

## The simplicity of true faith – part I

### Looking by faith and seeing the invisible

(Heb 11:27) By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

In the book of Hebrews the eleventh chapter we have the term “by faith” occurring 15 times and the term “through faith” occurring 5 times. In the very first verse of the chapter, the Apostle Paul makes a statement as to the constitution of faith. (Heb. 11:1) But what does God intend that we understand by these words.

What is the underlying lesson that he wants us to grasp and submit to? Many have not a clear understanding of this verse of scripture. If we do not have a Christian experience or have lost our experience, we therefore are not exercising faith and therefore cannot have any true experience of faith. We may be able to repeat the verse of scripture, without the saving essence of experience. Hence we have no faith in God. To receive any message God sends it must be received by faith. Therefore without faith it is impossible to please God furthermore make any advancement in spiritual growth and experience.

If you have the gospel, the good news it works in you who receive it, why? Because it is the Power of God. It is impossible to have the gospel, the power of God and it not work in you. I hear professedly Christian Organizations repeatedly say they are God’s Church—and that they have the truth. No man, no church can have that which they have not accepted or have rejected. No man, no church can know the gospel if it has been rejected by them. I also hear the statement — the problem is not that we do not have the truth or know the truth, the problem is that we need to share it. You may believe that it you want. But I say to you brethren, no man or church can give what he does not have as a *present experience*. Having books with truth, reading the bible every day or having it preached to you does not constitute having the truth. The Jewish nation had all of that without profit. To have truth means to have a growing experience with God daily, transforming the life and producing good works in the life moment by moment. If you have the gospel, the Power of God, it is impossible not to share it. Why? It works in you. You cannot help it. If you are not giving it, it is because you do not have it as a present experience. You may have a theory of it; you may have books with it, you may be able to repeat some things about the message; you can do all of that and never know the truth or have it.

The Great Reformer Martin Luther wrote these thoughts on faith.

**“Faith is not what some people think it is. Their human dream is a delusion. Because they observe that faith is not followed by good works or a better life, they fall into error, even though they speak and hear much about it. Faith is not enough they say, you must do good**

works, you must be pious to be saved. They think that when you hear the gospel, you start working creating by your own strength a thankful heart which says, I believe. That is what they think true faith is. But, because this is a human idea, a dream, the heart never learns anything from it, so it does nothing and reform doesn't come from this "faith" either. Instead, faith is God's work in us that changes us and gives new birth from God John 1:13. It kills the old Adam and makes us completely different people.

It changes our hearts, our spirits, our thoughts and all our powers. It brings the Holy Spirit with it. Yes, it is a living creative, active and powerful thing, this faith. Faith cannot help doing good works, constantly. It doesn't stop to ask if good works ought to be done, but before anyone asks, it already has done them and continues to do them without ceasing.

Anyone who does not do works in this manner is an unbeliever. He stumbles around and looks for faith and good works, even though he does not know what faith or good works are. Yet he gossips and chatters about faith and good works with many words. Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace make you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures. The Holy Spirit makes this happen through faith. Because of it, you freely, willingly and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of things, love and praise the God who has shown you such grace. Thus, it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light from fire. Therefore, watch out for your own false ideas and guard against good-for-nothing gossips, who think they're smart enough to define faith and works, but really are the greatest of fools. Ask God to work faith in you, or you will remain forever without faith, no matter what you wish, say or can do."

It takes faith to receive truth and it takes faith to share the truth. "When we speak of faith, there is a distinction that should be borne in mind. There is a kind of belief that is wholly distinct from faith. The existence and power of God, the truth of His word, are facts that even Satan and his hosts cannot at heart deny. The Bible says that "the devils also believe, and tremble;" but this is not faith. James 2:19. Where there is not only a belief in God's word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God."(SC, 63)

Let's take this word of promise. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matthew 7:7, 8.

This is the simplicity of faith that is not understood by many. And so many go about in uncertainty as to how to live in the simplicity of faith. They think that they must have an exhilarating emotion, or a feeling that they have never felt before, and conclude that such must be faith. But is faith emotion or feeling? So faith is hearing God speak and taking God

at his word; it is believing that God will do just as he has promised which gives power for obedience and produces actual obedience. But unbelief has been our life and hence has produced the condition of lukewarmness in the Laodicean church. In this condition faith and love are but only dead works.

We are exhorted to work out our salvation which is by faith. So then it is not possible to work out our salvation in unbelief. In plain words we cannot work out our salvation unless there is faith which works by love. Brethren faith cannot be hidden, faith is never dormant and inactive. The apostle calls it the good fight of faith.

(ITi 6:12) Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses.

All the faith that a person has will be manifested. There are so many that can be named. Abel, Enoch, Seth. How one utilizes his time and talents generally but more importantly to the service of God maintaining a living connection with Heaven that he may act his duty to his fellow-men, and to his God rather than devoting most of his gifts, time and talents to interests which is fading and will fade away in fact does manifest whether he is on the side of faith or unbelief.

Take this example of the simplicity of faith in (Heb 11:4) By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh.

Now watch the simplicity of true faith. Watch the boldness and humility of true faith as manifested by Moses.

(Exo 33:12) And Moses said unto Jehovah, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found favor in my sight.

(Exo 33:13) Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thy sight, show me now thy ways, that I may know thee, to the end that I may find favor in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

(Exo 33:14) And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest.

But Moses was not through yet. He will boldly but humbly demonstrate the power and simplicity of faith.

He continues (Exo 33:16) For wherein now shall it be known that I have found favor in thy sight, I and thy people? is it not in that thou goest with us, so that we are separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth?

(Exo 33:17) And Jehovah said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found favor in my sight, and I know thee by name.

Moses is pushing forward. (Exo 33:18) And he said, Show me, I pray thee, thy glory.

Oh the simplicity of asking in faith, oh he will talk to you as friend with friend.

Another servant of God Abraham is set forth as an example of pure faith. Remember his boldness and simplicity of faith in pleading for Sodom. "God had called Abraham to be the father of the faithful, and his life was to stand as an example of faith to succeeding generations. But his faith had not been perfect. He had shown distrust of God in concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, and again in his marriage with Hagar. That he might reach the highest standard, God subjected him to another test, the closest which man was ever called to endure."(PP, 147)

**Rom 4:17** (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

**Rom 4:18** Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

"**Hope** and **courage** are essential to perfect service for God. These are the fruit of faith. Despondency is sinful and unreasonable. God is able and willing "more abundantly" (Hebrews 6:17) to bestow upon His servants the strength they need for test and trial. The plans of the enemies of His work may seem to be well laid and firmly established, but God can overthrow the strongest of these. And this He does in His own time and way, when He sees that the faith of His servants has been sufficiently tested."(PK, 164)

If we would permit our minds to dwell more upon Christ and the heavenly world, we should find a powerful stimulus and support in our warfare against sin. By faith we may look upon the crowns laid up for those who shall overcome; we may listen to the exultant song of the redeemed: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power;" "for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Pride and love of the world will lose their power as we contemplate the infinite love of Christ, and the glories of that better land so soon to be our home. {ST, June 19, 1884 par. 5}. Oh we need to live and "endure, as seeing him who is invisible. Oh the faith of Jesus.

An unyielding trust, a firm reliance upon Christ, will bring peace and joy to the soul. But let none imagine that without earnest effort on their part they can retain the assurance of God's love. When the mind has been long permitted to dwell only on earthly things, it is a difficult matter to change the habits of thought. That which the eye sees and the ear hears, too often attracts the attention and absorbs the interest. But if we would enter the city of God, and look upon Jesus in his glory, we must become accustomed to beholding him with the eye of faith here. The words and character of Christ should be often the subject of our thoughts and our conversation; and each day some time should be especially devoted to prayerful meditation upon these sacred themes. Ibid

Though Paul was at last confined in a Roman prison, shut away from the light and air of heaven, cut off from his active labors in the gospel field, and momentarily expecting to be condemned to death, he did not yield to doubt or despondency. From that gloomy dungeon

came his dying testimony, full of a sublime faith and courage that has inspired the hearts of saints and martyrs in all succeeding ages: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." {ST, June 19, 1884 par. 14}

The glorious reward that awaits this hero of faith,--a crown of righteousness, and eternal life in the presence of God,--may be won by each of us. Jesus and holy angels are waiting to give us the help we need. Every prayer sent up in faith from an honest heart will be heard, and the petitioner will have his request when he needs the blessing most. Sometimes we ask for things that are not for our own good or the glory of God. When this is so, our wise and good Father hears our prayers, but gives us nothing hurtful. He will guide our feet. By divine grace, all who will may climb the shining steps from earth to Heaven, and at last, "with songs and everlasting joy," enter through the gates into the city of God. **ST, June 19, 1884**

Do we believe that? There can be no more time for unbelief it is now and forever more the time to believe God.

There is a deep, rich, and full experience for us individually to gain. We shall every one of us be tested and tried. We have a rough pathway before us; but Jesus has traveled this way, and he knows just how to help us. Faith lightens our burdens and relieves our weariness by the anticipation of Heaven at our journey's end. Faith rejoices in hope, and is patient in affliction. Faith waxes strong and valiant in conflict, and conquers in the great fight of temptation. We must have a living faith,--a faith that will hold the soul in the hour of trial; for everything that can be shaken will be. May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1884

Will the talents that God has given you here, glorify him in the world to come? It rests with you to decide. God has stated the conditions upon which you may be saved in his kingdom. Says the Saviour: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." If you fulfill these conditions through the grace of Christ, you will behold the matchless charms of the King in his beauty, you will see the attractions of heaven, you will realize at last what is "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" that will be given to the overcomer. Will you have the eternal riches that are reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith? This is the question that each one will have to decide for himself.

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Rom 8:36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Rom 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Rom 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let us do it brethren.

**Yours in the simplicity of true faith**

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