

New Testament Sermon Outline 10/12

FAITH

1. Introduction

We are born with faith in our hearts. The baby soon learns to have faith in his mother and father. He cries and is fed, he gets a hurtful pain and mom is there to sooth him. He believes (has faith) that when he has a need it will be met. As he gets older his Dad becomes his champion. He believes everything told him. Total faith. Wow betide anyone who dares to criticise his Dad. Better watch out.

In all this there is no evidence available to the child that in fact anything he believes is true. He takes by faith everything told to him until he grows sufficiently to enquire about the true of a subject.

Later when he chooses a career he has faith he will become the accountant or doctor he wants to be. The more he believes in the outcome the more real it becomes. Often this is called motivation. This however, is the driving force behind the effort. The real factor if faith. Every day we use faith to get by. We catch a bus believing the driver will take us to a known destination. We work having faith that at the end of the month we will be paid.

When we marry we have faith that our partner will be faithful to us. We have no real evidence for any of these assumptions.

2. So what about operating faith in the realms of Christianity?

St. Augustine said In essence, *faith* must be present in order to know anything. In other words, one must assume, believe, or have *faith* in the credibility of a person, place, thing, or idea in order to have a basis for knowledge.

3. Faith - What is faith from a biblical standpoint?

What the Bible says:

Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see. Heb 11:1-2

It was their faith that made our ancestors pleasing to God.

Faith hears the inaudible,
sees the invisible
believes the incredible
and receives the impossible.

4. How do we get supernatural faith? In fact how do we get faith from God?

Ephesians has the answer (See 2:1-10).

- a) We are made alive who once were dead in sin
- b) God, being rich in mercy in love made us alive together with Christ
- c) The saved us by grace
- d) raised us up and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
- e) The reason is that he saved us by grace through faith and the extraordinary thing is that the faith was given to us to believe!
- f) it was a free is the gift of God,
- g) We were not allowed to work for it in case we were to boast.
- h) We then find out in retrospect that we were God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works,
- i) Finally, God had already these good works prepared before we were saved

The Bishop of Durham in 1901 said of this text the following.

The passage (Eph 2:1-10) which we have just read is one of the great passages of all Scripture. The last three verses in particular stand in front of those brief pregnant oracles , which, scattered over the Book of God, seem given on purpose to put in its most concentrated form the message of the Gospel.

5. The importance of faith in the Christian live

The NT makes it very clear that all people have sinned and deserve the wrath and judgement of God. However God sent his only son to live and experience life on earth, die and rise from the grave so he may represent sinful man & woman before God and have each one pardoned. The offer of a free pardon and even more, a close relationship with the living God. The promise at the end of life is to live with him forever. What an offer. To more fully understand and believe this he gives us faith to believe and keep on believing.

Paul is an example

Explain his conversion on the road to Damascus

Not everyone has that type of dramatic experience but all must come into a relationship with God through Jesus by faith.

6. Early Church view.

Paul speaking. Becoming a Christian is repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:20-21)

Faith in Christ is the operative word.

Faith from God produces a spiritual life that we have never had before. We have someone with whom we can relate. Jesus. He can become more real than a human being. God gives us the faith to believe.

Spurgeon the famous preacher once said, A little faith will bring your soul to heaven; a great faith will bring heaven to your soul.

This faith that God gives overcomes all obstacles in life. We go through some awful times but you know God is close by you, guiding, comforting, and leading you on. Even in death he gives a shadow. It is not totally dark.

In turn this faith produces faithfulness.