

Faith is Not a Dirty Word

Introduction:

Dirty words? We all understand the concept of dirty words. These are words that are considered vulgar, insulting, and generally unprofitable. The kind of words that no self respecting Christian would have anything to do with. We recognize that these types of words evoke images of things vile and despicable. Now faith on the other hand, is considered to be a desirable condition, one that we are encouraged to pursue in the Bible. So why then would I even have to admonish anyone that the notion of faith is not to be considered in the category of something that can be exemplified by a dirty word? Because although every Christian will mentally ascend to the idea of faith, few actually understand it and how it works. Moreover there is no shortage of twisted, self deluded ignorant people who think that they understand the principles of God, but in reality they are spiritually bankrupt. They become enemies of the faith by robbing others of their faith through empty religion and philosophy. Their attacks on the faith of the church have been so pervasive, and ultimately so successful, that by now most Christians completely repudiate any notion of biblical faith. They prefer to subsist on a diet of fleshly ordinances, and satanically inspired empty promises. My purpose in this teaching is to restore to the body of Christ that which was stolen by these men, and that is the good seed of the Word, which when diligently applied to our lives will produce a good harvest of fruit which is evident to all. I will show what the Bible concept of faith is so that we can begin to judge ourselves as to whether or not we are in the faith. This teaching will be a first step in reversing the error that has plagued the body and rendered it all but powerless in our good fight of faith. It is my fervent hope that the church will stop turning up its collective noses in disgust at the very mention of the word faith, and begin to realize that, contrary to what they have been told, faith is not a dirty word, but it is a most necessary component of our daily lives if we are to live according to the covenant that was established in the blood of Christ Jesus.

I: Foundation Scripture

Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1)

Def. Faith Gr. Pistis(4102): persuasion, conviction, assurance, to convince by argument.

Webster's

1. Unquestioning belief, Holding something to be true without seeing the evidence of it.

Hope Gr. Elpis(1680) to anticipate, usually with pleasure, expectation or confidence, faith or hope

Webster's

1. A desire for some good, accompanied with at least a slight expectation of obtaining it, or a belief that it is obtainable. 2. Confidence in a future event

Substance Gr. Hupostasis(5287) A settling under as in support, essence or assurance, confidence, person or substance

II: The Notion of Now

The most important word in the foundation Scripture is the word "now." Why? Because in order to understand and operate by faith, we must locate our works and confessions. They are the energizers of our faith in the time frame in which it operates. This time frame is in the present or the now, since this is the time frame in which God who is the author and finisher of our faith also operates. In other words the operation of our faith is extremely time sensitive. It is the failure of the church to realize this, that accounts for much of the failure of our faith to produce the promised results. Now that we are on the subject of time, how do we define it?

Time: What is this thing we call time? It is a concept that only has validity within limited frames of reference. Largely it confines itself to the finite and has no relevance at all in the realm of the infinite. Simply stated, I would define time as the interval between the things which were yesterday, the things which are today, and the things to come tomorrow. These intervals are measured according to a convention given to us by God at the beginning, and called times and seasons, and further subdivided into smaller intervals called minutes, hours, days, weeks etc. These themselves are a function of celestial ordinances in the heavens. (Gen.1:14) Again bear in mind that these conventions are only valid within the context of the finite, but are of no use within the realm of the eternal. Consequently whenever God deals with man from the point of view of time, it is only for convenience sake as an accommodation to our limitations as temporal (as in temporary) creatures. God, who is an eternal being, does not reckon time nor is He limited by, or subject to temporal ordinances, since He is not confined to the earth. So then, any references to time as such, are designed to help us to begin to comprehend that which is infinite, using the limitations of our minds which are bound to the finite. These principles are demonstrated most dramatically in the following scriptural references.

A. Gen. 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

This first line of the holy Scriptures already shows the difficulty that the Lord faced in interfacing with mankind in revealing His divine attributes and eternal majesty. The use of the definite article here has absolutely no validity within the context of eternity. By definition eternity can have no beginning point or end point, since if its outer boundaries can be defined, then it ceases to be eternal. The context of this creative effort of the Lord must be understood from the position of His eternal existence in which at some point in "time" He decided to begin to create the heavens and the earth. Picture it this way. The triune Godhead is standing there and somewhere along the line of eternity they say "let us begin" and then they set about to speak into existence the known and unknown universe. Now as far as mankind is concerned it is sufficient for us to comprehend that the universe in which we exist had a beginning but it in no way binds the One who created it and who exists far outside of its boundaries.

B. 2nd Pet. 3:8 " But beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day". Here we have a very interesting insight into the way that God reckons time, or more specifically how He is not at all bound by ordinances. This verse is not to indicate that God's time reference is on an absolute scale of 1:1000. It serves only as an example of how truly timeless He is, and that He uses human temporal ordinances only as a convenience for us in our understanding of His ways.

C. Exod. 3:13, John 8:58, In these two verses we find the curious use of the words I AM when referring to the Lord. The first use is somewhat strange in that it was given as an answer to Moses when he asked the Lord, "who should I say sent me to deliver the people"? I AM, is an interesting name for a Deity. The employment of this term centuries later by the same Lord Jesus in response to a question asked by the Pharisees is even more peculiar since its use was decidedly ungrammatical. However the use of the present tense illustrates with potent clarity the eternal nature of God and how to Him who had no yesterday there can be no "was". Likewise to Him who has no tomorrow, there can be no "will be".

Now, why is it important to understand how God reckons time? Because in order for your faith to work , it must be located in the same temporal frame as God. Namely the "now". The problem comes in when we consider the fact that our physical sense realm also exists in the "now", and it is with this that we usually judge things. So then we can already see a potential for difficulty in calling those things which do not exist as though they did. Because in so doing, we will be speaking contrary to the witness of our senses. This of course is quite illogical and few people are willing to "risk" it, preferring the safety of standing behind the false shield of the natural. There is however no victory in the natural realm because there is no victory without faith, and faith is not of the natural. This is the conflict that keeps most Christians weak and defeated. In the case of most Christians, their confession of faith consists of something along the following lines of, "I know that God is going to do thus and so for me". That statement would be ok if it were not referring to a promise from the Word that the Lord already sees as done. So we can see that by speaking about a promise of God from the point of view of its still

being future to us, is not being in agreement with Him when He has declared it as already done. These kinds of statements, although having the illusion of humility, actually betray ignorance or unbelief of the Word. Consequently there is no foundation of faith to bring the promise to pass. Now as if that condition weren't bad enough, we make matters far worse by making God a party to the failure of our faith, by saying that it wasn't God's will to do thus and so. In fact the problem is that we sent the request to the wrong address, for the Eternal Creator does not dwell in the future but in the "NOW".

What then can we conclude about the relationship between our faith and time? Simply this. Our sense realm is in the now; we touch now, we see in the now, we hear in the now. However the things that we hope for and petition God for, are always in the future, as it is written : for we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?(Romans 8:24). So seeing as there is nothing substantial of what we are hoping for in the present, our faith then serves as the "substance" of that thing which we hope for, substituting for it and thereby satisfying our soul realm until we actually have the thing that we hoped for. Therefore, it is the "substance" that is our faith that allows us to satisfy the need of our senses to perceive things, as well as enabling us to speak and act as though we already have the things that we hope for. This is the essential mechanism of faith, by which it locates our perception of the promises of God's Word to the same realm as He. This is an important consideration since from His point of view He always deals with His promises as though they are already done. The most important element of faith is its ability to allow us to view matters pertaining to the promises of God's word in exactly the same manner. According to Rom. 4:17 we are told that among other things, God "calls those things that do not exist as though they did". Why is this concept so important? Because falling short in this principle is the main reason that even those who are not ignorant of His promises still fail to get their prayers answered effectively. When we lack true heart faith we will continue to speak of the promises of God from the perspective of the future. In this case the law of confession dictates that since you will have what you say, those promises will remain in your future, and thus perpetually just out of reach.

I will illustrate this important concept with the following beautiful Scriptural examples:

Gen. 17:4-5 " I have made you the father of many nations" (Notice the tense of this statement and contrast it with the temporal frame of its fulfillment).

John 11: 1-44 (Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.) In this beautiful illustration we see the Lord Jesus making a declarative statement about His intention to "wake up" Lazarus, even though He knew full well that he was actually dead. These statements were made four full days before He actually carried them out. Remember that faith calls those things that be not as though they were.

Mark 11:12-24 (The cursing of the fig tree)

2nd Cor, 5: 1-8 (the faith that leads to salvation)

III. The Law of Confession

When one thinks of confession, traditionally they think of the Catholic practice of the recounting of one's sins to a priest. This of course is not the biblical concept of confession. In the Bible the word translated confession is the Greek word homologia, which means "to acknowledge or to agree fully", or in more simple terms, "to say the same thing as". It is of critical importance that we understand the power of the words of our mouths, since our very destinies are shaped and dictated by them. Now there are many who would deny the power of your words to influence your life, but such as these are severely twisted and not able to fathom God's Word. For He makes it quite clear that everything about the fabric of our lives is ultimately a result of the words of our mouths, including the very notion of death and life. Those words of death and life not only pertain to our mortal lives, but also to our eternal salvation. We ignore this important consideration at our peril. The law of confession is essentially summed up by Jesus Himself in Mark 11:24, where He draws the parallel between what we say in faith(not doubting) and what transpires in our lives. One must realize that this law is neutral, working

in either direction, both positive and negative. That means that if we speak to our lives those things that are consistent with our Covenant, then those things will come to pass in our lives. However, if we speak contrary to those things then we will have the opposite outcome. Notice what Jesus said in Matt. 12: 31-37. Here He makes a pointed statement against those who contended against Him in rebuking them for knowingly speaking against the Holy Spirit. In His discourse He lays out the foundation of the law of confession, which is that out of the abundance of your heart your mouth will speak. In other words, what you speak does not produce an attitude of the heart, but is reflective of that attitude. Ultimately you will be judged by the intentions of your heart and these intentions, if evil, will be betrayed by the words of your mouth. Take note of v.37 “for by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned”.

Below are listed some other scriptural references that will illustrate this extremely powerful principle.

Prov. 18:21
Mark 11:24
John 6:63
1st John 4:2
Rom. 10:8-10
Matt. 10:32
John 9:21-22
Heb. 10:23

IV. The Importance of Understanding and Walking in Faith

A. Faith is the gateway to salvation

Practically all Christians understand at least on a conceptual basis the importance of faith in the role of salvation. We are clearly shown in the Bible that without faith it is not possible to be saved. Consider the following:

Rom. 10:8
Rom. 3:21-31
John 3:16
John 20:26-29

B. Faith Maintains our Justification (those declared righteous)

Faith is a dynamic element not a static one. It is our faith that not only takes us into salvation, but also maintains us in it, by being the engine that keeps us doing the works of salvation. In other words, faith is not a onetime “confession” that results in salvation, even though salvation may include that initial proclamation of belief in the Son of God. It is a continual stance that encourages us to live our lives in such a way as to exemplify on the outside those attributes that the Lord has forged on the inside.

Rom. 1:17
Gal. 3:11
Heb. 10:38

C. Faith Keeps us from Falling Away

Luke 9:62
Heb. 10:19-39
Matt. 13:1-23

D. Faith Keeps Sight of the Promise

Rom. 4:13-17
Col 1:24-29
Acts 2:36-41
Heb. 12: 1-4

1st Cor 9:24-25

E. Faith Pleases God

Heb. 11:6

2nd Chron. 16:9

F. Faith is our Shield

Eph 6:10-16

V. Where do we get Faith?

Rom. 12:3 (the measure of faith)

Rom. 10:17 (faith comes by hearing)

Heb. 12:2 (Jesus the author and finisher of our faith)

Jude v. 20 (the value of praying in the Spirit)

VI. The Enemies of Faith

No doubt by now you must be aware that there are many things that conspire to undermine and short circuit your faith. The following list of scriptural examples covers the main weapons that the adversary uses against the child of God in his attempt to defeat him.

A. Doubt and Unbelief

Matt. 14: 22-33 (Peter and the tempest)

Matt. 21: 18-22 (The fig tree)

Matt. 8: 5-13 (The centurions servant)

Mark 5: 21-24, 35-43 (Jairus' daughter)

Mark 16: 15-18 (These signs shall follow those who believe)

B. Fear

Matt. 8:23-27 (The wind and the waves obey Jesus)

Luke 12: 22-34 (Do not worry)

Luke 12: 4-7 (Do not fear)

Phil. 4:6 (Be anxious for nothing)

C. Inaction

James 2: 14-26 (Faith without works is dead)

1st Tim. 5: 3-8 (Failing to provide for one's own)

D. Leaven/ False Teaching

1st Tim. 4:1-5

2nd Tim 3:1-9

2nd Tim. 4:1-5

2nd Pet. 3:13-18

2nd Pet. 2 :1-22

VII. The Trial of your Faith

By now it should be getting pretty clear to you just how important faith is to us in our Christianity, and of course this explains why it is so often under attack by the forces of darkness. The attacks on our faith come in several forms, but primarily they concern themselves with matters of the physical world; things pertaining to this present life: food, drink, clothing, shelter and the like. In His teachings in the sermon on the mount, what was it that the Lord Jesus admonished us to do? That is to seek first the

kingdom of God , and then all of the things that pertain to sustenance and comfort in life would be added. The reason why this is such an indicator of great faith is this. In the natural, what is more important to us than the basic necessities of life? Now for us to prioritize them lower than our walk with the Lord demonstrates faith indeed.

James 1:2-3(The testing of your faith produces patience.)

1st Peter 1:7 (The trial of your faith is more precious than gold.)

VIII. Faith and Works

There has been much debate on the issue of faith vs works, and the role of each of them in the economy of God. The simplest way to look at their relationship is this. The presence of both are necessary to be in the will of God. The thing that must be remembered however is that faith always precedes and results in works. It never operates in the reverse direction, meaning that works alone can never result in righteousness. For if they could, and then we would not have needed Jesus. But faith that is true faith will always manifest itself in the corresponding works that will serve as the outward expression of those things that we hold in our hearts to be true.

James 2:14-26

IX. Faith in Action

The following are some biblical examples of what the Lord considers to be evidence of strong faith in operation.

Mark 10:46-52

Mark 5: 25-34

Matt. 15: 21-28

Matt. 8:5-13

Matt 21: 18-22

John 11: 1-44

Heb 11: 4-40 (The heroes of faith)

Conclusion

I think that it is clear how crucial faith is to our relationship with God. Through many scriptural examples, I have shown how faith operates, and how it can be used to obtain good favor with the Lord. Every promise that the Lord has made to us in His Word is true. The reason that we don't see more people getting healed delivered and set free is not because God "doesn't do that anymore", but because we refuse to believe that He really will perform the things that He has promised. Oh but if we would learn to take Him at His word, then all of those wonderful things in His word will surely come to pass in our lives. So guard your faith well for it is the most precious thing that you own, and it is the key to unlocking eternity. Amen.