

A STUDY OF "FAITH"

by

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Physical Healing is a Picture of Salvation

Let's consider the following passage as we continue our study of the book of Acts:

Acts 14:8-10 "And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: {9} The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked."

When we look at this man in Lystra, who was crippled from birth, we know that we are not concerned about his physical healing when we look for the spiritual message of the Gospel. Now it is true of course, that if we have an illness or if we have financial problems or whatever we might have, we can go to our Savior in our anxieties, as we read below:

Philippians 4:6 "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

We can pour it all out to the Lord, but that does not mean He is going to heal us. That does not mean He is going to send a check our way. That does not mean He is going to take care of our problem like we would like to see it. It may be that He wants us to live through that problem for His own purposes. It may be a chastisement or it may be for other reasons.

God is really underscoring that this man was a cripple since birth. Notice three times in verse 8 He describes how lame he was: "there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet" [that is, he had no strength in his feet] "being a cripple from his mother's womb who never had walked". Now is there any question at all about this man being a hopeless cripple? God is really driving home the point that he is a cripple. He has been a cripple since the moment he was born.

Now tell me, as we look at the picture of salvation here, what does this lame situation point to spiritually? Of course, it points to the fact that we are dead

in our sins. And when did we first become dead in our sins? Remember Psalm 58 that says:

Psalms 58:3 "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."

In other words, our spiritual illness began right from birth, actually from conception; because Psalm 51 says we are conceived and born in sin.

Psalms 51:5 "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Right from the moment of conception the infection of sin has thoroughly permeated our being as that is the way we are. And you know, when God is healing a lame person it reminds us that this is what was quoted to John the Baptist when he was in prison after he had baptized Jesus. He must have wondered, "Is Jesus now the Messiah? What am I doing in prison?". Then Jesus reminded him of Isaiah 35:

Isaiah 35:5-6 "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. {6} Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

We are going to come back to this verse a little later when we see the reaction of this man after he had become healed. But that is our condition before we are saved, we are spiritually lame (and in other places God indicates we are spiritually dead). We have no strength in ourselves. And here is a lame man that has been lame from his mothers womb; and that meant that there were no doctors, there was no methodology, there was no program that he could follow in order to be healed of this lameness. It was something that had become an integral part of his life, and he would go to his death with that. This is exactly like sin in our life, the infection of sin. We are conceived and born with that infection of sin, and it stays with us until we die. It even goes beyond that -- it brings us to the judgment throne of God and brings us under the wrath of God forevermore. That

is the awful illness that is being pointed out here by this lame man.

The Gospel has Power to Save

Now comes the solution in verse 9, and this is very curious language:

Acts 14:9 "The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,"

"The same heard Paul speak." Now one of the parts of God's program of salvation is the hearing of the Gospel. Never will anyone become saved, as this man would not become physically healed, without hearing the Gospel. That happens to be a condition that God has imposed upon his salvation program. Now he did not have to do this. God is God, and He could save any way that He wishes to save. But in God's divine economy He has set up a program where one must hear the Gospel before there is going to be salvation. That is the reason why a ministry like Family Radio exists. That is the reason that we have tracts that can be passed out. That is the reason we encourage speaking the Gospel to our family members or to our neighbors who are still not saved. Because without the hearing of the Gospel there will not be salvation. That is God's divine economy. It is through the word of God that He brings about healing. So God underscores this as he says, "the same heard Paul speak". Well, so far that is easy to understand.

But then it goes on, "who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed." Now we see that there is a contact between this man. It does not say who is looking steadfastly upon whom. Whether it is Paul looking steadfastly upon the one who is to be healed or the one to be healed is looking steadfastly upon Paul. We really cannot tell who is steadfastly beholding whom. It could be either way. Lets put it this way, both are looking at each other very intently. In other words, contact has been made. And one of the things that happens when we share the Gospel is there is contact at some point. That Gospel is going to hit into the heart of an individual and that individual in turn is going to begin look at that Gospel in a way they have never looked at it before. This is the way God uses the Gospel. There must be contact between the Gospel and the one who is to become saved.

The Concept of Faith

But now the next phrase is a tough one. It is the one we have to spend some time with.

Acts 14:9-10 "The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had **faith** to be healed, {10} Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked."

"Perceiving that he had faith to be healed said" [that is, Paul said] "with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet, And he leaped and walked". Now when we read this sentence it is very obviously teaching that a precondition for the healing of this man was that he had to have faith to be healed. Let's put it another way. Supposing Paul had looked at this man and he did not have faith to be healed, could he be healed? Was the faith of this man a condition that had to be there in order that healing might occur? Now this is not an incidental question because **faith** is a area of life, or an area of teaching, that is not very well understood.

In Luke chapter 8 there was a woman who had an issue of blood:

Luke 8:43-48 "And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, {44} Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchd. {45} And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? {46} And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. {47} And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. {48} And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

Actually in the literal language it is "thy faith having saved thee." You see God is locking it in; and there are three or four other references I could easily make to show that God is underscoring **thy faith**. He perceived that he had faith to be healed. So if we would isolate these verses from the rest of the Bible -- and it would be a great temptation to do this because in the first instance we like this idea -- this means that I had something already going in my life that made it possible for God to save me. As a matter of fact, this agrees entirely with such statements as "believe on

the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" [Acts 16:31]. So this seems to mean that -- like this impotent man that was lame in his feet or this woman that had the issue of blood -- if only I could start believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, begin to trust Him, then I could become saved.

After all, we are people who trust. We had faith when we went to bed last night that, unless the Lord returns, we were going to have daylight in the morning. Now, did any of you doubt that? Did any of you go to bed last night and think "I wonder if there is going to be another day tomorrow?". No, the answer is we knew that for each day there is daylight again.

Whenever you looked in the mirror of your car as you were backing up, you trusted that mirror. If you did not see anybody behind you, you put your foot on the gas and backed up. What are you trusting? What if that mirror was giving you wrong direction and there was a car behind you? Smack, you would have an accident. No, we live by faith. We trusted that mirror was giving us right instruction, and so, based on that, we backed up our car. And so on, and so on. Our whole life is built on faith.

Therefore, it certainly is entirely logical for man to say, "Well all right, I will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." I have to have faith, and then God will heal me or then I will become saved. That is the kind of thing that we can expect from mankind. We operate by faith. This is the way we live out our lives. It is by faith.

And so man thinks, "O Lord, I am going to start trusting you, and then the Lord will look at me and He will perceive, like Paul looked at this impotent man, that I have enough faith to be healed." So, according to this logic, **faith** becomes the instrument or the means whereby we are healed. As a matter of fact, language is even written into a lot of the theological statements concerning the nature of salvation that faith is an instrument through which God heals. But that faith, however, was not our faith -- it was given to us by God. God had to first give it to us and He worked through that faith to save us.

Faith is a Work

Now, the fact is when we study the Bible very carefully, we find that faith is a **work**. That is something many theologians have missed. In fact, I have missed it all my life until just recently as I have continued to study the Bible. Faith is a work that we do, and I will show you very clearly that it is. The moment that we recognize that it is a work that we do, then we know that it cannot be a precondition for salvation. Then

we know that this faith that is displayed in the life of this impotent man cannot be a precondition for his healing. Because God insists:

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: {9} Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Salvation is **not** of works. Now it is true that once we become saved, or even as God is drawing us, that good works begin to show up in our lives. Let me explain what a good work is. Until we are saved, or until God begins to do any work in our lives, there is no good works in our lives. We do not want to do God's will. We are in rebellion against God altogether. But, you know, when God desires -- and He can do this ahead of salvation -- God can begin "to will and to do of His good pleasure", as we read in Philippians 2:13. He can **draw** us according to John 6:44:

John 6:44 "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

And so in the life of an individual we begin to see good works. We begin to see a fear of God. We have talked about this again and again as we have been going through the book of Acts. It is such an important piece of information that it has to be hammered home and repeated again and again. These good works can be seen in the life of one that is still not saved because God is drawing that individual. God is beginning to give that person the desire to do His will, and yet he is not saved. On the other hand, God may take a person who never has done any good works of any kind and instantly save that person.

So how are we going to understand all of this? Well let me first me go through four passages that clearly indicate that faith is a work. One of the passages is 1 Thessalonians 1:3:

1 Thessalonians 1:3 "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;"

Notice it says, "your work of faith". All right, there it is identifying work and faith together. Now look at a passage in John 6:

John 6:28-29 "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? {29} Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God,

that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

In other words, believing is a work. Well then, we can go to the next passage:

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

Faith is the "substance". Now, work that we do has substance and anything that has substance is work. And so "faith is the substance of things hoped for". It is an evidence in our life of something, the evidence of things not seen; but in itself it is a work.

The last passages are in James 2:

James 2:17 "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

James 2:20 "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

James 2:26 "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Three times God says that faith cannot exist without works. The two are totally tied together and He says in verse 20 that, "faith without works is dead". He says it again in verse 26, "so faith without works is dead". Then to make sure we do not misunderstand this, He says,

James 2:22 "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

Since the word "wrought" comes from the same word as "works", we could say "Seest thou how faith **works** with his works [and the word "his" would have to be "Christ's" in this context] and by **works** was faith made perfect". Now, here again you see faith works. There is no question at all that faith is a work.

Well, that puts us in a terrible quandary; because Paul saw the faith of this man and perceived that he could be healed. In other words he saw the works of this man and perceived that he could be healed. Therefore, it really looks throughout that faith somehow has to be there in order for us to have salvation.

Salvation is by the Faith of Christ

Now the fact is, of course, that that is not the way it happens because our salvation is not of works. Let me quote again Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith" [that is through a work] "and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works". So, now we read in Galatians 2:16:

Galatians 2:16 "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law" means he cannot be justified by his faith because that is a work. "But by the faith of Jesus Christ". What is the faith? The work of faith, that is "by the **work** of Jesus Christ". In other words, any faith that is utilized by God to save us is Christ's faith. Christ's faith. It always is Christ's faith. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith **of** Jesus Christ"

It is an interesting fact that in almost all the translations the translators have changed this to say, "but by the faith **in** Jesus Christ". And yet the Greek will not permit that. It is by the faith **of** Jesus Christ. But they want the faith **in** Jesus Christ; because they believe that our faith is an instrument through which God works to save us. But that can't be! We can't have a work in our life that is an instrument through which God saves us. That is not a possibility. There can be nothing in our lives that produces salvation.

The proof of this, if you have any doubts about this at all, is the story of Lazarus in John 11. This is one of the most dramatic and wonderful evidences and proofs and illustrations and teachings describing salvation. When Lazarus was a stinking corpse in the tomb Jesus said, "Lazarus come forth," and Lazarus came forth. Was there any faith in that corpse? Was there any work that corpse could do? Was there any response that corpse could make? And the answers are absolutely not, nothing, nothing. That corpse was as dead as dead can be. A stinking corpse. Yet when Jesus said, "Lazarus come forth", Lazarus came out of that tomb!

So there we have the clearest illustration in the Bible showing that salvation cannot be preconditioned by anything. Not by our faith. Not by our good looks. Not by our integrity, nor by anything that exists within our lives. There is no precondition because a dead corpse cannot meet any precondition. It clearly indicates that the whole salvation plan has to be God's. Therefore, when we read these sentences where it says that "he perceived he had faith to be healed". Or "by thy faith thou hast become saved". We know that we cannot be looking at a precondition or an instrument through which God works to

salvation. God requires no instrument.

Again, I think about these dear people that believe that you have to “accept” Christ, and their little babies are left out of the loop totally. They might have a child that is born with a very limited mind that could never reason, never talk, never think out anything. He would be left out of the loop; because he cannot “accept” Christ. He has to have faith, he has to have something in his life before God is going to save him. Yet these babies in the womb, these children or adults (they even grow to be adults without a mind) cannot do that. In order to get around that, they concoct some more wrong doctrines by saying, “Well, you know, there is an age of accountability. Those little children are not accountable to God. They are safe and secure the way they are.” There is no biblical basis for that at all, none at all. They have to strain and force and cudgel the Bible in order to try to make it work out. They do not dare read Psalms 58:3, “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”

But the fact is God does the entire work of salvation without any preconditions. He can save that baby in the womb. He can save that little child and can save that person without a brain, He can save anybody that He wants to save. Because if He can raise a dead corpse from the grave, as He did Lazarus, He can save anybody that he wishes. That is exactly what salvation is all about.

Let’s finish Galatians 2:16 where God is underscoring this: “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law”. Therefore, our faith, which is a work, cannot enter into the salvation program, “but by the faith of Jesus Christ”. Now “even we have believed”, that is, we had faith in Jesus Christ. Now, when we became saved, God gave us a brand new resurrected soul, and in our new resurrected soul we want to do the will of God. That is a “want to” that is totally a part of our new personality.

To do the will of God means to do the work of God. And one of the works that will show up immediately in the lives of those who have become saved, if it has not been showing up earlier, is that they have become to trust in Christ. We have believed in Him. That is why the Bible calls us “believers”. Because faith is the major work that shows up in our lives. We have come to trust Jesus Christ as our Savior and our Lord. It was not a condition for our salvation. He could have begun to put that work in our life ahead of time; but that was not the instrument, that was not the condition, in order that we might become saved.

But when we do become saved, that good work will be seen in our life just as every other good work. As we read in 1 John 2:

1 John 2:3-4 "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. {4} He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

The fear of God, and all these other things, will be seen in our lives when we have become saved. The that is why it goes on in Galatians 2:16 "we have believed **in** Jesus Christ". Now here we have the preposition “**in**”. That is, we have entered **into** Jesus Christ because by His faith He has saved us, and He has made us a “new creature” in Christ [according to 2 Corinthians 5:17] so that we have a desire to do the will of God.

Then it goes on, “that we might be justified by the faith **of** Christ”. It was not **our** believing that justified us -- it was the faith **of** Christ -- “and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”. Trusting in God is a work of the law – that is, it is a command. When God commands someone “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” He is saying, “you have to become saved.” He is telling that individual, “you have to have your sins washed away.” “You have to repent of your sins.” These are all commands that God gives. And no unsaved person can do this of himself. God has to do it within him. These are all works of the law to have these things happen, and Christ had to do all the works of the law.

Go back to Revelation 19 where God assigns to the Lord Jesus Christ the name “Faithful”.

Revelation 19:11 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

Now the word "Faithful" is an adjective; but it is similar to the noun "faith". Christ’s name is Faithful, and His name is True; and He is called the Word of God in verse 13:

Revelation 19:13 "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."

These are all names that God assigns to the Lord Jesus Christ so we might know something about Him.

Christ Does All the Work of Salvation

So we see, therefore, that the matter of our salvation is totally, **totally** -- without any exception of any kind -- dependent on the work of Christ who is the Faithful One. He had the faith that all of this would be accomplished for us and is bringing it to pass.

So now, when we go back to Acts 14:9, we can ask the meaning of the statement, "Perceiving that he had faith to be healed." Now remember we are looking at the spiritual dimension here. This man represents any of us before we are saved. Does God look at us and see some kind of faith that somehow we can become saved? The only faith that he can see in our lives that has anything to do with salvation is the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In other words, if we are going to look at the spiritual application, God has given this man a trust in God. That trust will not be the means or the instrument by which he will become saved; but it is the evidence that God is interested in this individual. But when God heals this man it is completely apart from any faith that is in his life. It is totally the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ operating to heal this man. So Paul "Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked".

We saw in Isaiah 35 a description of sending forth the Gospel into the world:

Isaiah 35:5-7 "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. {6} Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. {7} And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes."

In other words God is saying, "You see this is a fulfillment of my prophecy, that indeed there is going to be salvation coming." Therefore, God utilized this individual, to show us that He is the Savior. But He has set it up in such a way -- and God has written the Bible in this way -- that unless we read it very carefully we can get the impression that it is something that **we** have that causes our salvation. However, that is an impossibility. It is the faith of Christ, and only the faith of Christ.

Grace versus Works

For example, go for just a moment to Romans 3 to read a couple more verses to develop this:

Romans 3:21-22 "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; {22} Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference."

Now here again we might get the impression that there is a precondition that they believe. No, it is upon all them that show the evidence of that salvation, in that they have come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The believing that they do is the good work that shows up in our lives just like all the other good works; and so we are called believers.

Again we can look at Romans 4:3:

Romans 4:3 "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

I struggled with this verse as much as any verse in the Bible. What is the "it"? Abraham believed God and "it". And anyone reading that would say that well "it" is his faith that was counted for righteousness. But immediately we say, "No, that's not possible. That's not possible". Because faith is a work, and no work that we do can be counted for righteousness. Well then, what is the "it"? Abraham believed God and **GOD**. The Hebrew [in Genesis 15:6] does not even have the word **IT**. The word is just put there to make the sentence work out. But the sense of the verse is "Abraham believed God, and **God** was counted unto him for righteousness". Or it could be "the **faith of Christ** was counted unto him for righteousness". That ties into Romans 3:22, where it speaks about the faith of Jesus Christ which is the righteousness of God.

Romans 3:22 "Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference."

Now let's go on with Romans 4:4:

Romans 4:4 "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt."

Consider the phrase "to him that worketh". For the one who is trying to work out his salvation, it is not "of grace, but of debt." And elsewhere the Bible says, if you are trusting in what your work has done, then you have fallen from grace, you are under the law:

Galatians 5:4 "Christ is become of no ef-

fect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

And so it is imperative that we understand that salvation is altogether of grace. That is, it is a gift of God, and we make no contribution. So God says in verse 5:

Romans 4:5 "But to him that worketh not, but believeth [i.e., has faith] on him [i.e., has come to salvation in Christ] that justifieth the ungodly, his [Christ's] faith is counted for righteousness."

Christ's faith is counted for righteousness. Our faith cannot be counted for righteousness. God put all these him(s), and it(s), and he(s), and so on, in the Bible so that we have to look at it very carefully. These are testing stones in the Bible whereby you are going to be tested. Are you going to be trusting finally in something you have done? Because if you do, then you have fallen from grace, you have a "works-grace" Gospel and that is not the Gospel of the Bible.

And again let me go back just to remind you once more (I remind myself about this all the time), if you have any doubts about what I am saying, go back to Lazarus in the tomb. What did he contribute? Nothing! Therefore, any time I arrive at an idea that there was something in my life that God used as an instrument, or as a means, or as a precondition that caused him to save me, I know that I am on the wrong track. There was nothing there, the work is totally that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we can look at Romans 5:1-2:

Romans 5:1-2 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: {2} By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

"Therefore being justified by **faith**". Who's faith? Have you got it now? "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by **faith**". Who's faith is it now? Who did the work? The faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Into this **grace** wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

We have read Ephesians 2:8-9 a couple of times already, "For by grace are ye saved through faith". Who's faith? Again, it is the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. It has to be through the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ because faith is a work and Christ has

done the work. Salvation is through the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ "and that [faith] not of yourselves:". You see it is not your faith, it is not something you have done. It is the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. "It is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast."

Now to close off this little discussion. If you go to James chapter 2, there are a couple of verses that puzzle a whole lot of people and that have puzzled me in the past. In fact, Martin Luther thought the book of James did not belong in the Bible because he thought it was contrary to everything the Bible teaches. You know, he was the one who said, "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). Incidentally, who's faith do we live by in that statement? By our faith? No, by Christ's faith. In fact, that quotation comes from Habakkuk:

Habakkuk 2:4 "Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith."

So who's faith can it only be? Christ's faith is the only faith. And so we read the following in James 2:

James 2:21 "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"

Well, now that certainly sounds heretical, doesn't it? Was he justified by his works? No, not by his works, but by the works of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who did the work to justify him. Remember, it is always Christ who did the work. It is His faith. Every aspect of the atonement is Christ's work. We could paraphrase this, "was not Abraham our father justified by all the work that Christ did in saving him?". The evidence is that he offered up Isaac, his son, upon the altar. In other words, he became obedient. Remember faith is the evidence of things not seen:

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

When we become saved, the evidence of salvation is that we have become to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. The good work of faith is seen in our life just like all the other good works should be seen in our life; and the evidence that Christ had worked to save Abraham was that he faithfully obeyed. He was entirely obedient to God in offering up Isaac. So James says:

James 2:22 "Seest thou how faith wrought [worked] with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

That is, the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was a work, worked with His works of going to the cross, paying for our sins, and all the other things He did in connection with the atonement. The words, "and by works" (meaning the works of the Lord Jesus Christ) "was [Christ's] faith made perfect?" The whole focal point is on the Lord Jesus Christ. The next verse says:

James 2:23 "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it [God or the faith of Christ] was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

That is, Abraham's faith was counted for him only because Christ had done all the work -- He was perfectly faithful in paying for the sins of Abraham. Therefore, Abraham had come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

James 2:25 "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"

Again, who's works? Her work? Absolutely not. She was justified by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ had saved her, and the evidence (remember "faith is the evidence of things not seen") was that, "when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?". In other words, she was obedient. She had come to trust in the God of Abraham, the God of the Bible -- Jehovah God.

Faith is God's Work

So we must understand this principle -- and this is a big, BIG principle -- that we must never countenance any idea that **anything** that is in our lives is a precondition for salvation. That is an impossibility. There are no preconditions. Secondly, any faith, any believing that we have, is never something that is a precondition for salvation or an instrument for salvation. It is the result, it is the evidence, that God is already working within us, and it will be locked in when we become saved.¹ We will from then on have an ongoing, earnest desire to be obedient to Him, to trust Him, because we have been given eternal life. We have been given a brand new resurrected soul in which we never want to sin again.

¹ John 6:29 "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

Philippians 2:13 "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure."

* * *

This message on Faith, was transcribed by M. E. Lee from a Bible study given by Mr. Harold Camping, on February 14, 1999 and was edited by G. D. Mittelstadt.

ARE YOU READY TO MEET GOD?

If you have any questions or comments about what you have read please contact any of the following people or places:

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