

“Through Faith”

Lesson Text: Ephesians 2:8-10

INTRODUCTION:

- A. When faith is mentioned have you ever noticed your own reactions?
1. When the term “believe” is used in conversation, what sort of feeling comes over you?
 2. Faith is probably the single most used principle in our lives and also very possibly... the least understood.
 3. In this period of study, we will look into the biblical information relative to faith — listen carefully because it might surprise you to learn that possibly you don’t really believe at all.
- B. **Ephesians 2:8-10** - “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”
- C. The book of Hebrews has a great chapter dealing with faith. It is chapter eleven and begins with this sentence. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
1. Faith is not a feeling — it a motivating principle to life
 2. Faith is not an experience which is indescribable.
 3. Faith is the substance of all our hopes and dreams.
 4. Think of how miserable the world would be without faith.
 - a. First there would be no hope, for faith is the thing that gives substance to hope.
 - b. Second, there would be nothing one could know other than that which
 1. All studies of history, geography, astronomy, medicine, and the arts would be impossible. How, you ask?
 2. If faith did not exist, there would be no way one could believe in a historical figure, for such a person exists only on the basis of written records that are evidence.
 5. We use the principle of faith in so many, many different aspects of our lives.
- D. But the most important aspect of our lives is our faith in God. I call your attention to **Hebrews 11**. When we come to verse **6** we read, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”
1. No faith means not pleasing God.
 2. Furthermore, faith is the real proof that there is a God.

- a. Some who deny the existence of God, or who doubt whether He does, in fact, live, have never come to directing their faith toward God.
- b. The evolutionist has faith in the theory that somewhere in an assumed primeval mud certain conditions prevailed to produce a simple life form.
 1. Friends, that has to be based on very shaky faith — not credible faith in God. It is faith nonetheless and I mentioned “assumed primeval mud” for there is no concrete evidence to support the evolutionists’ hypothesis.
 2. They guess, and they guess again, and then they guess some more — but offer no credible evidence for the elements they assume to have been in existence when life formed on this planet.
 3. However, the evolutionist feels he has sufficient evidence to believe that man today is the evolutionary product of a simple and lower life form that gradually evolved into a more complex one.
 4. But that kind of faith has no real solid or credible basis in fact.
- c. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).
 1. Faith in God is based on credible and irrefutable evidence.
 2. Verse 3 of this chapter reads, “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”
 - a. God spoke all solar systems into existence.
 - b. Without that kind of faith it is impossible to please the all powerful Being who was capable of this verbal creation of all things in the entire expanse of the universe.
 3. The passage in Hebrews affirms that such a faith has rewards. Jehovah God is a “rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”
 - a. Remember that I asked you earlier. . . what you thought of when the term faith is mentioned? Were your thoughts like those of some who believe that faith is the thing that people get when they “get saved.”
 - b. So many people think of faith as nothing more than some sort of experience which they have been told is salvation.
 - c. There are some very obvious reasons why just cannot be true. Certainly faith saves and we are saved by faith, but were you listening carefully?
- d. The Hebrew writer said that the faith that pleases God, **the faith which He richly rewards in the faith that diligently seeks Him.** It is not merely a passive effort in which one says, “I believe.” Faith is work and diligent effort.
 1. Faith requires the very best effort one has.

2. Effort means obey God’s commands.
3. The faith that pleases God is the faith that is active., not passive . . . in working His works . . . that is, God’s works.

WHAT IS THE PROPER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH & WORKS

- A. I realize that upon the very mention of the word “work,” some almost automatically and unconsciously blank it out.
1. They feel works are no part of salvation, that is salvation in Christ, separate from any kind of works.
 2. They repeat the time-worn expression—“You cannot work your way into Heaven—”“We are saved by grace through faith and that not of works.”
 3. These are expressions commonly heard when faith and works are mentioned together.
 - a. What is interesting about it is, that all of these statements are true, up to a point.
 - b. That point is that works of human merit, boastful accomplishments, and works of the Old Testament law certainly are excluded from anything that brings salvation.
 - c. But friends... don’t throw the baby out with the bath water.
 - d. Works and faith are like the wind and the windmill, or electricity and an electric appliance.
 4. **Faith is not Bible faith without Bible works.**
 - a. Listen very carefully to James. He spoke of Abraham and his faith and said, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works and by works faith was made perfect?” (James 2:21-22).
 - b. Notice that faith is made perfect by works.
 1. Perfect is often used to describe something that is complete, something that has all its basic parts, and the parts are all properly related to each other and adjusted to each other.
 2. So It is with faith — works perfect one’s faith in Christ.
 3. Again — these are not boastful works, or works of a legalistic system — or the works of the Law but the works of God.
 - c. Jesus was asked by His disciples, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” (John 6:28).
 1. Can you think of a more appropriate time or occasion for Jesus to say, “Forget about works — they don’t save you anyway, and you cannot work your way into God’s favor.”
 2. That was not our Lord’s response to His disciples. But here is how He did answer. “This is the work of God that you believe in Him whom He sent.” (John 6: 29).

3. Now here is an interesting and important fact. Notice that they asked about works plural and His answer dealt only with work singular. The question dealt with what they, as believers, were required to do — the answer reveals what God expects all men to do. The work (singular) of God includes all acts of obedience to the will of God.
 - a. All the works of God which He commands are encompassed within the basic work which Jesus said is faith.
 - b. If works have nothing to do with salvation, faith is eliminated also, for faith, according to Jesus, is the work God expects us to accomplish.
 - c. Please notice that the work of God is what Jesus intended for His disciples to do rather than something God says He will do for us.

B. Now, let's take one more quick look at **James 2**. In verse 24 he wrote, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”

1. The only place I know where “justification by faith only” is mentioned in the Bible is here —and it is denied.
 2. Justification can never be accomplished and realized by faith only . . . faith without works is faith that is not perfected by works.
 3. And what kind of works perfect faith? The answer is clear now — the works of God — the commands God . . . the commands God has revealed to sinful man by which He has promised to make them new in Christ.
 4. When Paul traveled to Athens, he found idolatry rampant. When he was given opportunity to preach, he made the following statement. “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent” (**Acts 17:30**).
 5. God commands repentance—and repentance is a work of God all men must do in order to be saved.
 - b. Confession of Christ (Matthew 10:32-33) is a commandment of God. . . therefore it is a work of God that a man must do in order to please God as a part of obedience.
 - c. And when Jesus was about to be taken up from Mount Olivet He paused long enough to say, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” (**Matthew 28:19-20**).
1. Baptism is commanded to penitent believers, and:
 - a. Without it faith is not made perfect.
 - b. Without faith it does not save
 - c. And without faith it cannot justify.
 2. Baptism is a work of God commanded to be carried out by man.

3. That which God commands men to do is faith.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Listening friends, be careful that you do not reduce the word of God to a mere work of man.
- D. Faith definitely has a part in your salvation . . . for if you do not have faith, then you will not obey. **Romans 1:5** – “Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith . . .”
- E. Do you have that faith this hour? Will this be the hour in which your belief will bring you to obey the commandments of God?

God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation.