


Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

Volume VIII

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No. 7

What Do We Mean By Faith?

Marty Pickup

What is faith? A little boy in a church Bible class responded like this when teacher asked the question: "Faith means believing when you know can't be true!" Do you remember Edmund Gwenn's statement about faith to little Natalie Wood's character in the classic Christmas movie, *Miracle on 24th Street*? He said, "Faith is believing in something when common sense tells you not to." A more intellectual description of faith, but one along the same line as the above, says this: "Faith begins where reason ends."

Is this what the Bible means by faith? Do the biblical writers ask us to suspend common sense and rationality so that, for totally subjective reasons, we can take a leap of faith and believe in Christianity without any evidence to support that belief? One of the problems we encounter when we try to talk with people about the gospel of Christ is the misunderstanding that many have about what the Bible means by faith. Many people assume that Christian faith, like the belief systems of other religions, is not predicated upon verifiable propositions.

A common definition of the English word "faith" foments this misconception. The word can, of course, mean a confident belief or trust

in a person or idea. But faith is also formally defined as follows: "belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence" (*American Heritage Dictionary*). If this is what the Bible means by faith, then for anyone to try to argue the truthfulness of Christianity by an appeal to objective evidence is absurd. Yet this is exactly the presumption that most people have about the faith of which the Bible speaks – a belief that has nothing to do with human rationality and which in fact asks people to suspend their rational thought processes in order to accept a religious system that has no objective support. I affirm that this is not what the Bible means by faith.

To be sure biblical faith involves "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). We are asked to believe in things that are beyond our own experience, things that we have not personally witnessed. As Paul puts it, "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). But this does not mean that there are no logical reasons for us to believe what we believe, or that the faith of which the Bible speaks has no evidentiary basis. Before we enter its realm of faith, the Bible does not ask us to check our intellect at the door.

Consider, for example, what Paul says about why people should believe in a divine creator. "Because that which is known about God is evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made" (Romans 1:19-20). Paul is saying that the existence and functionality of the universe should compel us to conclude that there must have been a creator who designed it this way. Isn't this passage indicating that faith in God is based upon evidence?

Another biblical proposition, one as fundamental as the doctrine of theism, is the claim that Jesus is the Son of God. But do the biblical writers ask us to believe that about Jesus without proof? Certainly not. They consistently affirm a solid rationale for believing in Jesus – the objective evidence of his miracles. John 5:31-36 records the statement by Jesus: If I alone bear witness of Myself, My testimony is not true...the words which the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me." We even read in John 10:37 that in the absence of miraculous corroboration, we would have no grounds for accepting Jesus' bold claims. "If I do not do the works of My Father," Jesus said, "do not believe in me."

Religions generally ask people to become adherents on the basis of social tradition or subjective preference. The New Testament, on the other hand, asks people to accept the gospel of Christ only after a thoughtful consideration of the evidence. Christianity is not opposed to rationality; it confidently presents itself as a faith system that is provable to any open-minded, reasoning person.

~via *Biblical Insights* Vol. 1 No. 2

If You Abide In My Word

Kent E. Heaton, Sr.

With the Temple in Jerusalem as His backdrop, Jesus tore at the heart of the Jewish mind in challenging them concerning His witness and His teachings. John records how they brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus seeking ways to accuse Him but to no avail. The only hope of salvation would be found in believing that Jesus was the Christ and without this acceptance, they would die in their sins. (John 8:21-29) The teaching of Jesus struck the hearts of some and the record says, "Many believed in Him. Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'" (vs. 31,32)

Jesus shows the nature of being a disciple of the Son of God. There will be a need to abide in Him and in His teachings. A price must be paid to be a disciple of Christ but the cost is outweighed by the blessings found in Him. The power of truth will change the life of every man who comes to the Lord because found in this truth is what all men desire - freedom. Truth will bring freedom from the bonds of hopelessness and despair.

These blessings can only be found - IF - one abides in the word. The idea of abiding is that of dwelling, to tarry or to remain. Many believed in Jesus but we find in John 12:42-43, "Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." The heart was not willing to remain faithful to the cause of Christ. A constant continuance is needed to find the blessings of Christ.

If one abides in the word of God salvation is found. "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." (James 1:21) The word teaches the

Remember Our Bible Class Periods

Sunday at 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

character of discipleship. A price is paid to be a disciple of Christ. (Luke 14:25:26-33) “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34,35) Jesus also shows the requirement to be His disciple in John 15:1-8.

A disciple of Christ understands truth and finds the blessings of knowing truth. Abiding in the word of Christ produces godliness (Titus 1:1) that sets man free from sin. (1 Timothy 3:16; 4:7,8) Truth is the word of God (John 17:17) and sets us free from the doctrines of men (Matthew 15:7-9). Found in the church of Christ is truth (Ephesians 4:4; 1:22,23; 2 Timothy 2:15) giving freedom from the denominational dogmas of men. The blessing of truth is found in the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; 15:26) received at baptism (Acts 2:38,39) giving us freedom from the spirit of this world. (1 Corinthians 2:11,12; Romans 8:14-17). Abiding in the word of truth gives man the knowledge of true worship. (John 4:23,24)

These blessings can only be found in Jesus Christ. Abiding in the word of truth brings about these changes in life and secures the hope and promise of salvation. How does one enjoy these blessings in Christ? “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

~via *The Gilcrest County Journal*, Trenton, Florida.



My Father Gives the Best

Lawrence Kelley

The concern and compassion of a parent for his child is called natural affection. It seems to

be an inborn trait enhanced by society’s approval of strong parental love. God affirms this form of love by condemning those who are (astorgos) without natural affection (Romans 1:31). The universal rule is that parents love their children and therefore seek their highest good and best interest. The problem is that parents often lack the wisdom to know what is best and at times even fail to perform what they know is best.

Not so with God. In my favorite verse we (human parents) are called evil in contrast with the surpassing goodness of God. He knows what is best and will always provide it for us. We are His children.

What a comforting realization that in the midst of life’s trials and tribulations I can know I have a Father whose affection for me is infinite and whose wisdom is perfect. This means I am not an orphan in the world, nor am I responsible for unholding the universe. In fact the only thing that really needs my concern is my Father’s kingdom and His righteousness. If I seek these things first, He will take care of the rest.

~via *Bible Viewpoints*, Katy Texas.

News & Notes

Willie Ridgeway is in the ECM hospital in Florence with pneumonia, room 655...*Angie McCrary* is to go for some test on Monday for her heart...*Mary Best* has continued to be sick with the flu and has been unable to be out...*Millinea Word* continues her physical therapy in Pulaski...*Emma and Ethan Wallen* have both been sick this past week, but are now doing better...*Scottie Goode’s mother, Claudette Goode*, is now home after spending several days in the hospital in Columbia,

Tennessee for pancreatitis ...**Scottie Goode's uncle, O. L. Prince**, had surgery this past week on his hip due to the infection and will have the hip reset after the infection clears up and is in ICU ...**Yvonne Pressnell's mother, Opal McGuire** is now back at her apartment after being in the nursing home for a few weeks ...Remember **Wanda Tucker's father, Billy Letson**, is continuing to take medication for his Lukemia ...**Sheila Goode & Lou Ann Phillips mother, Shirley Slaton**, is continuing to receive chemo treatments each week in Birmingham... **Sandra Glass' cousin, Tina Strickland**, who is continuing her treatments for her cancer ...Also remember **Mattie Blanche Word** who continues at home and not able to be out...Also remember **Gurtie Snoddy** who is in the Mitchell-Hollingsworth Nursing Home ...**Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson**, who is at home ...Remember **Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunt**, and **Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty**, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: Tonight is the night for group three to meet. If you are in group three plan to meet this evening.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Williams:* **Ray, Judy and Chase** are in Arkansas this week and will return this week.

SONG SERVICE: Tonight will be the time for our regular scheduled song service. **Mark McIntyre** will be directing the service. Make your plans to be present as we sing songs of praise to our God.

SONG PRACTICE: We will be meeting this afternoon at 5:15 to let our young boys lead some songs and to sing some new songs that we want to learn to sing. If it is possible, please come to be with us at this time.

GOSPEL MEETING: *The Harvest church* in Harvest is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Thursday evening with services Monday through Thursday at 7:00. **Bill Hall** will be the speaker in this meeting.

Gospel Power

is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Anderson church Home Page

Anderson-church.org

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