

In Spirit and in Truth: Rooted and Established

Freedom Church of Denton

Faith

Volume 1, Lesson 2

- **In Devotion** (feel free to highlight, underline, and scribble notes. Take your time, working through the following material over the course of the next week...it would be better for you to get through one sentence with understanding, than the whole lesson with no understanding!)

Let all the house of Israel therefore know that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" - Acts 2:36-37

*The first evidence of a true, saving, and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of any regenerate person is an awakening to the horror of his situation. In an unsanctified condition, the individual is a natural man, driven from the garden and the tree of life, void of the Spirit, and in the condition of a darkened heart. The Spirit comes to convict of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn. 16:8). The evidence is the horror that one experiences upon the realization of his lost state. Then and only then can he rightly flee to the cross for refuge! It is for this reason, the Proverb says that the fear of the Lord is the **beginning** of wisdom (Pr. 9:10). It is also why, in Acts 2, upon the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the indicting proclamation of the unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ, the same Holy Spirit had this effect on those that were being saved.*

What was the vehicle of their salvation and all who have ever been saved? It was unmistakably faith! The vehicle was, and is, faith, because the one being saved has nothing else to offer. The best of his good deeds are as filthy rags to God (Is. 64:6). That many in this Pentecostal crowd believed Peter's gospel, was proven by their sincere, prompt, and contrite response.

Facilitating this response should become the main objective of any conscientious gospel worker, prophet, counselor, or disciple-maker; namely, to awaken the heart of the unbeliever to the awfulness of his condition and the sufficiency of the cross and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without this foundation, there is no hope of any meaningful discipleship, spiritual counsel, or lasting renewal or healing.

Exemplified by Peter in no blushing fashion, he boldly declared to them that they were the ones that had nailed this man to the tree by the predetermined plan of God. Risking his very life to tell them the truth, Peter was not the coward he was

just a few days before. Something had changed. Resurrection power and the Great Gift of the indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit of God had come. Christ had been glorified and was now glorifying himself from the pen that was the tongue of the ready-writer named Peter (Petros), the rock!

This power (dunamis) came to bear in quickening fashion on the hearts of those that were being saved and those that were perishing. It came in an undeniable and irresistible way, leaving the contrite in humble lament over the desperation of his situation; the penitent's faith evidenced by one of most honest, humble, and yet simple and effective prayers that has ever been broadcast from the lips of men, "what must we do?" Their hearts were pierced, with no hope, other than toward the only One that holds the words of life! And Peter, seeing their faith and quick to deliver on the promise that "no one who calls on the name of the Lord shall be disappointed," prescribes the proper pattern for their faith to take flight (Ro. 10:11-13)! Boldly he commands, "repent, be baptized for the remission of your sins, and receive the Holy Spirit!" This is what I affectionately refer to as Peter's Petition! The perfect glove for fielding the saving cry of a penitent heart, thus sealing the "work" of faith in its external proof through the obedience of repentance and baptism.

*You see, faith is what saved them because faith is the substance of things hoped for and the certainty of things unseen and without it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:1-6). This is true because the only thing that has properly **ever** pleased God is the righteousness of His own Son that has been revealed from heaven. It is this righteousness that has become faith's object.*

Faith enables us to apprehend that by which we have been apprehended (Php. 3:12); and to secure the transfer of a positive and eternal credit to our account that had until this point been populated by a debt that was greater than all the cumulative debt in the world and every one of its constituents, entities, and governments. It was a debt so great that no human, subhuman, nor angelic federation, could ever have paid it. Only a divine being. And he did.

And now, what is the currency in which heaven trades this righteousness? It is the only thing of value that we really have to offer. That is our trust, or sola fide (faith alone) in the one that has been made manifest to satisfy the wrath of God. However, if truth be told, even that (faith) does not originate from ourselves, but is a gift that God bestows when He chooses us and calls us by his marvelous grace and mercy. It is his loving-kindness and truth that leads us to repentance, and all we can do is thank Him. Thank you Jesus!

- **In Meditation**

As you consider the following references, first pray and invite the Holy Spirit to come and teach you as only the Teacher and Comforter can. Admit to him your complete inability to understand anything spiritual apart from his grace and illumination. Then consider each

of these verses, taking notes on anything that the Spirit brings to your attention; perhaps a **Sin** to confess, a **Promise** to claim, an **Example** to follow, a **Command** to obey, or a **Seed** of righteousness to sow. If successful, you are learning to read the Word of God with your **S.P.E.C.S.** on!

Matthew 18:2 _____

Why is becoming like a child necessary to enter the kingdom of God? _____

What is the character of the faith of a child? _____

How does childlikeness stand in distinction to the “faith” of the Pharisees and worldly religion? _____

Stop and ask, is there anyone that is currently struggling with the simplicity of faith? Take time as a group to pray for those that are struggling!

John 6:29 _____

What did Jesus mean when he describes faith as “the work” that is required to work the works of God? _____

Hebrews 11:6 _____

James 2:19 _____

How is it possible that our faith alone can please God? _____

What are the characteristics of the type of faith described in the Hebrews 11:6 passage? _____

How does this contrast to the faith of the demons that is described in the James passage? _____

Romans 1:5; 16:26 _____

What is meant by the apparent oxymoron in the phrase “obedience of faith”? _____

John 3:16-18 _____

What does this famous passage above say to the need of “cleaning oneself up” before approaching God for salvation? _____

Ephesians 2:8-9 _____

If faith is a gift, then what would be the proper starting point for someone that was hoping to acquire it? _____

What confidence do we have that God will hear if we ask Him for more faith? _____

Romans 10:17 _____

According to the passage above, how else can one begin to cultivate faith? _____

Are there other ways that one can cultivate, exercise, and grow one's faith? _____

In Application

Begin with the humble admission of your neglect to approach the Giver of faith for the want of faith in your life. Take time at this moment to draw near to God with the mustard seed of faith that you possess, to ask the generous Father to increase your faith in the order of the saints listed in the "Hall of Faith" of Hebrews 11!

Examine yourself to see whether your doubts could be attributed to your negligence in reading, meditating on, and appropriating the Word of God in your life. Set goals that are **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely (S.M.A.R.T.)** to remedy this situation. Record them here: _____

In Prayer

Father, I humbly acknowledge that my lack of faith is not a sign of Your unfaithfulness nor is it a sign of your lack of speaking. I have failed to believe you as I ought. Often, I have complicated things, neglected the means of your grace, and at times have chosen to ignore the truth so that I could do what I wanted to do. Forgive me. Lord, I believe, yet help my unbelief. Increase my faith. Teach me to feed the disciplines that feed my faith that I might become like a child whose simple trust allows him to slay giants!

In Sharpening Your Axe

If it is the "hearing of the Word of God" that increases one's faith, then you should begin the discipline of praying the Word of God in your secret place. When the Spirit reveals specific applications as you read the Word with your S.P.E.C.S. on, then turn those applications back into direct, Word-informed prayers. Remember, the Holy Spirit wrote the Word of God. It is his will, plan, and promise. He delights when the child reminds him in a contrite childlike fashion!