

Gospel Power



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

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Faith Is Like That

Morris D. Norman

Preaching has carried our family to many interesting places. One of the more thrilling is the mountains of the West. On one such trip we decided to cross a pass that was above 10,000 feet. We could see the summit in the distance and started on the designated route, following markings the map told us would take us there. There were times the summit was obscured by trees and turns in the road. There were a series of difficult switchbacks and dangerous curves that called for caution. Sometimes it seemed the grade was down hill away from the summit, or even carrying us back where we came from. An occasional car was disabled along the way and we wondered if that might happen to us. Someone would ask how much further it was and we wondered if it was worth the effort.

We reached the top and felt the joy of achievement. We paused and beheld the beauties we could not see from below. From this vantage point we could see for miles, whereas below we were limited by distance and obstructions. We saw the road we had traveled and from the top it didn't look near that difficult and long; it now had a beauty we could not appreciate as we traveled it. The journey up was well worth the effort for the joy we now had.

Walking by faith is like that. God in His

word gives us just a glimpse of the summit, enough that we long to be there, a place of rest and beauty beyond imagination. We may not fully understand until we reach the end, but it will be worth it. The fact that others "break down" will not stop us. The difficulties of "switch-backs" and "dangerous curves" do not frighten us. God has set up "guard rails" and "sign posts" for our protection and guidance. Though we be weary and wonder if it be worthwhile, and how much longer we must climb, "we faint not...our ... inward man is renewed...our light affliction worketh for us...an eternal weight of glory." To attain "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ... we walk by faith and not by sight: we are of good courage...we make it our aim to be well pleasing in his sight" (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:9).

By faith, Abraham sojourned, looking "for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He died in faith, having seen the promises afar, "desiring a better country, that is an heavenly," for God prepared for him a city (Hebrews 11:8-16). Abraham's faith was tried, but it never wavered in unbelief; rather waxed strong, giving God the glory, being fully assured that what God had promised He could perform (Romans 4:20,21). "They

that are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” and are “heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:9,29).

“For the which cause I suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: 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 Tim. 1:12). That’s what walking by faith is all about.

~via *Southport Sounder*, Indianapolis, Indiana.



Can One Stop Believing?

Steven C. Harper

When discussing the matter of salvation, there is much disagreement about how one is saved (which we covered in a recent article), and just as much disagreement about whether or not one may so sin as to lose their soul after initial obedience. Some hold to the belief that once one is saved from their past sins, there is nothing they can do, no sin they may commit, that will affect their soul’s salvation in the least. The argument often is, “Once a child of God, always a child of God.” Others disagree, and teach that the Christian is just as liable to sin, and those sins will condemn the Christian just as sure as one who has never believed or obeyed.

Those who claim that the Christian can never be in danger of losing their hope of salvation are even divided on the explanation as to how this is possible. One group argues that Christians cannot even sin, others argue that since sins are “in the flesh,” the spirit is not affected and are not marked against the Christian’s account, and still others simply say that, to a Christian, all the sin in the world would not change his eternal destination, even if he went into complete idolatry or became the most proliferate mass murderer the world has ever known.

First of all, for us to know what the correct

answer is, we must admit to what sin is, by definition. According to the dictionary, sin is an offense against God, religion, or morals. But, the God-given definition (as found in the Bible) says that “sin is the transgression of the law.” (1 John 3:4) There are no further qualifications on this definition, meaning that when an unbeliever transgresses the law he has sinned, and when a believer transgresses the law he has sinned. We also find within God’s word that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), and there is no qualification on this, either; it does not say that the wages of sin is death only to those who have never believed and obeyed. Sin is a transgression of God’s law, no matter who is doing the transgressing, and death is the expectation for anyone who walks in it. These passages alone should be sufficient to show that the sins of even a Christian endanger their souls, and should eliminate the old argument of “once saved, always saved.” Yes, if a child goes against the will of his father, he is still his child, but that doesn’t mean he can’t be written out of the will.

One of the few things that is agreed upon in this whole debate is that unbelief will prevent anyone from the eternal reward. Jesus told his apostles in His final words on earth that “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16). John wrote, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36). Jesus would say, “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24). When the Philippian jailer asked what he had to do to be saved, he was told, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:30). Though there are many things on which we disagree, we all agree that belief saves and unbelief condemns.

If we can agree that unbelief condemns, then the next question should be: Can one who has believed in Jesus as the Christ stop believ-

ing? Or, Can one who has expressed belief be guilty of unbelief? As with all questions regarding our spiritual standing before God, we should go to the Bible for the answer. Let's look...

The best example we may look to is one familiar to us all: the Israelites. In the book of Hebrews, the writer attempts to convince many Jewish Christians that they should not turn away from their faith in Jesus Christ and go back into the Old Law — an argument for this topic in itself. In his writings, he points them back to the example of their forefathers and notes their unbelief as a warning to them lest they should follow in their steps. He begins by warning them, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (3:12), and then asked, "For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (3:16-19). He would later point back to this and exhorted them to "be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience." (4:11)

We should note some very important points to consider from these passages. First, these were the Israelites, God's chosen people. Second, they had rebelled against God, sinned, did not obey, and were guilty of unbelief. Now, were they still God's children? Yes. But did they receive the reward? No! The Israelites who were brought out of Egyptian bondage died in the wilderness and were prevented from entering into the promised rest because they sinned and because of unbelief! Because of their unbelief, God cast them off (Romans 11:20).

Did they stop believing that God was God? That He existed? No, they just stopped trusting in Him and obeying His will. They forgot about His promise of victory and sought a different way than the one He had determined. Their

plan was sure to fail and their constant murmuring, complaining and unjustified fears eventually led to them all dying in the wilderness and their children entering in.

Now, let's stop and think about the parallel here. The writer of Hebrews used the example of the Israelites because it was a parallel to their own lives and the end would be the same (failure to enter the promised rest). The Christian has been brought out of bondage (to sin), been made a child of God, and has been promised rest (eternal life). The parallel is that if we rebel and if we sin and if we are guilty of unbelief, then we, too, may be prevented from entering into the promised rest of eternal life, though we may be God's children. Unbelief is certainly possible (remember, he began by warning them of the possibility, 3:12) and it will just as surely condemn us as the Israelites of old. But, our fate will be worse than if we had never known the truth (2 Peter 2:20-22).

Beware of unbelief!

~via *North Park Beacon*, North Little Rock, Arkansas.

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Hoyt Hammond* went back to the doctor this week and is to go to Vanderbilt on July 25th for further evaluation ..*Arvel Newton's nephew, Chester Newton*, is at home sick battling cancer ..*Angie McCrary's aunt, Irma Newton*, is not doing well at all in the nursing home...Remember *Millinea Word* as she continues her chemo treatments... *Wanda Tucker's father, Billy Letson*, who is continuing to take medication for his Leukemia ..*Helen Trousdale neice, Martha Henson*, who is battling cancer ...*Sandra Glass' cousin, Tina Strickland*, who is continuing her treatments for her cancer ...*Mattie Blanche Word* continues at home and not able to be out...*Aldeen Noles* who is not able to be out ..*Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson*, who is at home ... *Tisha Thomas' grand-*

mother, Nellie Hunter, and Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

SYMPATHY: We want to express our deepest sympathy to **Roger Mosley and all the Echols family** in the passing of Roger's great-uncle, **Dewey Echols**, this week. His funeral was Tuesday.

DEATH: It is with sadness that we report the passing of sister **Gurtie Snoddy**, this past Wednesday afternoon. Her funeral was Friday afternoon here at the building. Sister Snoddy was 94 and the oldest member of the church here. We appreciate the life that she lived and the influence for good that she had. We express our deepest sympathy to her daughter **Signa Skipworth** and her sister, **Helen Trousdale and all the family** in her passing. May they find comfort and strength from God's word.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: Tonight is the night for Communication group 3 to meet. If you are in group three remember to meet this evening.

BETHEL, TENNESSEE: I am away this week in meeting at the **Bethel church** in Tennessee, north of Lester, Alabama. The meeting will continue through Friday with services at 7:30 p.m. In my absense today, **Wiley Deason** will be preaching. I appreciate Wiley's willingness and desire to fill my place while I am away and I know that you will enjoy hearing him. Wiley will be attending here with us during the rest of the summer break from school.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: This past week we had our Vacation Bible School. The VBS went very well and we had a good number of young people that attended 4 or 5 days of the VBS. The students seemed to have really learned a lot. I want to thank our teachers that taught this year for the time and the dedication they exhibited in preparing the materials for the classes. This is the first year that we have written our own material and it went very well. Thanks teachers for all your work, help and enthusiasm. I am looking forward to next year.

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.

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