

## Where does your Faith lie?

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I ask many people the question, “What is your world view?” Our belief system has everything to do with our understanding of God, how we conduct our lives, what daily choices we make, the motivation that we have to accomplish our goals, and the attitude in which we live out our days.

The Bible says that without faith it is impossible to please God. Not all faith is saving faith. What is saving faith and how do we get it? Romans 10:17 says that faith comes from hearing and hearing from the word of God. Saving faith comes from believing God’s word and applying it to our lives. “Make straight paths for your feet” Hebrews 12:13.

Look at Hebrews 11:6. (CEV version reads like this) “Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see. Abraham and his ancestors were pleasing to God due to their faith. By faith we know that the world was made at God’s command. We also know that what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen.

That is the foundation of saving faith. If we are not sure that the creation of this universe was brought into existence by a living eternal God then everything else that we believe will be built on shaky ground. That is the foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is the creator, the sustainer and giver of life. If you read this chapter in Hebrews 11, you will find amazing miracles brought about by people simply believing and trusting that God will perform the events that He promised. We must trust, believe and obey his word if we want the results that come from having faith in God. There is a long list of people from the beginning of time that accomplished great things for God because they asked, listened, obeyed and trusted God to bring results. In verse 33, it says this, “Their faith helped them conquer kingdoms and because they did right, God made promises to them.”

If you are truly interested in knowing the power of God you must spend time reading the word of God. Those who trust in idols and refuse to acknowledge God in their thinking will one day be overcome and destroyed by Jesus Christ. If you read the Old Testament, you will find that the only times that the Israelites lost battles were when there was sin in individuals or tribes who disobeyed the commandments of the Lord. When they strayed so far, God allowed their enemies to overtake them and they were in bondage to heathen nations until they cried out to God to rescue them. Then they were ready to listen and obey what God had commanded them to do for a period of time. God would then send a deliverance to his people until they forgot his commandments and fell back into sin.

In Judges 13:1, the chapter begins with “Once again the Israelites started disobeying the commandments of the Lord so He allowed the Philistines to control and rule over them for forty years. After that time, an angel of the Lord appeared to a woman from Zorah who was married to a man named Manoah from the tribe of Dan. He told her that she was

going to have a son who was never to cut his hair as he would be a Nazirite unto the Lord and he would begin to deliver the Israelites out of the hands of the Philistines. God enabled Samson to do mighty deeds through his strength. He had a weakness for heathen women and it proved to be his downfall.

Samson overcame the Philistines in every encounter until he compromised his calling that God had placed in his life. He had tremendous strength and no one or no group of men could overcome him because God had empowered him to conquer his enemies. . His weakness of being attracted to Philistine women caused his defeat. He fell in love with Delilah, a beautiful Philistine woman who the Philistines used to tear down the strong man. Using her womanly persuasion she lured Samson to trust in her. She began testing him and playing games with his emotions. “If you love me, you will tell me your secret,” she said. Love is misused by the world and many people get disillusioned by the promises made by false lovers. After several games that Samson engaged in with her to tease her, he weakened mentally and emotionally to the point where her insistence and pleading, tears and words of “you don’t love me” caused him to tell her the secret of his strength. He was a Nazirite, separated by God for a purpose, his hair was not to be cut and if he disobeyed he would be like any other man. He gave her the ammunition she needed to destroy him. He put trust in her and took the plunge that separated him from God’s protection. As soon as she lulled him to sleep, with his head on her lap, she cut off his hair. Then she called, “Samson, the Philistines are attacking.” He jumped up expecting to be able to overcome them not realizing that God’s spirit had left him until he tried to defend himself. His eyes were plucked out; he was tied up with chains and taken to a prison in Gaza. Delilah was paid a handsome fee for her services and praised for her ingenious work. The Philistines put Samson to work turning a millstone to grind grain. They mocked him and used him for entertainment when they celebrated feasts to their false gods. The last time they brought Samson out of prison to laugh at him and to praise their god, they chanted, “Samson ruined our crops and killed our people. He was our enemy, but our god, Dagon, helped us capture him.” How sad it was because Samson knew the truth. He had lost his connection with God as he compromised his position by failing to protect his heart, his ministry and calling of God. Now his hair had grown and he asked a young lad to help him get between the two pillars that held the building up in the temple of the heathens. There were 3000 men and women, all the lords of the Philistines were there and the house was full. He prayed to the Lord to allow him to have the strength to bring the building down and to be avenged of his enemies one last time. God heard his prayer and he brought the house down and all who were in the building died. Judges 16.

In Mark 3, Jesus was accused of doing miracles through the power of Beelzebub. These teachers of the Law of Moses had no faith in Jesus and they were determined to tear down

the faith of those who witnessed and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus responded with these words: “How can Satan force himself out? A nation whose people fight each other won’t last very long. And a family that fights won’t last long either. So if Satan fights against himself that will be the end of him. How can anyone break into the house of a strong man and steal his things, unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can take everything. Unbelief, doubts, faith in people, self, riches rather than Jesus Christ are some of the binding forces that Satan uses to tear down the strength and convictions of people so he can steal the power of God from their lives. Many people start out with Jesus, but turn aside when they face trials and temptations and misapply the word of God causing them to be angry at God accusing him of failing them in their time of need. Look at the story of Lazarus.

In John 11, there is a marvelous story of Jesus who raised his friend Lazarus from the dead. His sisters had sent for Jesus expecting him to come to heal their brother and his friend. Instead, Jesus delayed coming until after Lazarus had died and had been buried for four days. His sisters didn’t realize that Jesus was planning a greater miracle for the glory of God than healing the sickness of Lazarus. Mary and Martha felt let down and disappointed that Jesus had waited until it was too late to come to their aid. However, they were looking at the situation with human reasoning, not with faith. Martha and Mary told Jesus that if he had been there, their brother would not have died. Then Martha said, “But I know that even now whatever you will ask of God, God will give it to you. Jesus said, “Your brother shall rise again.” Martha acknowledged that she believed she would see her brother in the day when the dead shall rise in the last day. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he be dead, yet shall he live. And he that lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe?” She answered, “Yes Lord; I believe that you are the Christ the Son of God who should come into the world.” Jesus asked to be taken to the place where Lazarus was buried. When he arrived, He commanded that the stone be taken away. Martha said, “Lord, by this time he stinks; for he has been dead four days.” Human understanding and knowledge was used to reason that this man was decaying and was turning to dust. It was too late to be of help under ordinary circumstances.

Yet Jesus said, “Didn’t I say to you that if you would believe you should see the glory of God?” Jesus called to Lazarus, “Lazarus, Come forth!” He came out of the tomb and Jesus said, “Loose him and let him go!” In Psalms 84:11 it reads “Our LORD and our God, you are like the sun and also like a shield. You treat us with kindness and with honor, never denying any good thing to those who live right.” The answer to prayer may be delayed for the children of God but only due to the fact that He has something better in store for us. We must learn to wait patiently for God to move on our behalf.

There were people standing by who didn't believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. To them, perhaps, they may have reasoned that Lazarus must not have been dead. They may have passed it off as being unusual, but rather than attributing it the power of Jesus Christ, denied what they had witnessed with their eyes. When we refuse to see the Lord in our situations, we can explain it away as something that was mere coincidence. By trying to figure out events in our own minds, we minimize the ability of God's power to do impossible miracles. Look at John 12:9. Just before Jesus was put to death, He was present at a supper with his friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus who He raised from the dead. Many people of the Jews knew that Jesus was there and they came to see him and also to see Lazarus who had been dead and now lived. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death because they realized that many people now believed in Jesus because of this miracle. They wanted to destroy the evidence because they refused to believe and they wanted to destroy faith in others who would believe. In the first chapter of Luke, Gabriel, the messenger angel of God visits a young virgin named Mary. He told her that she was highly favored of God and was chosen to be the mother of the Son of God. She would bear a son and was to name him Jesus for he would save his people from their sins. She asked how that could be since she had never had been intimate with a man. He explained to her that the Holy Ghost would overshadow her and she would conceive and bear a son who would be great and would be called Emmanuel meaning "God with us." He also told her that her elderly cousin Elizabeth was pregnant and was in the sixth month of pregnancy and she had been called barren, but with God all things are possible.

Mary responded with faith as she said "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. Then Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth and spent three months with her and then returned to her own house. There were people who didn't believe and it was their loss. Their unbelief didn't change the facts that a virgin was called upon to bear the Son of God or that an elderly barren woman was blessed with a baby boy who was called to be a forerunner of the Messiah.

I have heard many people say that miracles don't happen today. They still explain things away and minimize the effect of the Holy Spirit that is still working in people's hearts even up to the present time. I believe in miracles because Jesus Christ has performed a miracle in my life. He changed my heart, He gave me a desire and a purpose to serve him, and He gave me the determination to fulfill his purpose in my life regardless of those who didn't believe that He placed me in the family of God and gave me a job to do. I don't try to convince people that God changed my life; I don't have to please people or persuade them that Jesus Christ has redeemed my soul. I need to only please the Lord and do His will.

**I encourage people of all walks of life to discover God for themselves. It is too late for people to try to convince me that God is not real for He has given me peace and joy that I never could have obtained without Him. He has given me a desire to read his word and to minister to those who are in bondage to sin and proclaim the power of the Holy Ghost to set men free from the chains of sin that Satan has them bound with.**

**Jesus Christ has made a way for every person to receive eternal life. The only requirement is that you believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. He will cleanse your heart and give you a desire to live a holy life before God and before people. The Bible says “They will know my disciples because they love one another.” If you read 1 Corinthians 13, you will learn that regardless of the sacrifices you make, the gifts and talents you may possess, if you don’t have love it profits you nothing. As your faith grows in the wonderful, amazing blessings of God that He gives to his children, the love of God will increase in your heart and you will want others to have the same opportunity that someone gave to you. He will put it in your heart to share your testimony and your story with others that they will also desire to have the experience of knowing Jesus Christ. Faith, hope and charity are all important to believers and the greatest of these is charity. They are as important as the sun, good soil, fertilizer, and water are to trees that they may bear fruit. Believe! Eternity will prove to you that you made a wise decision to follow and obey Jesus Christ. Scorners and mockers will one day regret their unbelief for they will come to the realization that Satan deceived them and they will have nothing but sorrow, regrets, and misery for their wages when they stand before their creator, Jesus Christ. We will all stand before Him one day in the future. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and He will one day rule and reign from Jerusalem. Do not delay to search the Scriptures to find out for yourself if the words in this wonderful book are true and the pages contain eternal truths.**