

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

The Gospel

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

Faith

Reading:
Hebrews - Chapter 11

Part One

The dictionary defines the word 'faith' as:

- Reliance or trust in a person or thing
- Belief in religious doctrines
- A system of religious belief.

This page concerns 'faith' as reliance or trust in the God of the Bible and His Son Jesus Christ (**Yeshua the Messiah**). It also encompasses the concepts of faithfulness, which is the loyalty and conscientious service of true believers. Faith and faithfulness are not New Testament concepts. They are old. The Protestant reformation was, in fact, based on this old and new testament texts:

Habakuk 2: 4: *Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*

Hebrews 10:38 38: *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel often had to rebuke His people for their lack of faith and their faithlessness.

Deut.32: 20: *And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.*

But when they proved faithful, He was not slow to acknowledge the fact.

Numbers 12: 7: *My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.*

Psalms 101: 6: *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.*

In **Sermon 51** found in **Vital Topics** the subject of faith is dealt with. There we learn, amongst others, the following facts:

- That faith, the action of the mind to believe in the Almighty, is reckoned by Him to be a form of righteousness, called '*the righteousness of faith.*'
- That faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- That the purpose of faith is the salvation of the soul.

- That faith increases by hearing or reading the Word of God - the Bible.

1. Faith in Jesus Christ

Where does the matter of faith in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) enter? **The answer is: Salvation from eternal death is obtained through faith in Jesus Christ, Yahweh's only begotten Son.**

Acts 16: 30: "... Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31: *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."*

Salvation is a gift. It is offered free of charge to the whole human race. Though free to us humans, it cost the Almighty the death of His own Son. It is given freely to us simply because we could never afford it. Yahweh's love is so great that He wants us to be saved no matter what the cost - to Himself. All we have to do to obtain salvation - to receive eternal life - is to accept salvation by putting our faith in Yahweh's son - **Yeshua the Messiah**. In other words: our entry, our passport to eternal life in the kingdom of heaven rests in the merits of the Saviour's life and sacrifice, not on our own obedience, however perfect we may believe ourselves to be. In short we receive salvation by faith! Yes, faith in Jesus Christ is the prescribed passport to the Kingdom of Heaven. "The just shall live by his/her faith" as our opening verse proclaimed.

In old testament times it was *'faith in the cleansing power of a lamb's blood'* that procured forgiveness from sin. Every time an old testament believer wanted forgiveness he/she was obliged to offer an animal sacrifice to the Most High. The death of the animal was accepted by Yahweh and the sinner was pardoned. He was forgiven and free to go because of the coming sacrifice of Yahweh's Son. All those animals and birds (lambs, goats, bullocks and pigeons) prefigured Jesus Christ - the Lamb of God!

It is the same today. To obtain forgiveness from sin we need faith in the cleansing power of the Lamb's blood; that is, faith in Jesus the Messiah. The difference between old and new testament times is that now the sinner doesn't need to offer a literal lamb as a sacrifice for sin. All we need for forgiveness in this day is - faith in the Saviour. He is the **Lamb of God**, our once and for all sacrifice for sin. His blood cleanses us from sin - if we believe, if we put our faith in him. That is the where our faith comes into the picture. We need faith in Yeshua for:

- Forgiveness from past sins; and
- Spiritual power to overcome sin in the future.

2. Sons / Daughters of God!

Millions of Christians live under the impression that faith in Jesus has done away with the need to obey the commandments of God. This is undoubtedly the greatest error Christian preachers have ever taught. It has turned multitudes into persistent and wilful Sabbath-breakers. For the fact is faith places a believer under greater obligation to keep Yahweh's commandments. Faith doesn't just point the way to the Saviour for forgiveness from past sins: it also opens the door to obedience, which is the opposite of disobedience (sin). Faith directs a true believer to study Yahweh's law in order that he may improve - purify - his life. Faith in God is the key to right-living, to righteousness. That is what the Almighty means when He says: *The just shall live by faith.*

1 John 3: 1: *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

2: *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

3: *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

4: **Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**

5: *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

6: **Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.**

7: *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

8: **He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the**

devil.

9: Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

In short, we may say that obedience is the outcome, the expression of living faith. Obedience is faith in action. We obey the Most High because that is what He wants us to do. That is His will. True believers will, therefore, seek to learn and keep the Ten Commandments. We will

1. Not serve other gods but Yahweh
2. Not make or worship idols
3. Not take the Almighty's name in vain
4. Remember the seventh day Sabbath (The seventh day is Saturday - not Sunday)
5. Honour our parents
6. Not murder
7. Not commit adultery
8. Not steal
9. Not lie
10. Not covet

To be sure these acts of obedience do not, yea they cannot, earn us a right to the Kingdom of Heaven. I repeat: obedience - no matter how perfect it may be - does not save a person from the death penalty earned for past sins. Just as managing your money well from today onwards does not cancel your past debts. In the same way, obedience can never cancel past sins. That must be done by God. He alone can cancel sin's debt, the death sentence our sins earned us. Nevertheless, current acts of obedience do show that one's faith in Christ is alive: and that we truly appreciate what God has done for us through His Son. Obedience is living faith in action. It is proof that we are the children of God!

1 John 5: 2: **"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.**

3: For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

3. Position in the Kingdom

Some will ask: If faith alone gains a person entry to the kingdom of God, what advantage is there in being obedient? Isn't faith enough?

The answer is twofold:

Obedience determines your eternal position in the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 5: 17: *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

18: For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

*19: Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the **least in the kingdom of heaven:** but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called **great in the kingdom of heaven."***

Persistent disobedience can keep you out of the Kingdom of God.

Galatians 5: 19: *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,*

20: Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

*21: Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which **I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."***

Believers who add obedience to their faith will be given positions of high rank during the millennium and beyond. We see this fact taught in the parable of the servants and talents:

Luke 19: 15: *“And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.*
 16: *Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.*
 17: *And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, **have thou authority over ten cities.***
 18: *And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.*
 19: *And he said likewise to him, **Be thou also over five cities.**”*

This parable shows how that believers who apply their faith in deeds of righteousness will occupy high positions in the Kingdom of God. Where those who blatantly disobey will be stunned to find out that faith without obedience is dead faith: and that dead faith will not get anyone into the Kingdom of Heaven.

James 2: 20: ***“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”***

In other words, if meaningful results are to come, then obedience and acts of righteousness must accompany faith.

Part Two

We live in a world of chaos and sudden change, nothing is guaranteed.

- **Business Failure:** Daily we read of thriving billion dollar businesses collapsing overnight into bankruptcy.
- **Jobs loss:** Very few persons can be certain they will be in work next week. The whole structure of human employment has changed in the past century. No one's job is now guaranteed. You can be employed one day and sacked the next.
- **Health:** The devastating discovery that one has an incurable disease and that medical science can do nothing to help.
- **Accident:** Scarcely a week goes by but some terrible accident wipes out life. In the air, the sea and on the roads, the death toll mounts by the hour.
- **Marital/Family breakdown:** The sudden realisation that an emotional earthquake has hit your life and irrevocably broken up a beautiful relationship.
- **Loneliness:** That terrible sense of total isolation.
- **War/Burglary/Fraud/Fire/Earthquake/Flood/Tornado/Drought/Famine** etc.etc.

The list is long; but you know the picture. Life can be wonderful one day and terrifying the next. How does one cope? Where does faith come into the picture? After all the good book says:

Hebrews 10: 38: ***“Now the just shall live by faith...”***

Is this possible in this day and fast-moving age when nothing is guaranteed? The answer is: Yes it is possible. Let me outline certain spiritual canons which I have used over the years to help me realise the truth of that verse. A canon is a general (in my case a spiritual) principle which can take on the weight of a law. In my case these canons are laws by which I govern my spiritual life.

Canon No. 1

No matter what may come my way, I will never doubt Yahweh's existence, His love, His law and His Word. My present condition, no matter how tragic it may be, can never change or banish these realities. They are eternal. In other words:

Habakkuk 3: 17: *“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:*

18: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

Canon No. 2

Yahweh the Almighty God of Israel is our perfect and loving heavenly Father who always does what is best for his children. In other words:

Romans 8: 28: ***“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”***

This means that no matter what may come your way, God is in control and has some divine, worthwhile purpose in mind. We may not recognise that purpose at the time of disaster, but it surely exists: and our heavenly Father is working His purpose out - for the good of His family. That is the second canon, the spiritual principle to bear in mind.

Canon No. 3

I will never make demands of the Most High. I will seek no signs, no wonders, gimmicks or tricks from Him to bolster my faith. I must needs walk by faith alone - not by sight, evidence and proof.

In other words:

Hebrews 11: 1: *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
2: For by it the elders obtained a good report.”*

Canon No. 4

No matter what comes my way, I will accept it unquestioningly: not because I am an ignorant, unthinking slave, but because I have total trust in the Most High. In other words:

Job 13: 15: *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him...”*

Canon No. 5

I will not condemn myself or any other, simply because I do not know all the facts. We humans know very little. Therefore we should be careful not to judge others or ourselves too harshly. The Master advises as follows:

Matthew 7: 1: *“Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

2: For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

AMEN!

In the Son's Name - For the Father's glory.

Elder: Max W. Mader

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