

BELIEVING GOD

By Henry T. Mahan

I John 5: 10-13

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

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Now, the title of my message today is: (**BELIEVING GOD**). If you wish to follow in the scriptures as I bring the message, I'll be speaking from the **Book of First John, Chapter 5: 10-13**. My friends, if there is one thing that is clearly established in the Word of God it is the importance of believing God. I couldn't have a more important subject. You can go all the way back in the earliest days of scripture, go back to the 15th chapter of Genesis and it says, "*Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.*" Abraham believed God! When God called him out of his father's house to go to a land that He would show him, Abraham believed God and went out not knowing where he was going, but he believed God.

When God told Abraham that he would have a son, he was over 75 years of age; his wife was almost that old. They were past the age of bearing children when God first made the promise, but Abraham believed God. When the Lord God came to him to take his son upon the Mount Mariah and sacrifice him as a sin offering to God, he started to the mountain and took his son up to the mountain, not knowing why, but he believed God. From the earliest days of scripture, this man whom God called "my friend," believed God.

Then David, who wrote most of the 150 psalms, summed up all that he said and all that he wrote with this statement: "*I believe God; therefore I've spoken.*" That's the

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foundation of my faith, that's the foundation of my hope, that's the foundation of all that I have to say, *"I believe God, therefore have I spoken."*

In **Hebrews, Chapter 11: 6**, apostle Paul wrote these words: *"He that cometh to God, (for whatever reason, for salvation, for rest, for comfort or for whatever), he that cometh to God must believe that God is, and that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."* He must believe or not come. If any man comes to God he must believe that God is and that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

One day a group of people asked our Lord Jesus Christ, this question, *"What shall we do that we might work the works of God?"* What are the works of God, tell us what to do to work the works of God? *"This is the work of God that you believe on Him whom God hath sent. This is the work of God that you believe."*

Now, my friends, I want you to listen to my text. I told you a moment ago that it is **First John Chapter 5, verses 10-13**. As I read it I want you to listen to the key word. The word is (believe). Are you listening? First John chapter 5 verses 10-13, *"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in Himself. He that believeth not the Son of God hath made God a liar, because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son. This is the record, which God hath given, that He has given to us eternal life and that life in His Son and he that hath the Son of God hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."* Then he says, *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life and that you may believe on the Son of God."* My friends, there is no greater requirement and there's no greater gift, and there's no greater possession than faith to believe God. You see, believing God brings life. Believing God brings peace. Believing God brings comfort. Believing God brings obedience, hope, love and joy. Believing God!

There's so much emphasis today put on the healing of the body, the performing of what we call miracles, but we live in a miraculous world. When the sun comes up every morning, it's a miracle, and when it shines through the day it's a miracle. When it rains it's a miracle. When plants come up out of the ground, it's a miracle. When this body continues to pump the heart, and the lungs pump air, it's a miracle. Everything about God's world is a miracle. Believing God brings all the time, these precious, precious blessings and benefits. To believe God is to have life and joy and peace and comfort, also hope and love. Where you find faith in God, you find these things. These are the fruit of God's Spirit and the fruit of God's presence.

Now, in plain language, I want to talk to you for a little while. I want to answer four questions. These are very critical questions on this subject of believing God. You'll see the importance of it. I've said to you, if there's any one thing that is critical throughout the Word of God, it is to believe God!

Here are four questions; I'll deal with them very simply.

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First of all, what is it to believe God?

Secondly, Who is the primary object of faith? One time, our Lord said to a blind man that He had healed, He said, “*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*” The man answered, “*Who is He Lord that I may believe, tell me who He is?*” I’m going to answer that question. What is it to believe God? Whom do we believe? There is a primary object of faith.

Thirdly, how does a person come to believe God? What’s involved in this thing of believing God? You haven’t always believed God, there was always a time when you didn’t believe God and a time when you did believe God. What’s involved in that passing from death to life, from unbelief to belief?

Fourthly, what enables this believing, this faith to continue? Is it a fad, is it a passing fancy, to some people it is? To some it disappears. With some, it grows; it increases. Faith increases.

Let’s look at those four things in the time we have together here.

The first question is: what is it to believe God? Now this is very important, you read that in Genesis 15, that is the first time this situation comes about. “*Abraham believed God.*” He’s the father of the faithful; He’s the pattern of faith. Did you notice something in that phrase? It didn’t say that Abraham believed (in) God; it didn’t say that Abraham believed there (is) a God. People will say, “Well, I believe there is a God.” That’s not faith. It didn’t say Abraham believed that God was Almighty or it didn’t say that Abraham believed that with God all things are possible. It says that, “*Abraham believed God.*” He believed God!

There’s a difference you see. He believed what God said. He believed that God was able to do what He promised. How do you know that he believed God? Well, he obeyed God. The reason I know that Abraham believed God was because God said, “*Abraham, you get out of your father’s house and go to the land that I will show you.*” He believed God! He could have believed there was a God and stayed there, but when God told him, “*You get out and go to the land that I promised you, and I’ll make of you a great nation,*” he believed God. He believed what God said.

God told him, when Abraham and Lot and their herdsmen, squabbled over the land because there were so many of them that had sheep, goats and other animals, they got in a conflict about where they were going to graze them, God told Abraham, “*Let Lot have the land he wants.*” Abraham believed God and said to Lot, “Pick out the land you want and I will take whatever is left.” Lot picked out the best land possible, the plains by the water and “*Abraham believed God.*” He went to the mountain. Then, when God told him to send Ishmael away, do you remember when he had the son, called Ishmael, He was about 14, 15, or 16 years of age when Isaac was born, God said, “*Abraham the son of the bondwoman cannot live with the son*

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of promise.” The law cannot live with grace. Works cannot live with mercy and grace. Ishmael has got to go! “*Abraham believed God!*” He just didn’t believe in God, or that there is a God, he believed God! God said, “*Send him away, I’ll bless him, I’ll make Ishmael a great nation,*” now you trust me. I’ll make of him a great nation. You do what I say! “*Abraham believed God!*” When he took Isaac to that mountain to sacrifice him on an altar, he believed God.

You can’t separate faith and obedience and I’ll give you an illustration of this. Down in Egypt, God said, “*I’ll pass through at midnight and I will slay the firstborn in every home. Now Moses, you tell the people of Israel to slay a lamb, and take the blood and put it on the lentil and the side-posts and when I see the blood, I’ll pass over you.*” Who in that country believed God? It was the people who had the blood on the door. They obeyed and believed God. They did what He told them to do.

You see, **James** wrote a whole book about that. You cannot separate faith and obedience. If a man believes God, now what is it to believe God? It’s to believe Him and our response reveals if we do. Do you believe God? I didn’t say; do you believe that there is a God, that’s not faith. “*The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.*” Do you believe God? Do you believe what God’s doing? Do you believe that God is able to do what He says and that every promise will be fulfilled? A promise with God is as good as an act; it’s done!

All right, **secondly**: What or who is the primary object of faith? You see; there’s a lot about God to believe. I believe in His greatness and His power, I believe in His sovereignty, “*The Lord God omnipotent reigneth in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and He will give it to whomsoever He will.*” I believe in His majesty, and His glory. “*The Lord is in His Holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him.*” I believe in His Holiness, “*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty.*” I believe in His truth and His justice and righteousness, purpose and providence. “*I know that a sparrow will never fall to the ground without your Father.*” The stars, He calls them by name. I believe His Kingdom and His reign, “*The Lord God Reigns. Say to Israel, your God reigneth.*”

The hymn writer put it like this:

I’ve seen the Almighty power of God
That spread the flowing seas abroad.
I’ve seen the wisdom that ordained
The sun to rule by day.
I’ve seen the goodness of the Lord
That filled the earth with food.
In heaven He shines with beams of love
With wrath and hell beneath.
Tis on His earth I stand and move
And it’s His air I breathe.

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I believe God. I believe there is a God. I believe God created all things by the Word of His power and for His glory they were created. The chief and primary object of faith is not His power, it's not His creation, it's not His providence, the chief object of faith, (the saving faith) is His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now, listen to my text again. You heard it a while ago, but hear it again; *“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not on the Son of God hath made God a liar because he believes not the record that God has given concerning His Son and this is the record that God has given us eternal life and this life in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that you might believe on the Son of God and believing you might have life in His name,”* and keep on believing in the Son, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Now, the scripture says in **Galatians Chapter 4:4-5**, *“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”*

Four thousand years after God made Adam, when the fullness of time was come, when prophecies were fulfilled, when the promises were all made, when the patterns and types were all set forth, when it pleased the Lord in the fullness of time, in the completion of time, as God ordained it. They said, *“Well, show us the Father.”* The Son said, *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” I and My Father are one.* They are inseparable; they are equal. The Son is the exact image of the Father. He's the brightness of the Father's glory. God sent His Son into this world, made of a woman. He who made woman was made of a woman. *“Great is the mystery of Godliness,”* God was manifest in the flesh. He was made of a woman.

That *“Holy thing”* in which was conceived in Mary's womb is the Son of God. God was manifest in human flesh and I'll tell you why. He's the second Adam. He's the redeeming man; He's the God-man. In Adam we die, in Christ we're made alive. By the first Adam came death; by the second Adam came life. *“The first Adam of the earth is earthy; the second Adam is the Lord from heaven.”* All men, all human beings of all races and nations, and colors came from Adam. One man, God made one man, and we all stood in him, and we all sinned in him, fell in him and died in him. Original sin passes through the whole human race. We came from the loins of our father Adam.

Now, God sent the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, made of a woman. Now watch this, *“made under the law.”* Christ became obedient to His own law, in subjection to His own law. Now get this, *“When the fullness of time was come,* (when all the prophecies and promises and pictures and patterns and types were fulfilled, when God's time came), *He sent forth His Son into the world, made of a*

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woman, made under His law” as a man, bone of our bones, flesh of our flesh, the representative man, federal head, representing all who were in His loins, all that were given to Him by the Father, all of His elect, His sheep. He was their Head, their Surety, their Representative and He did that to redeem them that were under the law, redeem them by His obedience, redeem them by His death, redeem them by His resurrection, that we might receive the adoption of Sons in Christ.

The hymn writer said it this way:

Jesus thy blood and righteousness
My beauties are my glorious dress,
Mid flaming worlds in these arrayed
With joy shall I lift up my head.

He’s the object of faith. What is it to believe God? (Believe Him). It’s to believe Him and trust Him. It’s to believe God in Christ, the revelation of God in Christ. No man has seen God, Elohim; we’ve seen His Son. It’s to believe Christ. No man has seen God and any time, the Son reveals Him. The Son declares Him; the Son manifests Him in the flesh. That way we can look into His face and see the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

Recently, we had an eclipse of the sun. Everybody said, “Don’t look at it.” I’d rather try to look at that sun than to look at God in His brightness and His glory. It can’t be done, but I can look to Christ and see the glory of God in the face of Christ (2Cor. 4:6).

Thirdly, how does one come to believe God? Well, I’ll tell you this, believing God, like any other grace or any other spiritual gift is the work of God; it’s the work of God in us. Faith is the gift of God; it’s the goodness of God that leads to repentance. It’s the goodness of God that grants to us faith. Listen to this verse of scripture, “*For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it’s the gift of God.*” What’s the gift of God? Faith is the gift of God. “*It’s not of works lest any man should boast. For we’re His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.*” You see? “*It’s not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, it’s of God that showeth mercy.*” “*Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*” God gave him faith.

The disciples said to our Lord one day, “*Lord increase our faith.*” It’s given unto you not only to believe on Him but also to suffer for Him. You know, we can look into the scriptures and see how that God is pleased to bring His sheep to faith.

Now watch this, all of you know this story. There was an Ethiopian Eunuch, and he was troubled in his heart. He was trouble about God, troubled about sin, troubled about eternity, and troubled about death. He began to seek the Lord. He didn’t know God. He didn’t know the gospel, he didn’t know Christ, and He didn’t

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know the way of life. He began to seek and he took a chariot and went all the way to Jerusalem; he heard that people up there new something about God. He sent out to find some answers. He journeyed to where he thought he could find God amongst some people he thought knew God, but he found no answers. They had religion but they didn't know God. They didn't know Christ, and they didn't know the gospel. He found no answers, and he found no solutions.

He turned around and got back into his chariot and started home. He started searching the scriptures, in the Book of Isaiah. The New Testament wasn't written then. He was reading the scriptures and God sent him a preacher; God sent him a true servant, a man that knew Christ that knew the gospel, a man named Philip. He sent this man Philip, he said, "Preach to this Ethiopian Eunuch who is seeking the Lord, who is troubled in his heart, who wanted to know God, and reading the scriptures." Philip said, "*Do you understand what you are reading?*" He said, "*How can I, unless somebody show me?*" Philip got up in the chariot and began right there at those scriptures and preached unto him Jesus Christ.

Now, this man was aware of God, the creating God, the reigning God, the ruling God, the Holy God, but he didn't know that God in the person of His Son until this man preached Christ to him and when he heard this message, he said, "*Here's water, I want to be baptized.*" Philip said, "*You may if you believe.*" Do you believe? If you believe, you may. This man looked at him and said, "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*" Isn't that what my text says? "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not on the Son of God hath made God a liar.*" This man heard the gospel of Christ.

I say this to you, everyone that is listening to my voice. **John 7:17**, my Lord said this, "*If any man will do His will, (really wants to know His will), he'll know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself.*" If he really wants to know God, he will.

Now, that's how God works faith. There's a disturbing, there's a convicting, there's a troubling, there's a revelation, there's a searching of the scripture, there's a preaching of the gospel, there's a hearing of the gospel, and there's a commitment of the heart. "*I know whom I have believed, I'm persuaded He's able to keep that which I have committed to Him.*" I believe God!

Here's the **fourth** question. What enables this faith to continue? What's the chief support of faith? Chiefly, what does faith stand upon, build upon and rest upon? It looks to Christ. Listen, "*Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in Him. But, we're not of them who draw back unto perdition, but we're of them that continue to believe to the saving of the soul.*" Faith continues where it begins, believing God. We never look to our experience; we look to Him. We never look to our profession; we look to Him. We never look to our works; we look to Him. We never look to our feelings.

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Feelings come and feelings go
And feelings are deceiving.
We trust the ever-living Word of God
Nothing else is worth believing.

We believe God, and faith continues right where it starts. It never gets away from that one point of beginning. That's what Paul said; "*We're the house of Christ if we continue, if we hold fast our profession firm unto the end.*"

Abraham believed God that God was able to do all that He said and that's where he started and that's where he died, believing God. Abraham left home not knowing where he was going, but he left home believing God. When he came to die, he was looking for a city, he was going to another home and he hadn't seen that one either. It was the same faith that brought him out of his father's house on earth and took him to his Father's house in glory. That's it! You talk about faith continuing and faith persevering; it depends on whom you believe. If you are looking to your experience, you've got real trouble. If you're looking to your feeling, real trouble. But, if you are looking to Him who never moves, ever lives, never changes, your faith continues and takes you home.