



The Foundation of the Christian Faith

Course: Salvation

Lesson Six

Title: Faith

Text: 'Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.'
Acts 20:21

Introduction: Two phases of salvation.

Repentance unto salvation must be joined by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance changes the way we think. Faith leads us to trust in Christ alone for salvation.

Faith is putting all our trust in Christ and in Christ alone.

It is well described as: Forsaking All I Trust Him.

Faith in the Lord Jesus means having complete trust in the death and resurrection of Christ for salvation and confessing Jesus to be Lord of our lives. Romans 10:9-10. 'That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.'

If we think we can do things ourselves we can't put our faith in Christ.

We cannot be saved by works.

- 1) Religious (sacramental works). David's great psalm of repentance, Psalm 51:16-17, 'For You desire not sacrifice; else would I give it: You delight not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.'
- 2) Humanistic (charitable works). Rich Young Ruler – give all to poor (can't gain salvation this way but it does bring an eternal reward) then follow me (salvation in Christ alone). Matthew 19:21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.
- 3) Self righteousness by living a good life. All our self righteous acts are as filthy rags Isaiah 64:6, 'But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are as* filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.'

Difference between Christianity and other faiths. Evangelical Christianity trusts in Christ alone for salvation. A person must realise that salvation is through Christ alone not works. Ephesians 2:8-9, 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.'

Faith in Christ and living a good life.

John Locke (1632-1704), 'The reasonableness of Christianity'.

Locke believed that salvation was through faith in Christ and living a good life. This gives man a part to play in his own salvation. But salvation is not a reward; it is the gift of God through faith in Christ alone.

Living a good life comes through the process of sanctification (the life of Christ in the believer). It is the fruit of new life and not the cause of new life.

Personal Testimony: Salvation – saving faith.

I made decisions for Christ but it did not change my life.

My life was changed on a Tuesday night in London at a meeting where a young man preached on Christ living His life in us. Never the same again.

Saving faith came into me.

Introductory Story:

John Wesley Journal, May 24, 1738.

John Wesley's conversion (trusting Christ alone)

'I think it was about five this morning that I opened my Testament on the words : "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that you should be partakers of the Divine nature. . . ." Just as I went out, I opened it again on these words : " You are not far from the Kingdom of God."

'In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation ; and an assurance was given me

that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I then testified openly to all there what I now felt in my heart.'

Exposition of saving faith

1. Faith in Christ alone.
2. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Relationship of faith and works

Main Points

1. Faith in Christ alone. Righteousness comes through faith in Christ alone.
Romans 3:24, 'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus'. Justified freely (for no reason – the grace of God) without works.
 - a) Faith in the cross. Because righteousness comes by faith there is nothing to glory in except the cross. Galatians 6:14, 'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' The message of the cross is that mankind is without hope but the cross puts to death the old man and a new man created in Christ Jesus is raised in newness of life. Having faith in the death and resurrection of Christ. Forgiveness through the substitutionary atonement and new life through the resurrection.

The believer is:

- (a) Crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)
- (b) Buried with Christ (Romans 6:4)
- (c) Risen with Christ (Colossians 3:1)
- (d) Ascended with Christ (Ephesians 2:6)

- b) Faith in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Trusting in His righteousness alone. Romans 4:5, 'But to him that works not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' The word 'counted' means 'to pass to one's account'. It is the righteousness of Christ credited to the one who has faith in Him. Jesus Christ became sin so that we through Him can be free from condemnation and become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21, 'For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'
2. Faith in the **Lord** Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ means confessing Jesus is Lord. 'That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus' Romans 10:9a, '...with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' Romans 10:10b. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. When we believe in our hearts the Lord Jesus then our mouths will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of our lives.

Question: Is it possible to receive Christ as Saviour and not confess Him to be Lord of our lives? No it is not.

This is more than just saying words.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ means yielding ourselves completely to the Lordship of Christ in our lives.

- a. The word confess (Greek 'homologeo') literally means 'same words'. It means to say the same thing. It is God the Father who has given Jesus the name above all names, the name Lord. To confess that Jesus is Lord is to speak in agreement with the Father. Philippians 2:9-11, 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'
- b. The gospel message is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Philippian jailor was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 16:31 'And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house.'
 - (i) When Paul was converted on the Damascus Road he immediately confessed Jesus to be Lord, Acts 9:6a 'And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what will you have me to do?' When a person has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ then they will ask the same question; 'Lord, what will you have me to do?'
 - (ii) The Holy Spirit comes to glorify Jesus and He will always uphold the Lordship of Christ in our lives. The confession that Jesus is Lord recognizes that Jesus has conquered sin and death and has ascended to the right hand of the Father where He is far above all. Ephesians 1:19-21, 'And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:'
 - (iii) Paul explains that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is characterized by the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord, 1 Corinthians 12:3. 'Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.' If Jesus is accursed then faith cannot save us, but if Jesus is Lord then He has conquered sin and death for us.

3. The relationship of faith and works. Works are the evidence of faith. Faith must produce works. James 2:18, 'Yea, a man may say, You have faith, and I have works: show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.' If there are no works then there is no faith, James 2:17, 'Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone.' If we put works in the front we have moved the cart in front of the horse. Faith is the horse that pulls the cart of works.

a) Salvation is more than believing something to be true. The Bible says that even the devils have that kind of faith, and they tremble. They know they will soon face the wrath of God. James 2:19, 'You believe that there is one God; you do well: the devils also believe, and tremble.' It means having faith to trust fully in Christ to deliver us out of the kingdom of darkness where we were the servants of sin and to be brought into the kingdom of the Son of God. Colossians 1:13, 'Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.'

A person may claim to have faith but unless there is a willingness to yield completely to it then the person has doubt in the heart. Faith without works is dead, James 2:17.

Living faith requires action.

It is the action of one who confidently relies upon that which is believed. A person who has faith in Christ will trust Him totally. A person who believes they can still do something themselves can never have faith in Christ. Self reliance will make his or her faith unproductive.

b) Faith will be seen by our relationship with sin. 'No longer servants of sin but servant of righteousness. Romans 6:17-18, 'But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.' It is possible to sin after we have been saved but our relationship with sin cannot be the same. If our relationship with sin has changed then it means we are no longer the servant of sin and we have become servants of righteousness. A servant of righteousness is a person under the Lordship of Christ.

c) Faith will be seen by the fruit of holiness growing day by day. The life of faith. Romans 1:17, 'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.' Faith is continuous and will be seen by its fruit. It is only possible to please God with faith. 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.'

Summary:

Repentance must be joined with faith in Christ alone for salvation.

- 1) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone will save.
- 2) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ has the question 'Lord, what will You have me to do?'
- 3) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is continuous. It is the life of faith and without faith we cannot please God.

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