

2020 Fall College Conference
NY, NJ & E. Canada

FAITH, LOVE AND HOPE FOR THE LORD'S COMING

Message Two

Faith for the Lord's Coming

Scripture Reading: Matt. 24: 1-3; Heb. 12:1-2

- I. We need to see the signs of the Lord's second and imminent coming—Matt. 24:1-3:**
- A. Before the day of the Lord's second coming, the apostasy will come, and the man of lawlessness, Antichrist, will be revealed—2 Thes. 2:3, 7:
 - 1. Sin is lawlessness, which is the living of a life outside of and not under the principle of God's ruling over man—1 John 3:4.
 - 2. The mystery of lawlessness is working today among the nations and in human society until Antichrist as the man of lawlessness is revealed; because the perishing ones do not receive the love of the truth, God sends to them an operation of error, an active power of misleading, that they might believe the lie—2 Thes. 2:11.
 - 3. Thus, we can see that Isaiah 5:20 is fulfilled with the ones who believe the lie—"Woe to those who call evil good, /Who put bitter for sweet, /And sweet for bitter!"
 - B. A sign of the Lord's second coming is a lack of faith among many of His believers—"when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"—Luke 18:8.
 - C. Another sign of the Lord's second coming is that "because lawlessness will be multiplied, the love of the many will grow cold"—Matt. 24:12; Rev. 2:4.
- II. We need to look away unto Jesus—the Author and Perfecter of our faith—with undivided attention by turning away from every other object—Heb. 12:1-2; S.S. 1:4; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Psalms 27:4:**
- A. The faith of the believers is actually not their own faith but Christ entering into them to be their faith—Rom. 3:22 and footnote 1; Gal. 2:16 and footnote 1:
 - 1. Our believing is our appreciation of Christ as a reaction to His attraction and divine infusion—Rom. 10:17; 4:16-20; Acts 7:2; 14:27; Gen. 12:1-3, 7-8; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1; ch. 18; cf. Isa. 60:1, 5.
 - 2. In our natural man we have no believing ability; we do not have faith by ourselves; the faith by which we are saved is the precious faith that we have received from the Lord, the God-allotted faith—2 Pet. 1:1; Col. 1:12.
 - 3. When we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) transfuses us with Himself, His believing element; this faith is not of ourselves but of Him, who imparts Himself as the believing element into us that He may believe for us—Heb. 12:1-2; Gal. 2:20.
 - B. Our spirit of faith is the organ we must exercise to substantiate everything of the unseen God, transferring all that He is objectively into us to become our subjective experience—John 4:24; Heb. 11:1, 27; 1 Pet. 1:8; 2:7; 2 Cor. 4:14:
 - 1. Faith is in our spirit, which is mingled with the Holy Spirit, not in our mind; doubts are in our mind—cf. Heb. 4:2.
 - 2. Our regenerated spirit, our spirit of faith, is the victory that overcomes the Satan-organized-and-usurped world—1 John 5:4, 18; John 3:6b.
 - C. Faith is to believe that God is—v. 6:
 - 1. To believe that God is, is to believe that He is everything to us and that we are nothing—John 8:58; Eccl. 1:2.
 - 2. To believe that God is implies that we are not; He must be the only One, the unique One, in everything, and we must be nothing in everything—Heb. 11:5; Gen. 5:22-24.

3. To believe that God is, is to deny our self; in the whole universe He is, and all of us are nothing—Luke 9:23.
 4. Prayer is the real denial of the self so that Christ may be our replacement and become everything to us; to pray means: No longer I, but Christ—Gal. 2:20; Mark 9:7-8; cf. Acts 9:4-5, 11; 13:9a.
 5. This faith—“O the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here”—J.N. Darby.
- D. Faith comes out of hearing of the word; when we come to the living Word (Christ) in the written word (the Bible), He becomes the applied word (the Spirit) of faith to us—Rom. 10:8, 17; John 6:63; Gal. 3:2; cf. Heb. 3:12.
- E. Faith operates through love; the hearing of faith awakens our loving appreciation, and the more we love the Lord, the more faith operates to bring us into the riches, the profit, of the all-inclusive Spirit—Gal. 5:6; Mark 12:30.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss some of the signs of the Lord's coming being imminent.
2. What is your experience of losing or gaining more faith?
3. Practice speaking the 5 aspects of faith with one another.

Ministry Excerpt:

We need now to consider **the shield of faith in detail**. We certainly are not to have faith in our own ability, strength, merit, or virtue. Our faith must be in God (Mark 11:22). God is real, living, present, and available. We need to have faith in Him.

We also should **have faith in God's heart**. Every Christian must know both God and the heart of God. God's heart toward us is always good. No matter what may happen to us or what kind of sufferings we may undergo, we must always believe in the goodness of God's heart. God has no intention to punish us, to injure us, or to cause us to suffer loss.

Along with faith in God's heart, we should have **faith in God's faithfulness**. We may change, but God does not change. As James 1:17 says, there is no shadow of turning with Him. Furthermore, He cannot lie (Titus 1:2), but is always faithful to His word.

God is not only faithful, but also able. Therefore, we need to have **faith in God's ability**. In [Ephesians] 3:20 Paul declares that God "is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think."

Still another aspect of our faith is **faith in God's word**. God is bound to fulfill all that He has spoken. The more He speaks, the more responsible He becomes to fulfill His own word. We can tell Him, "God, You have spoken, and Your written Word is in our hand. Lord, You are bound to fulfill Your word." Hallelujah for God's faithful word!

We also need to have **faith in God's will**. Because God is a God of purpose, He has a will. His will with respect to us is always positive. Hence, no matter what befalls us, we should care not for our happiness or our environment, but for God's will. **Our environment may change, but God's will never changes.**

Furthermore, we must have **faith in God's sovereignty**. Because God is sovereign, God could never make a mistake. Under His sovereignty, even our mistakes work for good. If God did not sovereignly allow us to make mistakes, we could not possibly make them. (However, this does not mean that we should deliberately make mistakes.) When we are wrong, we need to repent. But there is no need for us to regret, for that means we are lacking in faith. After we repent for a mistake or shortcoming, we must still exercise faith in God's sovereignty. We could not have made that mistake if He had not sovereignly allowed us to do so. Hence, there is no need for regret.

We all need to have a full faith in God, in God's heart, in God's faithfulness, in God's ability, in God's word, in God's will, and in God's sovereignty. If we have such a faith, Satan's flaming darts will not be able to damage us.

(Life-Study of Ephesians, Chapter 65)