

WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD (Hebrews 11:6)

A. **“The just shall live by faith.”** This declaration of the Christian’s principle of life is found four times in the Bible:

1. Habakkuk 2:1-5
2. Romans 1:17
3. Galatians 3:10, 11
4. Hebrews 10:38.

In Habakkuk we see the difference between the lives of the unjust and the just. The unjust are puffed up and live by their own self-sufficiency; but the just live by faith – their confidence is in God. To them, faith is more than a philosophy of life; **it is the very principle of life**. The righteous shall live his whole life by faith.

1. He is **saved** by faith (Acts 16:31); he is **kept** by faith (I Peter 1:5); and he **lives** by faith (Galatians 2:20).
2. His faith shall be **tried** many times, and in many ways (I Peter 1:7), but faith will always be **vindicated**, because it is more than equal to any occasion. Faith knows how to **wait** on the Lord (Isaiah 40:31), and it is always **victorious** (I John 5:4).
3. Faith defies reason; it moves mountains (Matt 17:14-21). Faith does not always face facts; it never gives up (Hebrews 11:32-39). Faith says, “God is working out His perfect will in my life, and I can wait, endure and suffer.” Faith does not make anything easy, but it does make all things possible.

B. What is faith?

1. According to the Strong’s Concordance, the Old Testament definition is:

Established; trusty; to build up or support; trustworthiness; to foster, or parent or nurse; to render or be firm; faithful; to trust or believe; to be

permanent or quiet; to be true or certain; turn to the right hand – to take the righthand road; assurance; establish; security, fidelity; stability. In the New Testament the definition is: to have faith (in – trustworthy genuine unadulterated); upon, or with respect to a person or thing, i.e. credit – to entrust one’s spiritual being to Christ; believe, commit, put trust with; persuasion; moral conviction of religious truth; reliance upon Christ for salvation; fidelity; convince, conciliate, to assent, to rely; to agree; obey; have confidence; yield.

Hebrews 11:1 *“Now faith is the substance (title deed) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*

2. Your faith is your title deed to eternal life. Just as a title deed is evidence of real estate, so your faith is evidence of your eternal estate in God (**II Cor. 4:18**).

a. Faith is taking God at His Word and asking no questions (**Hebrews 11:6**)

b. Faith is knowing *“All things work together for good to them that love God”* (**Romans 8:28**). Faith does not believe that all things are good, or that all things work well. It does believe that all things (good or bad) work together for good to them that love God.

C. Faith has two sides.

1. One side has to do with the intellect. It is an intellectual conviction that Jesus Christ is God. The other side has to do with the will. It is a volitional surrender of the will to Jesus Christ as Master and Lord. This is seen when Thomas believed and confessed, *“My Lord and my God”* (**John 20:28**). *“My Lord”*- this was volitional surrender; *“My God”* this was intellectual conviction. Together you have saving faith (**John 20:31**). Saving faith is an intellectual conviction that Jesus is God, and a volitional surrender to Him as Lord (Master) of your life. By faith, the mind trusts in God; the heart responds to the love of God; the will submits to the commands of God; and the life obeys in the service of God.

2. Faith is paradoxical. It goes beyond reason. It believes without understanding “why.” It sings in prison (**Acts 16:25**). It glories in tribulations (**Romans 5:3**). It chooses to suffer (**Hebrews 11:25**). It accepts all things as part of God’s will (**Phil. 1:12**).

You are not born with this faith. It comes by hearing the Word of God (**Romans 10:17**). This is why we are commanded to preach the gospel to every creature, that they may hear and believe (**Romans 10:13-14**).

D. THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

THE SHIELD OF FAITH IS A VITAL PART OF THE Christian's armor. You are to put on the whole armor of God (**Ephesians 6:16**) because the Christian life is a warfare, a spiritual conflict.

As Paul names the different parts of the Christian's armor, he comes to the shield and emphasizes its importance by saying ***“And above all, taking the shield of faith...”*** For with the shield of faith, nothing can hurt you; you are more than conquerors through Christ. (**Romans 8:37**)

E. The importance of faith is seen in that:

1. You cannot be saved without faith (**John 3:36**).
2. You cannot live victoriously over the world without faith (**I John 5:4**)
3. You cannot please God without faith (**Heb. 11:6**)
4. You cannot pray without faith (**James 1:6**)
5. You cannot have peace with God without faith (**Romans 5:1**)
6. You cannot have joy without faith (**I Peter 1:8**)
7. You are justified by faith and not by works (**Galatians 2:16**)
8. You are to live by faith (**Gal. 2:20**)
9. You are made righteous by faith (**Romans 10:1-4**)
10. Christ dwells in your heart by faith (**Ephesians 3:17**)
11. The Holy Spirit is received by faith (**Galatians 3:2**)
12. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (**Romans 14:23**)

FAITH IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT HONORS GOD, AND GOD ALWAYS HONORS FAITH.

F. LITTLE FAITH

Matthew 14:28-31, *“28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”*

At this stage in the spiritual growth of Peter, he was a man of “little faith.” However, after Pentecost, he became a spiritual giant. Let us take a good look at his “little faith” and profit from it. Jesus came to his distressed disciples, walking on the water in the midst of a storm. Peter asked to come to Jesus on the water. He must have been thrilled at the thought of doing the impossible, because Jesus said, *“come.”*

1. Peter did the impossible thing: he walked on the water by faith.
2. Next Peter did the conceivable thing: he saw the storm and had a second thought – he doubted. For a moment, he lost sight of Jesus. He may have thought he was going to drown.
3. Now Peter did the natural thing: he feared destruction. Doubt always breeds fear.
4. Then Peter did the expected thing: he began to sink – he failed.
5. Now Peter did the right thing: he prayed, *“Lord, save me.”* Immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him. Once more Peter made contact with Jesus by faith.
6. Again Peter did the impossible thing: he walked on the water with Jesus, to the boat. In this lesson, we see the success and failure of “little faith.”

Now let us recap the steps that led to failure.

1. Peter started by faith and walked on the water.

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2. Peter saw the storm and had second thoughts that led to doubt.
3. The doubt produced fear that caused him to sink.
4. This brought Peter failure.

You need a faith that is bigger than the elements that would drag you down to defeat. You can have big mountain moving faith by “prayer and fasting,” (Matt. 17: 14-21) and by feeding your faith on the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

HOW FAITH COMES

Romans 10:17: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Hebrews 11:6: “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Notice particularly the first part of Hebrews 11:6: “**But without faith it is impossible to please him...**” If God demands that we have faith when it is impossible for us to have faith, then we have a right to challenge His justice. But if He places within our hands the means whereby faith can be produced, then the responsibility rests with us whether or not we have faith.

FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD

God has told us that without faith it is impossible to please Him, but He has also told us how to get faith. If we do not have faith, God is not to blame. To blame God for our lack of faith is nothing in the world but ignorance. If we lack faith, we are to blame.

This is also true concerning faith for salvation. Faith for salvation also comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Paul said in Ephesians 2:8: “**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.**” We know that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, but how are we to get faith to get saved? Romans chapter 10 tells us.

Romans 10:8-10, 13, 14: “8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, THE WORD OF FAITH, WHICH WE PREACH;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation... 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed: and HOW SHALL THEY BELIEVE IN HIM OF WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

Men are saved by hearing God's Word, because the scripture says, **"...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"** (Romans 10:17). You cannot believe and have faith without hearing the Word.

In Acts 10 and 11 we read about Cornelius, who although devout, had not yet been saved. He had not heard the gospel yet, so how could he have been saved? No, Cornelius was not saved until he heard Peter preach.

An angel of the Lord appeared to Cornelius in Acts 10:3. The angel who spoke to Cornelius could not preach the gospel to Cornelius because angels cannot preach the gospel; God sent men to preach. Remember Jesus said, **"...Go YE into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"** (Mark 16:15). But the angel could tell Cornelius where to go to get someone who could preach the gospel to him (Acts 11:13).

The angel instructed Cornelius to call for Peter in Acts 10:5-6. **"And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."**

Acts 11:14 reports that the angel said that Peter would preach the gospel to Cornelius: **"Who shall tell thee WORDS, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."** This verse shows us that men are saved by hearing words – God's Word. You cannot believe without hearing. So many are trying to believe without hearing.

How does faith for healing come? The same way, by hearing the word of God concerning healing. In Acts 14 we are told of the impotent man who received his healing because of what he heard.

Acts 14:7-10: **"7 And there they PREACHED the GOSPEL. 8 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 steadfastly 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."**

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The casual reader of the Word of God might say, “Isn’t it wonderful how Paul healed that man?” You have heard that said, and so have I. But Paul did not heal the man. The man was not healed because Paul was an apostle. The man was not healed by Paul’s faith. The man himself had the faith to be healed. But notice what had to take place before this man was healed: **“And there they (Paul and Barnabas) PREACHED the GOSPEL”** (Acts 14:7).

Paul did three things:

1. He preached the gospel to the man.
2. He perceived that the man had faith to be healed.
3. He told the man to rise up and walk

The man also did three things:

1. He heard Paul preach the gospel.
2. He had faith to be healed.
3. He leaped up and walked.

The man was not healed by some special power that Paul had. The man himself had faith to be healed. Where and how did he get faith to be healed? He got it from what he heard!

Remember Acts 14:9 says, **“The same [man] heard Paul SPEAK...”** What did Paul speak? Verse 7 says, **“And there they PREACHED the GOSPEL.”** If Paul preached what we call the gospel of salvation, how did the man get faith to be healed? The man got faith to be healed because Paul preached what the Bible calls the gospel, which also includes healing.

Many hear preaching to be saved, but many churches do not preach that the gospel includes healing. Faith to be healed has not been done away with. In Mark 5:34 Jesus spoke to the woman with the issue of blood and said, **“...Daughter, THY FAITH hath made thee whole; go in peace and be whole of thy plague.”**

The bible clearly shows that faith has not been done away with. It was the woman’s faith that made her whole.

HEALING IS PART OF THE GOSPEL

Paul preached the gospel of salvation which includes healing. The Bible simply calls it the gospel. How do we know he did? Let us look at **Romans 1:16**.

“For I am not ashamed of the GOSPEL OF CHRIST: for it is the power of God unto SALVATION to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

The Hebrew and Greek words for salvation imply the ideas of deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and soundness. The gospel is the power of God unto each of these: deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and soundness. Paul preached the full gospel, not just part of it.

Other scriptures indicate that healing was part of the gospel also:

Acts 8:5-8: ***“5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and PREACHED CHRIST (the gospel) unto them. 6 and the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing THE MIRACLES which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were HEALED. 8 and there was great joy in that city.”***

Notice in **verse 7** the miracles that followed the preaching of the Word – the gospel. Those healing miracles and deliverances all came about as the result of preaching Christ. The people heard the word preached and received.

The New Testament knows no Christ without Christ the healer. Physical healing – divine healing – is a part of the gospel. If there is no gospel of healing today then none of us has a gospel of salvation to preach either because **healing is included in the atonement** (**Isaiah 53:4, 5**).

There was a Baptist minister by the name of P.C. Nelson. He said, “Healing is part and parcel of the gospel.” During his pastoring of a church in Detroit Michigan he was run over by an automobile. The doctors told him that one of his legs would have to be taken off at the knee. They told him if by some “miracle” it did not have to be amputated it would be stiff for the rest of his life.

He testified that as he laid in the hospital bed that the Lord began to talk with him and brought **James 5:14 and 15** to his mind that said:

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“Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”

He tried to excuse himself because his denomination did not practice that in the church. But he knew someone that did practice it and asked him to come pray for him. They anointed him with oil and prayed, and he was healed. God’s word is good. ***“... faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”*** (Romans 10:17).

Why did the woman with the issue of blood receive healing? In **Mark 5:27, 28, 34** it says:

“WHEN SHE HAD HEARD OF JESUS, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. 28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole... 34 and he said unto her, Daughter thy faith hath made thee whole...”

Where did she get her faith? She HEARD ABOUT JESUS. This built her faith that she could also be healed.

In **Matthew 8:17** it says, ***“that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying, HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES, and BARE OUR INFIRMITIES (sicknesses).”***

Again, in **1 Peter 2:24** it says, ***“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: BY WHOSE STRIPES YE WERE HEALED.”***

Isaiah 53 points to what Christ would do in the future, but **1 Peter** points to what he has already done. As we believe these verses that they are for us today, we build our faith up to receive healing.

When it comes to faith, we must remember that it comes by hearing. Whether it is a preacher preaching the word of God and your faith is built, or your own reading aloud of the word of God that develops faith, we must remember that it comes by hearing.

We act on what the Word of God says, and not our own thoughts that deny it is for us. Salvation and healing are ours today as much as they were when Paul, Peter, and the rest preached it in the book of Acts.