

STUDY FOURTEEN – WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT FAITH

Introduction

Why Jesus demanded Faith of the Jews bothered me at first, then I saw why. He was speaking to God's Covenant people who had broken faith with Jehovah. Matt. 9:28-30 when the two blind men came for healing, He said, *"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"* They said to Him, *"Yes, Lord."* Then He touched their eyes, saying, *"According to your faith let it be to you."* And their eyes were opened." He said to Martha, *"Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"* (John 11:40). Again, He said, *"If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."* (Mark 9:23).

What were they to believe? Not that He died for their sins and arose for their Justification, not that He was their Substitute who had put their sin away, not that if they accepted Him as a personal Savior and confessed Him as their Lord, they would receive Eternal Life. What kind of faith did He demand? It was not saving faith as we understand it. *"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* (Romans 10:9). He never asked anyone to believe in Him as a Savior who was to give men Eternal Life. He asked them to believe that He was the Son of God, the Healer, the Messiah. He did not ask them to believe in what we call His Substitutionary Sacrifice. He never mentioned it. He did not ask them to believe in His Resurrection, for He had not yet died and risen from the dead.

Mark 11:20-24 is suggestive. They saw the fig tree withered away from the roots. Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, *"Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."* So Jesus answered and said to them, *"Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says."* He is not talking to the Church. He is talking to Jews under the First Covenant, yet in a way it applies to us. He is demanding that they believe in God.

They can see Him as a man. They see His miracles. He has fed the multitude; He has turned water into wine; He has walked upon the sea; He has ruled the winds and the waves; He has raised the dead. In John 6:30 The Jews said to Him, *"What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?"* Theirs was Sense Knowledge Faith. They believed in what they saw or heard. John 20:24-29 is the story of Thomas' unbelief. He said, *"Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."* Eight days after that Jesus suddenly appeared to Thomas and said, *"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving but believing."*

Jesus was not asking Thomas to believe that He had arisen from the dead because He had put his sin away. He was challenging his Sense Knowledge Faith to actually believe in Him. Thomas' faith was in the Senses: what he could see, feel and hear. You can understand that no one who walked with Jesus had faith in the sense that Paul has told us in the Book of Romans. Jesus never demanded that anyone believe in Him as a Savior who was going to die and rise again for their Justification.

The Pauline Revelation had to come before this knowledge of Christ as a Substitute, and the knowledge of the New Creation could be known. Jesus said, *"When He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth. He shall glorify me, for He shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you."* This indicates that there was to be a Revelation of Jesus and the Father beside what Jesus taught in His earth walk.

SCHOOL OF FAITH!

That Revelation came to the Apostle Paul. The basis of it is found in the first ten chapters of Romans. There is revealed to us a Righteousness from God to the man who believes in Jesus. Righteousness means the ability to stand in God's presence as free from sin consciousness as Jesus was in His earth walk. There is no hint of that in Jesus' teaching.

What Paul Taught

Israel's faith was all future. Our faith finds its root in the past in what God did for us in Christ. Abraham looked unto the promise and never questioned or challenged it. We look at the New Testament, the fact of our Redemption, of our healing, of the Father's care for us, and like Abraham we wax strong giving glory to God. Here are a few simple facts that we as sons of God are to act upon.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). That means that the moment we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and confess Him as our Lord, everything God wrought in Christ belongs to us. It is ours. Just as Jesus belongs today to the world because God said in John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.”

The Father has never taken that gift back. That gift today belongs to the people for whom it was given. When you accept that gift, everything that Jesus did for you belongs to you. This has been hard for us to accept. We have been taught that we must pray and agonize and cry for these things. They are ours.

The Holy Spirit has been given to the Church. Luke 11:13 *“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”* The moment you are Born Again, that moment He is yours for the asking. Eternal Life belongs to the sinner. The moment he accepts Jesus Christ, he gets Eternal Life. *“By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourself; it is the gift of God.”* It is a gift. *“We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus.”* When were we *“created in Christ Jesus?”* During the three days and three nights before He arose from the dead. When were we declared Righteous? *“He was delivered up on the account of our trespasses and raised when we were Justified,”* (or declared Righteous). Righteousness is a gift. Salvation is a gift. It is not something we have to earn. In the Revelation that God gave to Paul, He demanded that the sinner have faith in what He did in Christ for him. The sinner must believe that Jesus died for his sins and rose again from the dead. Paul's Revelation declares that after you have believed, the problem of faith is not raised again, for all things belong to you. It is only necessary to know they belong to you.

SUMMARY

You have been through this school of faith. What are your reactions? Much has been new to you. Some of it has confused you because it was so different from anything you have heard before. Your heart knows that it is true. What are you going to do with it? The Church is in a desperate condition. There is little active, living faith among believers anywhere. Won't you help us spread this glorious truth that makes the Father and Jesus, the Spirit and the Word real?