

7/12/18

### What About Faith?

Spurgeon said the following about “faith”, “A little faith will bring your soul to heaven; a great faith will bring heaven to your soul”. #1499

\* Abraham is the classic example of faith in Scripture, for by faith Abraham offered up his son, knowing that God was able to raise him from the dead. Gen. 22

His faith in the promises of God was accounted to him for righteousness, to be called the father of faith.

\* “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also.” Rom. 4:11

In fact he is called a friend of God! Ja. 2:23

\* “And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the **friend** of God.”

There are many unscriptural teaching regarding the doctrine of “faith” causing confusion in the church, giving the world to mock God and the church.

1. There are that take faith completely out of context, isolating it from the whole council of God.

2. There are those of the health and wealth movement teaching all are to be healed and be wealthy by positive confession, as evidence of their faith.

\* If you are not healed, then it is your fault lacking faith or having sin in one’s life, a very condemning doctrine of self-righteousness!

3. These same teacher and preacher make nifty little slogans to entice the people and enrich themselves, such as “seed faith”, which means you give money in faith that you do not have believing in advance God will reward you in proportion to your faith.

\* Paul warned Timothy about men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

1Tim. 6:5

We want to answer the question, “What about faith?” by looking at “the doctrine faith” from a three-fold perspective.

**I.** The description of faith.

**II.** The distinctive kinds of faith.

**III.** The distinction of the persons for faith.

#### **I. The description of faith.**

**A.** Faith is described for us in the book of Hebrew.

1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb. 11:1

**a.** Many think this is a definition of faith but it is not.

- b. One put it this way, “They do not define faith in itself; they describe it in it’s power. They are the sort of statement we make when we say, knowledge is power. That is not a definition of knowledge, by any means. It is a description of it in one of it’s great effects. (Moule, Lectures on Systematic Theo, Thiessen:356)
  - c. Another said, “These words are not a definition or a completed account of faith: they are not a definition or a complete account of faith, they tell what faith is, but they do not tell all that it is, and they do not separate it from all that it is not.” (Machen, Lectures on Systematic Theology, Thiessen:356)
2. The basic meaning of the word faith “pistis”, in the Scriptural sense is belief and trust, a firm persuasion or firm conviction. Heb. 11:1
- a. Strong’s concordance states faith as conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the New Testament of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it relating to God, relating to Christ, the religious beliefs of Christians, with the predominate idea of trust or

- confidence whether in God or in Christ, springing from faith.
  - b. Fidelity, faithfulness, the character of one who can be relied on.
3. The word substance actually describes the word “faith”. Heb. 11:1
- a. The word substance “hypostasis” literally means “being set under”, with the idea of substructure or foundation.
  - b. The confidence and assurance that the thing hoped for is valid and grounds for their being realized.
  - c. The faith is so firm that no further evidence “elengchos”, literally no further persuasion is needed for the expectation in the future.
4. The commentary on faith is declared as the only sphere a Christian can please God. Heb. 11:6
- a. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, God. vs. 6a
  - b. For he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. vs. 6b-c
  - c. There are various forms of the word.
    - 1) “Pistiuo” the verb form, translated believe or believed, found 248 times in the New Testament.
    - 2) “Pistis” , the noun form, translated faith, found 244 times in the New Testament.

- 3) “Pistos”, the adjective form, translated, faithful, found 66 times in the New Testament.

**B. Faith involves the entire or whole person.**

1. Faith is more than intellectual assent to Biblical truth.
  - a. Jesus said, “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.” Matt. 15:8
  - b. James says, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!” Ja. 2:19
2. Faith involves man’s intellect, emotions and the will.
  - a. Paul tells the Romans, “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe “pisteuo” in your heart “kardia” that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Rom. 10:9
  - b. Paul immediately qualifies the place of belief or faith, “For with the heart “kardia” one believes “pisteuo” unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Ro 10:10
  - c. Faith in the heart “kardia” refers to the center and seat of spiritual life, the soul, mind of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes and

endeavors of man, the assent of the mind and the consent of the will.

- 1) In regards to the intellect it is belief in certain revealed truths concerning God, Christ or anything about spiritual truth.
  - 2) In regards to the emotions there is a sense of awakening of the soul to it’s personal needs and appropriation of the atoning work of Christ with peace and assurance of the gospel truth, but not based on feelings or emotionalism.
  - 3) In regards to the will it is the acceptance of these truths as the directing principles of life.
  - 4) Faith in the heart means acknowledging the gospel facts as truth and the willingness to dedicate oneself to live those truths out.
 

\* In the gospel of John it says, “They could not believe”, due to the hardness of their hearts, quoting Isaiah. Jn. 12:39
3. Faith is no blind act of the soul; it is not a leap in the dark. (Dr. Williams Evans)
    - a. Believing with the head without believing with the heart is foreign to the Bible.
    - b. A man may believe with the head without believing with his heart; but he

can not believe in his heart without believing in his head also.

- c. Faith is reasonable, yet contrary to human reason, therefore never unreasonable Scripturally.
- d. Paul told the Corinthians, “And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith “pistis” should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” 1Cor. 2:5

### **Illustration**

A man had gone hiking alone and in the darkness he slipped down a cliff and was hanging on to a small tree on the side of the cliff, calling for help for hours. Then a voice said, “Let go”! He responded, “Is that you Lord?” Again he heard, Let go!” and a third time. The man yield out, “Is there anyone else up there?”

\* Because of the darkness of night he was unaware that he was only a few feet from ground level!

\* Faith believes and acts despite the lack of evidence!

***This is the description of faith!***

## **II. The distinctive kinds of faith.**

**A.** There is “saving faith”.

- 1. Paul tells the Ephesians, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not

of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Eph. 2:8-9

- a. The gift is salvation, that which God bestows on man by no merit of his own.
  - 1) The Greek scholars tell us the following, the word that “touto” is in the neuter singular pronoun. Lenski, A. T. Robertson, Wuest.
  - 2) Therefore it does not refer to the word “grace” or “faith”, both are feminine.
  - 3) The neuter singular pronoun refers to the divine act of saving the sinner.
- 2. The salvation is not, nor can it be credited to man, “not of yourselves”.
  - a. The word of “ek” means out from the person being saved, in other words the act of salvation is not of human origin.
  - b. The means of salvation is two-fold.
    - 1) By grace “charis” unmerited favor of God, the source of salvation.
      - \* The article appears before grace, literally the Greek reads “by the grace”, a very specific one.
    - 2) Through faith “pistis”, by believing persuasively in the heart the truth of the gospel about the sinful position of man and the capacity of Christ to save through his death and resurrection by the illumination and conviction of the Holy Spirit.

- \* Faith is the subjective medium or instrument for the process of salvation, the gift of God!
- 2. John says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe “pisteuo” in His name”. Jn. 1:12
  - a. Confident persuasion in the heart that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world!
    - \* God initiates, man responds to the word!
  - b. The faith is produced by the hearing of the gospel and the Holy Spirit produces the faith at the openness of heart by the sinner to believe.
    - \* “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Rom. 10:17
  - c. Yet the sinner can not boast about the gift of salvation, for it is all a work of God!
- B. There is “general faith” after salvation.
  - 1. The believer once born-again begins to live as a pilgrim and so-journer. 1Pet. 2:11
  - 2. The believer begins to study the word of God in order to grow, develop and mature in Christ as they begin to grow in their faith.
    - a. Learning all about their wealth in Christ and by faith appropriating it. Eph. 1-3

- b. Learning all about their ability to walk in Christ by faith to walk in the power of the Spirit. Eph. 4:1-6:9
  - c. Learning all about the spiritual enemy, Satan and in faith doing good warfare with the armor of God and the weapons provided for victory. Eph. 6:10-18
  - d. So just like hearing the gospel produced faith to believe for salvation, the gift of God, so the reading, studying and meditating on the Word produces faith in the believer’s life by prayer, that the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phil. 4:5-6
    - \* “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Rom. 10:17
- C. There is “the gift of faith” during salvation.
- 1. Paul as he taught the Corinthians about the gifts of the Spirit said, “To another faith “pistis” by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit.” 1Cor 12:9
  - 2. The gift of faith is a supernatural power of belief to an individual to receive what the Holy Spirit has revealed.
    - \* Herald Horton, The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, defines it this way, “active faith that passively expects a miracle or whatever is revealed”.

3. The book of Hebrews as we have seen describes faith itself for us; “It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Heb. 11:1  
\* Hebrews is not describing the gift of faith but faith itself, yet the “gift of faith” is after the same nature and character!
4. We could define the gift of faith as the guarantee of things revealed despite of the evidence of things not seen, as of yet.
  - a. This is not presumptuousness, will or mind power!
  - b. The “gift of faith” is God’s enabling me to believe what He reveals.
5. The manifestation may not always be immediate, but because it is the gift of faith operating, the individual waits for God to bring it to pass, confidently knowing that God has spoken to him or her.
6. The “gift of faith” is **passive**, distinct from the “gifts of healings” and the “gift of miracles”, which are **active faith** and **active works**.  
\* Even though they may work at times in combination or multi-combination.
7. The important thing to understand is that the “gift of faith” being operated through an individual at a particular time does not guarantee that he or she will operate it every time, for God not only disperses the gifts

- severally as He wills, but He also manifests them severally as He wills.
8. The “gift of faith” is distinct from “saving faith” and “general faith” also.
    - a. The gift of salvation is through the means of grace and faith to believe God to be saved. Eph. 2:8-9
    - b. General faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom 10:17
  9. The Old Testament and New Testament evidence of the “gift of faith”.
    - a. Elijah believed God to sustain him by a widow who had a handful of meal and a little oil in a cruse. 1Kings 17:8-14  
\* “I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.” vs. 9
    - b. Woman with an issue of blood for twelve years. Lk. 8:47-48
      - 1) “Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, “Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”
      - 2) Mark says, “For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.” Immediately the fountain

of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction”. Mk. 5:28-29

**10.** All the gifts are operated at a different measure of faith imparted by God.

\* Paul says, “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our “pistis” faith.” Rom. 12:3

### **Illustration**

Elijah the prophet believed God for his salvation in faith as an Israelite, he grew in faith during his life and also was given the gift of faith to believe God for the miracles revealed!

\* One day a black church met to pray for rain to release a long dry spell. The preacher looked severely at his flock and said: “Brothers and sisters, yo’ll knows why we is here. Now what I wants to know is—where is yo’ umbrellas?” #1498

*There are the distinctive kinds of faith!*

### **III. The distinction of the persons for faith.**

**A.** The source of faith is Divine.

**1.** The source of faith is the Father.

**a.** Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father

in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” Jn. 4:23

\* The fact man is commanded to believe and that the Father is seeking such to worship Him implies the imparting of the ability to do so in and by faith!

**b.** Paul said to the Colossians, “Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He the Father, has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.” Col. 1:12-13

\* The Father planned salvation through faith in the Son.

**2.** The channel of faith is the Son.

**a.** The author to the Hebrews says, “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,” Heb. 12:2

\* There is no one else we can look to or trust! Jn. 14:6

**b.** The disciples said to Jesus after He told them to forgive seven times seventy, “Increase our faith.” Lk. 17:5

\* He is the One living through us, the crucified life. Gal. 2:20

**c.** This is illustrated perfectly by Matthew.

\* “But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!” And immediately

Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

Matt. 14:30-31

3. The agent is the Holy Spirit.
  - a. Paul says, “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” 1Cor. 12:4
    - \* The Holy Spirit is the comforter, the One to come along side to help the believer do the work!
  - b. Paul again says, “To another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit.” 1Cor. 12:9
    - \* The Holy Spirit is distributing severally as He will, knowing the mind of God!
  - c. Paul to the Galatians says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness “pistis”.” Gal. 5:22
    - \* The Holy Spirit is trying to bring about the life of God in and through us!

**B.** The source of faith partners with human beings.

1. We have seen that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17
  - a. The person gives attention and consent to the content he is hearing.
  - b. The work of the Spirit illuminates and convicts by the truth of the gospel.
  - c. The individual agrees with the message of God that he is a sinner and repents.

2. Luke says, “However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.” Acts 4:4
  - a. These stand in sharp contrast to the priests and Sadducees who choose not to consent to the gospel.
  - b. These 5,000 consented and embraced the message for salvation, being active not passive.
3. Paul speaking to the Galatians said, “This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?” Gal. 3:2-3
  - a. They actively responded at the hearing of the gospel.
  - b. They actively yielded to the illuminating and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.
4. The very invitation to embrace the gospel is based on man’s decision to choose.
  - a. John says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever** believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Jn. 3:16
  - b. Peter says, “And it shall come to pass That **whoever** calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.” Acts 2:21

- c. Paul says, “For the Scripture says, “**Whoever** believes on Him will not be put to shame.” Rom. 10:11
  - d. Paul again says, “For **whoever** calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” Rom. 10:13
5. Therefore if any are lost, it is not the fault of God the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit, but man himself.
- a. In the gospel of John it says, “They could not believe”, due to the hardness of their hearts, quoting Isaiah. Jn. 12:39  
\* Not because God did not predestined them, but for rejecting the gospel!
  - b. Luke tells us, ‘Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves **unworthy** of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46
  - c. Peter says, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should **perish** but that all should come to repentance”. 2Pet. 3:9
- C. The source of faith is distinguished as being responsible for the faithm be it active or passive.

1. The four friends of the paralytic man could not enter the doorway so they tore open the roof and lowered their friend and Mark tells us, “When Jesus saw **their faith**, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.” Mk. 2:5  
\* Jesus credited the four friends for the faith that healed the man!
2. The Syro-Phoenician woman cried out to Jesus for her demon possessed daughter and as she persisted for merciful scrap as a little puppy, Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great is **your faith!** Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour. Matt. 15:28  
\* Jesus credited the woman for the faith!
3. The disciples asked Jesus about the man born blind from birth, if he or his parents had sinned and Jesus said, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the **works of God should be revealed in him.**” Jn. 9:3
  - a. “When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.” vs. 6
  - b. “And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.” vs. 7  
\* Jesus healed sovereignly without the faith of anyone!

4. Faith is always involved in the life of the believer.
- a. Each of us have to live by faith and develop it for our daily lives, not sight or feelings. 2Cor. 5:7  
\* “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”
  - b. Faith is trusting God to do what He says what He will do according to the promises and provisions of the Scriptures that are according to His will. 1Jn. 5:14  
\* “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”
  - c. Faith is coming without doubting. Ja. 1:6-8  
\* “But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”
  - d. Faith is believing God for the impossible when all the conditions of a disciple are met. Jn. 14:13-14
    - 1) Jesus said, “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do.” vs. 13a
      - a) His name is not some formula or magical saying that God has to act on.
      - b) His name means as if Jesus would be asking, glorifying the Father!

- 2) The condition, “that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” vs. 13b
- 3) The offer, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.” vs. 14
  - a) Prayer is to get God’s will done not our own. 1Jn. 5:14-15
  - b) Prayer is to be according to God’s word. Jn. 16:23-24, 26
  - c) He is talking to His disciples that are to deny self, pick up their cross and follow Him.
  - d) This is the context that anything in My name must be interpreted.

### **Illustration**

Doubt see the obstacles,  
                   Faith sees the way!  
 Doubt sees the darkest nigh,  
                   Faith sees the day!  
 Doubt dreads to take a step,  
                   Faith soars on high!  
 Doubt questions, “Who believes?”  
                   Faith answer, “I!” #1496

***There is a distinction of the persons for faith!***

### **Conclusion**

The doctrine faith from a three-fold perspective:

- I.** The description of faith!
- II.** The distinctive kinds of faith!
- III.** The distinction of the persons for faith!