

How Our Faith Saves Us

By *Ron Boatwright*

In order to be pleasing to God so we can be saved, we must have faith in Him. Jesus says, "for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). If we do not believe in God and in Christ, we will not do anything They tell us to do. "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 those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Our faith must cause us to diligently to seek God if we are to be saved. To believe in Christ is to believe and do what He teaches.

But what is faith? "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is not a feeling, an opinion, or a hunch. Faith is based on facts. Faith is a firm persuasion and conviction in what one believes. True faith causes us to place all our confidence in the Lord, and to do everything He tells us to do. Only then will our faith save us.

How do we get faith? "So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). It is by the grace of God through faith that we are saved. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). We can never earn our way to heaven, but we must be obedient to God if we expect to go there. Jesus says, "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, we are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). We are saved by the grace of God when our faith works by love. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but **faith working through love**" (Galatians 5:6). "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for the **obedience to the faith**" (Romans 1:5). In order to receive the grace of God we must have an obedient faith. If our faith is not an obedient faith, then we have a dead faith. "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17). "But do you know, O, foolish man, that faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). "For the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26). Our faith cannot be alive until it acts.

There are many in the denominational world who say that we are saved by "faith only" and that there is nothing we can do to affect our salvation. They say we are saved the moment we believe and accept Jesus as our personal saviour and say the "sinner's prayer". Nothing could be farther from the truth

than this. This may sound impressive but this is Satan's way of causing people to be eternally lost. We do not earn our salvation but we qualify for it only when we have done what God tells us we must do. Satan is trying to tell people today that they do not have to do anything to receive God's gift of eternal life. If Satan can only cause us not to do what God requires, then Satan has achieved his purpose in causing us to be lost. The Bible does not say we are saved by "faith only", but it says the very opposite. "You see then that a man is justified by works, and **not by faith only**" (James 2:24). If one says we are saved by faith only then he is no better than the demons because, "Even the demons believe and tremble" (James 2:19).

Just believing is not good enough for one to be saved. "Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43). God requires action on our part for us to be saved. "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Hebrews 11:4). It took action on Abel's part in obeying God's command. "By faith Noah...moved by godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household" (Hebrews 11:7). Without an active faith Noah would have perished. "By faith Abraham obeyed...offered up Isaac" (Hebrews 11:8, 17). Abraham was pleasing to God because he had an obedient faith. We are not saved by faith alone. We are not saved by works alone. We are saved by "**faith working through love**" (Galatians 5:6).

We are not saved at the point of faith. We are saved when our faith causes us to obey the Lord's requirements in order to qualify for His grace. "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). The Lord has promised salvation only to those who obey Him. Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). We can only go to heaven when we have done the will of the Father. We cannot go to heaven by obeying the "faith only" doctrine of men which is really the doctrine of Satan. The purpose of the "faith only" doctrine is "to pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:7) and cause people to be eternally lost. If we are to qualify for God's salvation we must do what God says, in the way He says, and for the expressed reason He says.

If our faith is to save us then it must act by manifesting itself in obedience to the instructions of God's word. After one has heard and believed God's word, he must repent. Jesus says, "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). We must be willing to confess our belief in Jesus before

men. Jesus says, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him will I confess before My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). Then our Lord says, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Baptism is not a work of merit which man can boast, but one of humble obedience to God. Our faith must cause us to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). Our faith must cause us to obey God so we can be saved and go to heaven.