

Visible Faith

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Last week you heard the story of the man who was sick of the palsy who was carried to Jesus by four other men. When they could not get close enough to see Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof and let down the bed whereon the sick man lay.

The Bible says in **Mark 2:5** that **When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.**

The subject of faith is no doubt one of the most all encompassing subjects in the Bible; it seems that nearly everything depends upon it in some way or another.

As a believer, you are going to be learning about faith your whole life long; and quite likely there will still be a great deal to learn in heaven after that.

As saved, Bible-believing, Bible-reading Baptists we think we know all about faith.

We readily quote verses like **Ephesians 2:8** which reads: **For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:** and others like **Romans 3:28** which says: **Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**

We do tend, however to shy away from verses like **James 2:20** Which says: **But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?**

The Bible defines faith quite clearly; both by definition of the various terms used and by direct statement:

Faith = pistis

pis'-tis

From [G3982](#); *persuasion*, that is, *credence*; moral *conviction* (of *religious* truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially **reliance upon** Christ for salvation; abstractly *constancy* in such profession; by extension the system of religious (Gospel) *truth* itself: - assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.

The term “believe” which we use even more readily is but an extension of this term faith. To believe means simply to “have faith.”

Believe = pisteuō

pist-yoo'-o

From [G4102](#); **to have faith** (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), that is, *credit*, by implication to *entrust* (especially one's spiritual well being to Christ): - believe (-r), commit (to trust), **put in trust with**.

Look at this direct statement in **Hebrews 11:1**
Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen.

It is easy to see that faith is based in substance and evidence; trusting (if you will) in that which is real and factual and provable.

Faith is our means of connection to and with God; that makes it imperative that we understand at least something about it.

Look at this statement in **Hebrews 11:6** *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Unlike the rest of those present at the healing of the man who came through the roof; Jesus really did see the faith of this presumably young man who was sick of the palsy; and was thereby able to say to him, “**Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.**”

(The subject of this scripture passage is about the deity of Jesus; the healing of this man with palsy is but a side note.

Those present immediately concluded that since only God can forgive sin, then Jesus must be a blasphemer.

Based on the evidence, they could and should have correctly concluded that since only God can forgive sin then Jesus must be God!)

The Lord is out to teach us some details about faith today that can and will make a real and eternal difference in each of our lives. The first is that:

I. No one but God can see your faith.

A. God does not forgive sin because we trust Him for other issues.

1. **John 2:23-25**

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

2. The Bible tells us that faith is a matter of the heart. **Romans 10:10** For with the heart man believeth [has faith] unto righteousness;...

3. From the scriptures we know that only the Lord looks on the heart: **1Samuel 16:7** ...for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

4. To be saved from the penalty of sin, the Lord requires that we repent and believe the gospel.

Mark 1:14-15

14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

a. To repent is *metanoēō*

met-an-o-eh'-o

From [G3326](#) and [G3539](#); to *think differently or afterwards*, that is, *reconsider* (morally to *feel compunction*): - repent.

b. It means in this application to change your thinking.

c. It means to change from _____ to _____.

d. If you understand what the change is to, you can figure out what the change is from.

e. The change is “to” belief or trusting in the gospel: the death, burial and resurrection of Christ according to the scriptures.

f. The change must thus be “from” trusting in your dead works or whatever else you may be trusting in.

5. Faith is enough: you can deal with turning from your sins after Jesus saves you when you then have the power of God within you.

6. This man with the palsy either trusted in Jesus to save him and to heal him; or it could be that he was already a believer and confessed his sin to the Lord in his heart and was cleansed according to God's promise to believers in **1John 1:9** *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Jesus forgave this man because of what He saw in his heart.

B. How can others see our faith: our kids, our spouses, our friends, even our enemies: how can we show them our faith when only God can see it?

1. How do men see the unseen?
2. We say things like; "I saw how sincere he was": can you really see sincerity?
3. God is not the only one who deals in faith; take the banker for example:
4. You want him to have faith that you will pay for the new car or the house you want to buy.
5. He is going to want you to put something out there that says you are sincere and serious about making those payments on time.

6. What's he going to want? He is going to want you to put some of your own money you already have into it; it is called earnest money.

7. Others can only see our faith in God when we put something out there that says we really do trust the Lord. For example:

a. **John 13:35** By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

b. Your faithfulness in God's house.

c. Maybe you should let your children see you write your tithe check (you had better be smiling and happy when you do.)

8. What are you putting out there that shows others that your faith is real?

C. Don't get faith confused with good works; good works in themselves do not prove that there is faith.

1. Mark did not say, **When Jesus saw their good works, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.** He said, **When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.**

2. **Matthew 5:16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

3. When there is genuine saving faith in Christ, good works will always come eventually.
4. Some of you have a lot of sinful baggage to unpack that must be replaced by the good stuff and that may take some time.
5. Faith in Christ always produces good works, however, good works are not always produced by faith in Christ; some do good works:
 - a. for recognition;
 - b. for investment return on giving;
 - c. in an attempt to buy favor from God;
 - d. just because of the good feeling.
6. I suppose there are many reasons for good works that are other than because of saving faith in Jesus.
7. It makes for good neighbors but it amounts to no glory for the Lord in the kingdom of heaven.

II. Faith in itself has no power; it is merely that which connects us to the power of God.

*A. Ephesians 2:8 states emphatically that salvation is **through faith**; but it also states that clearly that salvation is **not of ourselves**.*

1. For by grace are ye saved **through faith**; and that **not of yourselves**: *it is the gift of God: **Ephesians 2:9*** Not of works, lest any man should boast.

2. Faith is most definitely of ourselves; it is always said to be *your faith* or *their faith* or *his faith* or *her faith*; it is definitely of us.

B. The scriptures are extremely specific about this:

1. James asks a question to which the answer is a resounding “no”! **James 2:14** *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?*

2. When in **Romans 3:28** we read that which says: *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified [saved] by faith without the deeds of the law.* We also read three verses earlier in **Romans 3:25** how that Paul prequalified this statement as being *“through faith in his blood,”*

3. Which is it? Did your great faith save you or did the blood of Jesus save you?

4. Eternal salvation is definitely something worth boasting about; are you going to brag on your faith or are you going to brag on Jesus?

5. If we are not careful we can be guilty of the same kind of glory-robbing as those blasphemers who claim that salvation ultimately depends on their own good works.

6. The power to make a difference is in God, not in your faith.

Acts 3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong...

One final detail about faith that the Lord wants you to get today:

III. It is right actions, not faith or good intentions, that God will reward.

A. We learned not long ago that there are no special blessings or rewards for doing that which is simply your duty to do.

1. Where on the Marine's chest is that ribbon or medal that is given for just showing up?

2. Where in the Bible have you read God saying, "I will bless you if you *don't* do something"?

3. Doesn't God want you to quit drinking and smoking and drugging and fornicating and gossiping and cheating and lying and a hundred other besetting sins?

4. Of course He does; but God knows like every wise Bible student knows that it takes righteous activity to replace these things!
Proverb 16:3 Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

5. Because of this principle we have learned that: **The righteousness you do is more important than the sin you don't.**

*B. The Bible says that the just shall live by faith. **Romans 1:17** ...The just shall live by faith.*

1. Living by faith is learning how to work the system.
2. That may sound crass but it is very true.
3. If you really do believe or “have faith” that these rules and principles of God’s Word are indeed true and that He is faithful to all that He has promised; it is only right and normal to begin using and applying and claiming by acting upon these rules and principles and promises!
4. Why would God give you a promise of blessing if He didn’t expect you to avail yourself of it? Do you think He is just teasing you?

C. What then will God reward?

1. 1Corinthians 3:11-14

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

2. This is clear enough; what is not clear, it seems, is what it means to build on this mighty foundation.

3. The Body of Christ is the Church; a real one like here at Lighthouse. **Colossians 1:18** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

4. As soon as we are saved we are commanded to be baptized into the Body.

5. As living breathing members of His body we are commanded to bring Him glory in the Church. **Ephesians 3:21** Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

D. Being a scripturally baptized member of the body does not mean, however, that you have done anything worth rewarding.

1. But you cannot even begin building on this foundation without it!

2. Do not confuse us here at Lighthouse with all the non-denominational “feel good” groups.

3. You are not a member here just because you show up.

4. If you want to be a part of the body of Christ here at Lighthouse, you must actually have faith that God wants you here; and then you act on that faith by actually coming up here and joining the Church.

5. Then you will be in place and ready to begin building something that is worth rewarding!

In Conclusion: Faith connects you to the power of God; are you plugged in? Have you trusted Jesus to save you? Are you in place and ready to build?