continuing on now in verse 64, “But there are some of you that believe not.” Or that is, “You don’t have faith.” Just like in English, to have “faith” is the noun of “believing.” So here, they were not having faith. They weren’t believing. They believed not. “For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him.” And of course, we see that from that time many of His disciples went and walked no more with Him. Let’s continue on here, verse 65, “And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father. From that *time* many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him” (vs. 64-66).

Now, I want you to think about this scripture, and I want you to think about this verse. Why didn’t they walk with Jesus anymore? And let’s ask it from the point of view, what is it that you would allow to come between you and God, that you would follow God no more? Is there something in the flesh that would offend you? Is there a man who would offend you? Is there someone you would be mad at? You know, that’s why Christ went through everything He did. So that He would set us an example that there was nothing that turned Him back from the Father. Not a thing. Not even the crucifixion. And all the things that He endured - and right at the end, what did He say when He was already nailed on the cross? He said, “Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.”

But look at the disciples here. They couldn’t even take a little saying, “You’ve got to eat My flesh, and you’ve got to drink My blood.” They became all upset. And they left. And I’m sure some of them left in a huff, and said, “Boy, that’s the craziest thing I’ve ever heard! Boy! I can read in the Bible that we’re not to have cannibalism and drink blood! This is insane!” So what would it take for you to be offended, if you want to look at it that way? Now let’s continue on, and see the rest of the account. “Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? [Are you going to leave too?] Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we [know that you are from God, and that]... “ (vs. 67-69). (*Pause*)

Ok. Let's go on. Let's go back over verse 69 again. "And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a [demon] devil?" (vs. 69-70). Now that really says an awful lot. So the faith that we're talking about for salvation has got to obviously be greater faith than these followers of Jesus who left Him. And even greater faith than the disciples had at this time. Later when they received the Holy Spirit they had faith. But at that particular time they didn't.

Ok, let's go on over here to Acts - not Acts, but John 8. And you go through and read the whole account, where Jesus said, "If you follow the truth, and obey the truth, and believe Me..." Now I'm just summarizing this, "...the truth shall set you free." And they said, "Well, we're not in slavery to anyone." And then you know the whole account, how they went on, and even those who believed Him then accused Him of being born of fornication, accused Him that He was not of God. And then Jesus said, "You are of your father the devil." Now notice what they did. Let's go to the very last verse in John 8. And here's how much faith they had. "Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" (John 8:59). You know, even today we have temple stonings over there, don't we, between the Arabs and the Jews. No different now than it was then.

But here, these people, they were willing to be "good-time Charlie's"; they were willing to be fed with the bread, and fed with the fish, and, "Yes, You're of God." And then He gives them something a little difficult to understand, and they turn around and don't follow Him anymore. And then it comes to the point then when He really levels in with them and says, "If you continue this way, you are of your father the devil." And they get angry and pick up stones and go after Him. Wonderful, isn't it?

Now let's go back to Matthew 21, and let's see another occurrence and another lesson. And here, then, Jesus begins to teach a little bit about faith, and what kind of faith that we can have, and so forth. And here it is in the example, as we find out, of the cursing of the fig tree. And we find, beginning in verse 20, "And when the disciples saw *it* [that is, after He cursed the fig tree], they marveled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!" And we find here, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not,..." (vs. 21). Now let me repeat that: "...If ye have faith, and doubt not,..." (Matt. 21:20-21). Why would He say, "And doubt not"? Because there are many times that, even though you have faith, it's not going to happen exactly as you thought it would work out that way.

Now what do you do when you have a doubt? Do you sort of, "Oh well, I shouldn't doubt", and bury it in the back of your mind? Is that how you handle a doubt? Well if it is, I'll guarantee you it's going to pop up again, and again. If you have another doubt you say, "Oh, well, I'm not to have doubt." So what do you do if you have a doubt? Just file it in the back of your mind and store it up there? No, that's not how to handle doubt. If you have a doubt you pull it out of the back of your mind, you put it right on the table, and you take the word of God and you examine the whole subject and topic, and go through it, and make sure from the word of God. You eliminate the doubt.

You cannot let any doubts build up in your mind. And we're going to see one of the doubts that you cannot have, absolutely cannot have, because you can't have faith for salvation if you have this kind of doubt. But let's go on here.

So He said, "...If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done." Now that's qualified later on where Jesus said that we ask according to the will of the Father. So if it is according to the will of the Father, and you take and have the faith to cast it out into the sea, and it obeys you, then that will happen. But I'll tell you one thing that is harder, harder to do: and that is let God convert you. To convert a mind from being carnal and hostile and an enemy of God, into one who has faith in God, and loves God, and serves God is far more profound than moving a mountain. Because the physical things don't count. Even though you may have the faith to do it. And later on we'll see that it's even qualified one step further. Ok, verse 22, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing [having that kind of faith], ye shall receive" (vs. 21-22).

Now let's talk about how this kind of faith comes. Do you just kind of work it up within you? Is it something that is there that you've just got to kindle? Or how does it come? Let's first of all begin with a very basic thing that is absolutely true. Let's go to Romans 2. Because before you can have faith, the kind of faith that is required for salvation, you have to have something else. You have to do something on your part toward God. And that is what is called in the Bible "repentance". And God grants you this. It must be that God grants you the repentance.

And I don't know how many of you have ever had the experience that, being a Christian, you go along and you sin, and you really don't think too much about it. But God keeps working with you. And then there comes a time when you come to the full understanding of what you have done, and the magnitude of it in relationship to God and Christ, and the sacrifice of Christ, that you come to your senses. Just like the prodigal son, when he was out there in the hog field feeding the swine, he came to himself. And so, likewise, God helps you come to yourself. And we find this here in Romans 2:4. It says, "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" And of course, we know the very first thing that was preached by Peter was, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38, paraphrased). So you've got to have that repentance. That repentance has to come before anything else, and God has to give this to you. And when you repent, you are granted repentance unto life.

Let's go back to Acts 11 and let's see how that is explained right here. After the apostle Peter went to Cornelius' house, and God gave the Holy Spirit to those who are called in the New Testament "Gentiles," and how that Peter was taught through the vision that God is no respecter of persons, and that those who believe, those who have faith, those who rely and trust in God are going to be led to repentance and receive the Holy Spirit. And that's the whole purpose of the entire chapter 10 of the book of Acts.

Now let's come to chapter 11, and we will see a summary of this which we need to cover. Verse 15, and Peter is explaining, and he says, "And as I began to speak, the Holy [Spirit] Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). Now God had to do something very important. He had to show those Jews, who were strict separatists through Judaism before, that now that separation was going to be no longer. So in order to show that that was going to be, then God gave the Holy Spirit, and gave it in the way that is demonstrated in Acts 10. So they would know that the Holy Spirit was going to be given to all people, for those that He called to repentance.

"Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy [Spirit] Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift [that is, of the Holy Spirit] as *He did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" Now this is quite a confession on his part, isn't it? And it's really quite a fantastic thing that occurred. Now, "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then..." Now I want you to notice the rest of this: "...hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (vs. 16-18).

So now we have repentance unto life, the receiving of the Holy Spirit. And what else does God give? God gives that faith necessary for salvation. And these things, then, we're to grow in and develop from that time on. But it's not something for a person to come along and say, "Oh, I have faith!" We find that in James 2. Some people say, "Well, I have faith." And James said, "Well that's not doing too good. Even the demons believe in God and tremble. So don't go bragging on your faith" (James 2:19, paraphrased).

Let's go to Ephesians 2 and let's see what kind of faith that we are really talking about. Just as God gave the gift of repentance to them, God also gives you other gifts. And part of the gift, the free gift of God's Holy Spirit, also then, is that faith. Which then, makes you wise unto salvation; which then helps draw you close to God. And that faith is going to be tested. And that faith is going to be tried. And you're going to have experiences that you go through so that you can really have that faith in God and believe. And what kind of faith is that going to be? We'll see in just a little bit.

Now let's pick it up here in Ephesians 2:8. It says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith;..." Now grace is another whole broad topic of God's great magnanimous gift. And grace includes everything which functions in a Christian's life through faith. "...And that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:..." And in the final analysis, though you have things you have to do that God requires of you, that God requires of me, I cannot save myself and you cannot save yourself. God must save you by faith. And it is His gift. Just like the Holy Spirit, just like repentance, just like eternal life.

So then comes the next sentence here that we read, verse 9, "...Not of works,..." Not of something that you can do. What can you do to grant you eternal life? What can you do to whip up your faith? Have a positive attitude? I'll tell you what, you confront some of the spiritual trials that you will go through, and I'll tell you how long your

positive attitude is going to last. Long enough just about to snap your fingers. Because that is not a gift of God. That's just "pump yourself up by your own ability, your own vanity, and pull yourself up by your own bootstraps." That'll get you a little ways. But how far is it going to go spiritually? Remember what Jesus said: "The flesh profits nothing." And this faith, then, has to develop. And this faith has to grow, and it has to expand into, as we will see, the love of God.

Let's go to Romans 5. Romans 5, then, becomes very, very important. Romans 5:1, and let's see how these things develop. And I'm sure you've experienced some of these things. Now I just talked to a lady the other day, way back on the East Coast in the northern part of the United States. And she's back there all alone. She's wondering, "Boy, these trials I'm going through, and these difficulties I'm going through." And I assured her it wasn't anything different than other people are going through, because you can be guaranteed one thing: the trial of your faith is going to come. And what are you going to do when it comes? Are you going to exercise the faith as it comes from God, as the gift of God? And what kind of faith does that have to be? We'll see in a little bit. Or are you going to let the trial drag you and pull you down to nothing?

Now let's pick it up here in verse 1. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace..." (Rom. 5:1-2). Which means, then, you must believe that the only atoning sacrifice for your sins is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And that one thing justifies you to God. And you must believe that. And that being the case, you can't add all kinds of things to it that you are going to do, or that I'm going to do for God. Now in talking with this lady back there, she said she went to visit some people at the House of Yahweh. And she says, "Boy, what a confused, divided mess that is." That every word that has any connotation that doesn't fit their little mold, you mustn't speak. Now I tell you, that is not faith. That is works. "Do this. Do that. Don't do this. Don't do that." See, we have access to this grace by faith; that God is merciful, that God is kind, that God has called you, that Jesus was sacrificed for you. Now what is this to do for us, once we really know and understand and believe that to the very depths of our being?

"...We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand,..." And that's where you need to stand. You have to have the conviction of mind, and the determination of the Holy Spirit. Not by will. I heard a minister say, "Well, brethren, now that we have this truth, we must set our will to obey God." You can set your will all you want. Unless you have the gift of faith, which comes from God, unless you have the conviction of mind through the Holy Spirit, setting your will isn't going to do anything. That's another work that people would do, if you set your will. It works the other way. Let God's Spirit convict you. Let God's Spirit give you that determination. Let God's Spirit work in your life. And then let God's will be done in your life. Not that you set your will. It isn't going to happen. It may get you a certain place. It may take you along the road a little bit, like the apostle Paul said, "In will worship." But that doesn't get you any place. That won't bring you salvation. You must worship God, not your own will. You must have the gift of faith, which comes from God, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Continuing on, "...Wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations..." (vs. 2-3). Now in difficulties. Now what kind of faith is that, that you glory in difficulties? Now we've seen some good examples of that. We've had a member, two members, in our little group die after they suffered terribly. But I tell you one thing, their spiritual attitude and their spiritual faith in God was greatly multiplied through what they experienced. So, will tribulation separate you from God? Will a hard saying out of the Bible separate you from God? And if that's the case, do you have faith for salvation? And how profound must this faith be? You have faith because you want to remove a mountain? You have faith because you want to be healed? You have faith because you want an increase in your job? Or do you have faith unto salvation and eternal life, regardless of your circumstances? And the apostle Paul can tell you, if you read what he went through - when Paul ended up, every church he raised up turned away from him. Yet he kept the faith of God. You think on that for a minute.

Let's continue on here. "...Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience;..." That's why the trial of your faith, being more precious than gold tried in the fire, it's going to be tested. We'll see that in just a minute. "...And experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy [Spirit] Ghost which is given unto us" (vs. 3-5). So we've got to have that faith, we've got to have the experience, we've got to have the endurance. And that brings hope. And then hope brings love. And we find, what are the three main things? Faith, hope, and love. But they've all got to be tried. Because we're not talking about just living a comfortable life here, now. We're talking about eternal life forever.

Let's go to 1 Peter 1, and we'll see that this faith is being tried; that it's being tested. And God is going to test it. So like it says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is come upon you" (1 Peter 4:12, paraphrased). How are you going to show that you truly have faith? How are you truly going to know that you have faith unless it's tried? Now he says, 1 Peter 1:5, it says, "...Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation..." So what kind of faith is required for salvation? We're about ready to begin to answer that. But I want to show that this faith to salvation, which he says is "...ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice,..." And we rejoice in that. But, "...though now for a season, if need be [if it's necessary], ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:..." (vs. 5-6). Now let's think on this for a minute. Is faith going to make you happy and jumping up and down with joy all the time? "Oh, clap hands! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let's have faith! Let's have faith!" And be like some silly televangelists on TV, and see these people on there, "Oh! Oh! Wonderful joy!" Never happen. That's not true Christianity.

It says, "...though you be in heaviness..." There are going to be times when you are discouraged. What do you think heaviness means? There are going to be times when you are down. And there are going to be times when you're going to wonder, "God, what am I going through?" That's what this means. And maybe not just one trial. And how many of us have this in mind? We think, "Oh, well, do you know what kind of trial will I

go through?” Any kind of trial you prepare your mind to go through, that’s not the one you’re going to have.

(Turn tape)

...Simple as that. Because if you can walk by faith, you’re going to live by faith, you’re going to act by faith. And if you’re going to believe in God, you’re going to be tried and tested, because this is a matter of salvation. In “manifold temptations.” So they will come. There were times when the apostle Paul felt total despair. But God was able to lift him up and give him faith and joy beyond it, because he saw beyond that. Because he had the kind of faith that we’re talking about here. That faith was made perfect.

1 Peter 1:7, “...That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth,...” Now a lot of us would really get excited if we had, right sitting before us here a huge, gigantic rock of solid gold. But do you get excited when you go through a trial and you have faith, and you see that God is seeing you through it, and God is there to help you, and God is there to be with you? What does it matter what the trial is? Maybe it’s sickness. Maybe it’s weakness. Maybe it’s other people. Maybe it’s persecution. Maybe it’s husband and wife problem. Maybe it’s parents and children problems. Maybe it’s neighbor problems. Maybe it - whatever the problem may be. Maybe it’s where you work. Maybe it’s for food that you need, or clothes, or all this sort of thing. Maybe it is that you can hardly endure to believe God and have faith in this world, that is absolutely so alien to God, that it’s incredible. And it’s hard for you to see that little flicker of God in your life. Well that’s when you really need to turn to God. Because your faith, being tried, is more precious than gold that perishes, though it be tried in the fire. Why? “[That it may] might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love;...” So there again, we have faith, and we have love, and we have hope. We have trials and we have difficulties. Let’s see a little bit more how this goes on and teaches us. “...In Whom, though now ye see *Him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:” (vs. 8). Now how can you do that? How can you, in trial and difficulty and tribulation, joy in God when you’re going through so much misery?

Well, let’s go to Hebrews 11 and we’ll get the answer. Here’s the kind of faith that you need for salvation. And this is the kind of faith that God wants you to have, that you grow in it. It’s His gift that comes to you through trying, through experience, through difficulties, through having to battle your own stupid, carnal, evil, human nature. And having to live in this rotten, wretched, miserable world. And, you know, many people say, “Oh, we live in such terrible times at the end here.” Listen - there is no time in human history that Satan hasn’t been around. There’s no time in human history where it really was “the good old days.” Human existence is the same. Did Jesus live in “the good old days”? Well, if He did, why was He crucified?

Ok, let’s go on. Hebrews 11. This is the important thing. Do you have faith, in spite of all the circumstances around you? And in your faith, what are you seeking? Are you seeking something? Some person? Some event? Some sign? Or are you seeking

the person of God Himself? That's the important thing. Faith must grow to where you are seeking the very person of God. Because to believe in Jesus means much more than we've understood.

Now here in Hebrews 11 we will see what this means. But the chapters were divided by men. So let's back up two verses into Hebrews 10:38. "Now the just..." The "just" means the ones who have been justified by God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. "...Shall live by faith:..." Now we're going to see this again a little later in the book of Romans. "...But if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." But Paul goes on to write, "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition;..." Now notice, if you draw back, and you read all of chapter 10 and all of chapter 11 and what people went through, how their faith was exercised and tried, and they didn't pull back. So Paul says, "But we're not of them that pulled back into perdition." And if you pull back and cast your faith aside, where are you headed? You're headed into the lake of fire, and you're no different than the son of perdition, made for destruction. "...But of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:38-39).

Now chapter 11:1. "Now faith is the substance..." It is the substance. Not just confidence. Confidence and conviction are true; but it is the substance. Now this table here is substance. It is made of something physical. Faith is the spiritual substance. You can't see it, you can't feel it, you can't touch it. But it is there and you can exercise it. It is the substance by God's Spirit. Of what? "...Of things hoped for [that you believe God], the evidence of things not seen." And that's what we have to have. We don't see the end yet. But we have the evidence that we will be there, because of the faith that God has given, which is the gift of God. And that must grow, like we're to grow in grace and knowledge; like we're to grow through trials and temptations and difficulties. It is the substance. It is the evidence.

"For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God,..." (vs. 2-3). And now we're able to see and comprehend so much more of the vast universe. I read an article the other day where they discovered, through the Hubble telescope, they discovered a bank of galaxies that they say is six trillion light years across. Now my little pea brain cannot comprehend that. And if that be so - because I asked the question, how do they know? And yet they can take a picture of it. That this vast universe, and the things we see around us were made of those things that are not seen. And we can have a little more proof of this. Whenever there is a solar flare, that is, where - you've seen pictures of this - where on the sun there's a great huge explosion that sort of loops out around from the surface of the sun. And this radiates dust in small minute particles into the earth. And those particles are so small that they penetrate all the way through the earth. And they actually have instruments sensitive enough to measure those. Doesn't that give us, even the physical evidence that the things which are made are made from the things which don't appear? You can't see it. "Which do not appear."

Now let's come to verse 6. Here's the key and important verse. "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*:..." There's no way you're going to please God

without faith. Doesn't matter what you do; it doesn't matter what you build. Doesn't matter how many people you feed, how many homeless you take care of; it does not matter how many, whatever you want to consider. If you don't have faith you're not going to please God. I just want to say something concerning the commandments of God. If you have faith, you will keep the commandments of God. But if you don't have faith, then you'll end up with a whole bunch of do's and don'ts and regulations like the Jews have. They've worn the law to a frazzle, because they don't have faith. And they don't please God. So the kind of faith that pleases God comes from God, but you have a part in that, as we will see.

“...For he that cometh to God must believe...” And the word there for “must” there is “required.” Absolutely necessary. “...Must believe that He [God] is,...” That you believe that God exists. And there is nothing greater, and there is nothing truer, and there is nothing else worthy of worship in this world but God Who exists. And this is the kind of faith that we do need to grow in to salvation. Therefore, it doesn't matter what men can do to you. It doesn't matter what's going on in the world, because you believe that God is. And that God is love, and that God is mercy, and that God is kindness. And that in spite of your circumstances, regardless of what it is, that God is greater than those circumstances. And if you're going through a trial, or suffering, or temptation, or difficulty, know that God will deliver you from it. He has promised that He will. And even if you die in that, you've endured unto death believing. So, you've got it made. You will be in the resurrection. But you've got to have this kind of faith. You must believe that God is. Now if you believe that God is, then you can - there won't be any room for doubt. Because that's how you take these doubts and examine them, in the light of God's word. And it is God, then, that you are seeking. And it is God, then, that you are after. You're not after some thing, or some person, or prestige, or a name, or a title, or whatever. You are truly seeking God in your faith. Now that's the kind of faith that is required for salvation.

“...Must believe that He [God] is, and *that* He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (vs. 6). You've got to have this diligent seeking after God. And that's the kind of reaction that you're going to have with faith. So therefore, then, you can believe under any circumstances that God's way is right. The day is going to come, as it already has in the past, when people are going to be lined up and they are going to be asked to renounce God and take the mark of the beast, or lose your head. Now I'll guarantee you one thing: if you don't believe that God is, that God loves you, in spite of any circumstances, in spite of the fact they're cutting off your head, or chopping off your hands, or whatever it may be, that God loves you and that your faith resides in God because He is. Now that's the kind of faith that's required for salvation.

Now let's go to the book of Psalms. Let's go to Psalm 42. And here's the kind of attitude that we need to have. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.” That you are seeking God. It says there in Hebrews 11:6, “He who is coming to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (paraphrased). So here is a real diligence, seeking after God. Wanting God. And that's why David was a man after God's own heart. Because David was seeking

God. Not something that God could give him. Not something that God could do for him, but God Himself. “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psa. 42:1-2). Tremendous. Fantastic.

Let’s go to Psalm 63:1. And this is the kind of faith that we need to grow to. Now if you find yourself, “Boy, I don’t have that kind of faith.” Well let me tell you - just take your Bible, you study it on your knees, you use it as a vehicle for prayer. You go through the book of Psalms; you ask God to help you in growing in faith. Because that faith must come from God. Ask God to bring you through whatever trial or temptation or difficulty that you are in. He will do it. Psalm 63:1, “O God, Thou *art* my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see Thy power and Thy glory, so *as* I have seen Thee in the sanctuary. Because Thy lovingkindness *is* better than life, my lips shall praise Thee” (Psa. 63:1-3). Tremendous attitude that David had. Absolutely fantastic.

And what, then, is this going to do in our lives? And how is this going to be accomplished? Let’s go to Romans 1 and let’s see how this is to be done. And it’s something that in the Greek conveys a very profound meaning. And how then, can we exercise this faith? How then can we grow in this faith? Romans 1, and let’s pick it up here in verse 17. “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” Faith is then a way of life.

Now let’s go back and look at this phrase, “from faith to faith.” And this becomes very profound, I think, and very important. The little word “to” in the Greek comes from the word *eis*. Which in most cases means, “into.” So to live, it’s revealed from faith to faith, it is from the faith of God into you, and that faith back to God. So your belief, like it says, that you believe in God, and believe in Christ. That means into. It is a moving, profound, and deep spiritual thing. That it’s not just something that you have. But it is a moving, active, between you and God, kind of faith. Your faith to God, and God’s faith to you is His gift, and back to God. And it’s just like two-way circuitry, as we would liken unto electricity. And that is living faith. That’s how you can live by faith. And that is absolutely important, and there’s just nothing more profound than that: from faith into...(pause).

Now let’s see how this faith is from faith into faith. It’s an interacting, spiritual thing between you and Jesus Christ and God the Father. That’s why, brethren, never let any man interfere with your faith between you and God. Let’s go to Revelation 14. Let’s see something that is very profound. Revelation 14:10. And let’s finish answering the question, what kind of faith - and we can in this sense say, whose faith? Just yours? No, it has to come from God. Let’s see. Revelation 14:12. If I said verse 10, I’m sorry, it’s verse 12. “Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Now what does it mean, “the faith of Jesus”? Does that mean you’re following the tenants that Jesus has given? Or does it mean something else? “The faith of Jesus.” Well, it actually means Jesus’ own faith.

Let's go back to the book of Mark. Let's go to chapter 11:12, and see what Jesus told us here. In Mark 11:12 He's talking again about faith. The same thing that we covered, right where we started out about the cursing of the fig tree. They came by, saw it all withered, verse 22, "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God." Now what does that mean, "Have faith in God"? Well, in the Greek it's a little more. It means, "have the faith of God." Or, "have God's faith." That's why it is from faith into faith. It comes from God, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, which then, gives you faith, which is His gift, and it goes back to God, and back to you, and continues in this spiritual flow; which then, is the very faith of God, or, God's own faith. That's what kind of faith that is required for salvation. Not something that you can whip up. Not something that you have or possess alone. But something that has to come from God.

And what is this going to let you do? How are you going to, then, view your life? Let's go to Galatians 2 and let's see how this is going to affect our lives. And here again, it is the faith of Christ. Or, Christ's very own faith. That's how you live. Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:..." Now if Christ is living in you, and Christ is living in me, whose faith do we have? We have God's own faith in us. "...Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God,..." Or, by the Son of God's very own faith. That's how we live. That's how we continue to live in the flesh. Regardless of the circumstances. Regardless of where we may be. Regardless of what may be happening all around us. You see, that's why it becomes so very, very important.

Now let's go to Romans 8, and we will see what this faith will do for us, and what this will activate in our lives, and then we'll take it one step further. What is the last thing that we need to bond this all together in a whole converted package, if we could put it that way? Verse 30 - no, verse 31. "What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?" Now let's stop here and think about this statement, "If God be for us." Let me ask you a question: did God call you? Yes. Did God give you His Holy Spirit upon repentance and baptism? Yes. Does God want you in His kingdom? Yes. How much does He want you in His kingdom? So much that He sent His own Son to be crucified and die and resurrected, so you could partake of God's eternal spiritual life, and be born into the kingdom of God. "If God be for us." Now I want you to understand this. Whenever there's a difficulty that comes along, God is for you, in spite of the seeming difficulties and trials and circumstances that you may find yourself in. If God be for you, which He is, what can be against you? Can Satan be against you? No, He won't succeed. Can circumstances be against you? No. It doesn't even matter if you die in them, as long as you are in faith with God.

"He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (vs. 32). Listen - the little difficulties we're going through here now are nothing. They're pipsqueak. They are nothing. "All things" means the whole universe. God is going to give us the kingdom of God. We have an inheritance that is absolutely incredible!

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth [ridicules; criticizes]? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of [God] Christ?” (vs. 33-35). And this is what we must grow into. Not only have faith, not only have hope, but grow in that love of Christ. And there again, we can say, “Christ in us.” Christ’s love for God the Father. And Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments; and if you love Me you will keep My sayings” (John 14:15, 23, paraphrased).

“Who shall separate us from the love of [God] Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” This doesn’t sound like a very cheery, rosy, Christian life, does it? A little difficult, isn’t it? So what are your circumstances? I think most of us have had tribulation and distress and persecution. But none of us have been scrounging on the ground looking for a little crumb of bread, or nakedness, or peril, or sword. “As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long;...” And really, when you get down to the bottom line, what difference does it make if you are killed? Why should you fear what men can do to you? It is God who is going to resurrect you. It’s says, “...we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vs. 35-39).

And that’s the kind of faith we need to have, rooted in that love. Let’s go to 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter. And let’s see that not only do we have to have that kind of faith for salvation, but we’ve got to have the love of God, which then perfects this faith. It doesn’t matter about your abilities. It doesn’t matter about how great a person is, or what they can do, or any accomplishments that they have, or whatever. Because there isn’t one thing that you have or can do that God didn’t give you the means or the ability to do it one way or the other, even though you had your part in it.

1 Corinthians 13:1, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal [gong].” So all that knowledge is not worth anything unless it is the way of God. Now let’s continue on in verse 2. “And though I have *the gift of* prophecy,...” Be able to preach fantastic sermons; know the future, “...and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith [of yourself], so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:1-2).

So there is the final qualifier that is there for the kind of faith we need. It doesn’t matter if you can remove mountains. If you don’t have love, then your faith is nothing. So the kind of faith that is required for salvation is the kind of faith that has the love of God behind it, that inspires you, that moves you; that you have that faith into faith, from God, and that love of God to you, shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, and in you going back to God. And that you truly, absolutely love God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your soul, and all your being, and all of your strength. And if you

have that with your faith, there is nothing that can be against you at all, whatsoever, period.

Now let's finish off by going to Philippians 3, and let's see how this faith is going to act in our lives, and the thing we need to look to and focus in on. And here the apostle Paul expressed it so clearly, and so vividly, and so right for us. Let's pick it up in Philippians 3:7. "But what things were gain to me,..." It doesn't matter what there is in this world. Whatever it is, what things were gain to him, he says, "...those I counted loss for Christ." And he says, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:..." Which means, His faith, His hope, His love, His Spirit, His life in you, in me, to God, back to us. "...And do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him,..." See, there it is. Seeking God Himself. "...Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law [or through law], but that which is through the faith of [Jesus] Christ,..." (Phil. 3:7-9). Jesus' very own faith in you. That's the kind of faith that's necessary for salvation. Then you can go through whatever difficulties or trials or tribulation, or whatever it may be. Because you know God loves you, God is for you, God has called you, God will see you through everything, and nothing can be against you whatsoever.

"And be found in Him [and that is, the righteousness which is of God by faith]... that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection,..." You're looking forward to that resurrection and the very power of it. "...And the fellowship of His sufferings,..." (vs. 9-10). Paul said, "I wanted the fellowship of His suffering." Because Paul persecuted the church and killed church members. So therefore he said he wanted that fellowship of the suffering of Christ. "...Being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after,..." And this is what this living faith will do. The faith for salvation is that we follow after. We always keep going God's way, regardless. "...If that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (vs. 10-14).

And that's the kind of faith that we need for salvation. And this is what the Bible teaches us. So let's, through God's Spirit, grow in that faith, and perfect it in the very love of God, that we can truly be in the kingdom of God and the sons of God.

(End of Tape)

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