

FAITH
AND
HOPE

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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FAITH AND HOPE

In this small teaching we will briefly look at the subjects “Bible faith” and “spiritual hope” - their definitions, their functions, the relationship between them and their importance in the life of the Christian.

We as Believers have the presence of God within us, so it is reasonable to believe that God’s power must also reside within us as a potential. You will see as we study Bible Faith and Spiritual Hope that all things obtained from God come by His grace through the faith that He develops deep within us. In this way, God’s power residing within us as a potential is realized, and can be called upon accordingly.

Some of the following material has already been presented in earlier studies. However, the vital truths being examined need to be refreshed in our minds and should be able to be studied at a greater depth by the Series 3 student.

SPIRITUAL HOPE

Background Reading: Romans 4:17-21

The dictionary meaning of the word “hope” is a combination of expectation and desire. In the world today, however, its meaning has deteriorated to that of mere wishful thinking. In contrast, the Biblical concept of hope, which is spiritual hope, is not merely expectation and desire, but includes having confidence and taking refuge in the “*God of hope.*”

ROMANS 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

So to hope in the Biblical sense is to:

- anticipate with pleasure
- earnestly expect
- wait in patient confidence

HEBREWS 6:19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast (Paul uses the illustration here of “a ship reaching harbor after a tempestuous voyage, knowing that her anchor is sure and stedfast” : E.S.B.) . . .

Spiritual hope is meant to be an anchor for the soul of man, a sure foundation which will prevent us being battered, pummelled and set adrift by the storms of life. This hope is found only at the Cross as the sinner, on bended knee, confesses himself as a sinner needing God’s grace. Then God is able to bring him face to face with the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world (John 14:6). Salvation is found in no other. Only through Him, and the sinner accepting Him as Lord and Saviour, can the Blood of the innocent One be applied to our sins so that all can be forgiven and we can be united with the Father - being “in Christ” and established firmly on the Rock of our salvation.

Without this hope in our life, all that we do will cause us to be buffeted and tossed by the waves of life, finally to drift onto the rocks. With this comes final destruction (death) without any hope.

Concerning the things of God, belief alone can do nothing to bring God’s power into our lives. If all we have is belief without trust, then our lives will still be empty of God’s power - that which is needed. All we will have is belief, like the Philistines who were convinced in regard to the power of God but not converted so as to yield to Him. They had seen firsthand the power of God and could not deny it (1 Samuel Ch 5). Nevertheless no change was evidenced in their lives.

Similarly many Christians have seen the power of God in operation, or heard about its results. They believe in it, but still have no trust. They are “convinced but not converted” in relation to God’s power, for they do not have their hope (belief) united with trust. They have trust in the truth that Christ died on the cross for them and then rose again, being now seated at the right hand of the Father. In this grace they have yielded to, they are saved, for they have trust in this hope. Sadly, however, many don’t progress much further than this point. They are Christians lacking the power to truly live for God and to have an impact on the lives of others. They are

Christians who may have hope but who lack the trust to make that hope effectual beyond salvation.

Furthermore, experientially, and sadly, many Christians crawl instead of walking on the road of life in regard to spiritual strength. They do not grow in the knowledge of what the Cross has afforded them. Therefore, because they have no knowledge, they can have little faith (belief and trust). With little faith they cannot draw from the resource of God's grace which is so readily available to them. This results in a faith-walk based on human effort - with no power, no maturity and no victory.

As Christians, we have been called to a present hope, a daily experience of hope, that of being firmly established in the Gospel. The Christian's identity is redefined by hope. We should no longer see ourselves as unrighteous sinners, but realize that God has destined us to be holy, positionally and experientially - for we have the glorious privilege of being identified with Christ and thus clothed in His righteousness. "*For He (God the Father) has made Him (Jesus) to be sin (the sin offering) for us Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Thus we are to live not as the person we once were, but as the person we have become in Christ, empowered through the graces of the Divine Nature which has been imparted by Divine connection.

The hope we have available to us in Christ therefore far surpasses any concept of worldly hope, for it not only promises us the empowerment we need to live a life of victory over sin, it also gives us the joyful expectation of an eternal future which we will spend with our Heavenly Father.

Also, spiritual hope will give us strength, for it is based on revelation knowledge which has been written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:16). We can even gain the strength we need to continue from spiritual hope, which represents an inner vision given by God. However, spiritual hope can only anticipate and expect the fulfillment of God's promises. It cannot birth them without trust being added so that we then have faith in that for which we hope.

Biblical faith always begins with spiritual hope concerning the thing that we are believing in or for. Only through the empowerment and grace of the Divine Nature at work in us can this belief be brought, with the addition of trust, to a heavenly height, meaning that

nothing can pull our thinking down concerning that in which or for which we are believing. This means that nothing on earth or in hell can convince us otherwise. Our confidence would then have reached a level to which only God could bring us. This comes through us yielding to God's grace and obtaining the trust which we treasure and seek. Trust added to belief then becomes faith, the faith by which we can move mountains - of unbelief, oppression or lack (Matthew 21:21-22). Only in this way can we fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12).

Hope is the anchor (foundation) of trust, and combines with trust to form faith. Hope is the blueprint of faith and the foundation of faith. Hope is the Word of God explained - which brings understanding. Faith is the assurance of that which we hope for. The spiritual anchor of hope cannot move, being anchored in God Himself, and thus being steadfast and secure (Hebrews 6:19). The union of hope (belief) and trust constitutes faith.

Remember: Relationship developed is the only pathway to gaining this trust. Just studying the Word at an intellectual level and listening to sermons is useless without developing your personal relationship with the Author of all truth. Christians need to be spiritually, emotionally and in every other way connected to the Lord so that true communion can take place. With proper focus, a transfer of grace can then occur so that one can have "the mind of Christ" concerning the truth, will and heart of God in any area. Amen.

HOW SPIRITUAL HOPE IS DEVELOPED

As we read God's Word or hear it being preached under the Anointing, we come to believe that a particular promise of God is true and available to us. With the Spirit's help we thus develop a two dimensional image or picture in our minds of this promise. As we meditate with proper focus upon this promise, we allow God to reveal the truth of it to our hearts. It then becomes three dimensional. This is how spiritual hope is developed within our hearts.

Therefore, in order to develop spiritual hope, we need to allow God to help us deposit the knowledge of any particular promise in our heart. This is the process by which is created an inner awareness or an inner mould - a three dimensional image. This is the three dimensional reality of spiritual hope, and it is this which

precedes the four dimensional image of faith. In fact one reason God tells us to continually meditate on His Word is so that with proper focus, spiritual hope can be created deep on the inside. (Indeed this is the inner mould into which trust can then be poured so that faith is obtained). For example, the blueprint or inner mould for having God supply our needs should start to develop as we meditate on such scriptures as:

***PSALM 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want
(lack any good thing - Psalm 84:11).***

Because:

***PHILIPPIANS 4:19 . . . my God shall supply all your
need according to His riches in glory (the wealth of God
- His truth, mercy and unfailing love) by Christ Jesus
(made available to us through the Cross).***

As we read these verses of scripture or were told of their promise, and we received the knowledge they contained, we also received the vision or hope whereby we were able to believe that this promise was for us. This takes place through a work of the Holy Spirit deep within us, as we yield and flow with Him in seeking truth. We should always recognize Him as our true Teacher - the giver and revealer of truth. So by a work of grace, we were brought to believe in that which God has written on our heart and mind.

The primary revelation in these scriptures is found in: “*according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*” Only as one understands this can one then move on in the knowledge that God in Christ will supply all our needs. What does this mean? It means that the answer to our every need is to be discovered first at the Cross and not in the stated promise itself. Only with proper focus can the Saint begin to understand the promise. Too many look too hard and too long at the promises until it is too late. They spend their whole Christian life searching and believing for the promises of God, and truly these are “yes and amen” in Christ Jesus. But sadly, most Christians never position themselves to have faith, only belief. The reason for this is that they bypass the Cross, in ignorance thinking that it is only important at salvation. In this they are totally wrong. As a result their outlook becomes skewed, and so they fail to mature

in faith and character. If one comes to the Cross with proper God-given understanding then one's faith indeed becomes personal - very personal for the sinner or the Saint as they connect with God.

What we are saying is that we must always see God's promise through the Cross. This means, for example, going to Romans Ch.6 and understanding it so as to have the proper object for our faith. In this, our relationship with the Lord should become primary in our thinking rather than just the acquisition of temporal blessings (even if this includes the curing of cancer).

Another example of the way spiritual hope can be developed concerns the blueprint or inner mould for having God heal us. Isaiah 53:4-5 tells us:

ISAIAH 53:4 Surely He (Jesus) has borne our griefs (sickness, weakness and disease), and carried our sorrows (pains): yet we did (ignorantly) esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

ISAIAH 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions (rebellion), He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace (the punishment that brought us peace) was upon Him (and Him alone); and with His stripes (wounds) we are healed (and made whole).

Isaiah 53:5 is one of the main scriptures Christians meditate on to help them obtain the hope of, or the blueprint for, healing. As we have learned, this hope is not the hope which is commonly understood by the world today. Rather it is Biblical hope, the joyful expectation that we will obtain the promises of God as we make proper demands on His power.

Again we say: understand the Cross and its prescribed order of victory and you will be better able to believe and trust in the Bible's promises. First the Cross, then the promise - this is the way, this is the journey of faith, properly ordered and undertaken. It is always to firstly know and appreciate the Author, then to seek to understand and appropriate His promises - His gifts and graces.

The proper usage of words is very important for the development of hope, for words transfer images to the soul of man, images which can be of either a positive or negative nature. Positive confession is an important tool which we can utilize in order to obtain real Biblical hope, for confession with proper focus can help us build up a vivid inner awareness of God's Word. Indeed the Holy Spirit can anoint our words so that, brick by brick, spiritual hope can be built up within us. Continually meditating on God's Word and confessing scriptural promises can, with God's help, build up an inner image on the inside which cannot be broken, distorted or stolen by anyone.

Initially it may be hard for some to gain spiritual hope (a three dimensional picture of one of God's promises), just as it is hard to begin anything which is new. For example, when we first begin playing a sport, we generally feel awkward. As time passes by, however, with practice and dedication the particular sport becomes more natural for us. It is the same with our faith-walk. It takes time, dedication and practice for us to learn to walk by faith, always yielding to and relying on the Spirit. It is then not the power of our will but the power of the Holy Spirit - His grace at work within us which brings us to this position.

However we need not only a vertical connection with God so that we gain knowledge and power, we need to experience vertical fellowship with our Father which gives us the intimacy we need to stay under the shadow of His wings. Then we will progress in His will, under His direction and empowerment.

Psalm 1:1 tells us:

PSALM 1:1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful (2 Corinthians 6:17).

PSALM 1:2 But his delight is in the Law of the Lord (the Word of God); and in His Law does he meditate day and night (Josh.1:8).

Because, as Luke 6:45 states:

LUKE 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil (no matter the claims, what is in the heart is going to ultimately come forth : E.S.B.): for (out) of the abundance of the heart (that which he has meditated upon) his mouth speaks.

Therefore those who receive God's Word into their hearts will be as follows:

PSALM 1:3 And he (the good man) shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season (John 15:1-8); his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper.

This is a wonderful picture of the faithful, Bible-believing Christian who is committed to God's Word and their walk with the Lord.

Instead of developing an inner image of Biblical hope, many people develop within themselves an inner image of failure which is based on fear. If you were to ask them if they could feel this fear, they would have to answer "yes," for it is to them a real experience. The foolish thing is that many create such an image of negative expectation within themselves because they meditate, and therefore focus, on all the negative circumstances of their lives. People then dwell on this negative expectation until it becomes so-called "negative faith." This is because they are actually believing in or on something which goes against God's will or Word. They then come to experience the very thing they had feared, the very thing they had come to anticipate and expect (Job 3:25).

To counteract this, Believers need to meditate on the promises of God's Word rather than dwell on the past, present or future in a negative way. They need to have a wholehearted approach to God's Word so that it will eventually become their hope. Then they will begin to see themselves as God sees them and to think and act accordingly (as the Spirit energizes the heart of man by the grace of His Divine Nature).

Therefore we need to believe and confess what God and His Word say we are, not what people say or what the negatives of our past may dictate. For example, with the help of the Holy Spirit:

We need to see ourselves in a position of righteousness, washed and cleansed by the Blood of Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 1:3-7).

We need to see that the old man is dead in Christ, and we are now new men and women with a new Nature that can give us the desire and power to do God's will (Romans 6:3-4; Philippians 2:12-13).

We need to see ourselves as joint heirs with Jesus, seated in heavenly places with Christ as citizens of heaven (Romans 8:16-17, Ephesians 2:6).

We need to see ourselves entering the throneroom of grace to speak with our Father at any time (Hebrews 4:16, Ephesians 3:12.)

We need to see ourselves as sons of God and not slaves of the devil (Romans 6:17-18, Galatians 4:6-7).

We need to ask the Spirit to illuminate (beyond our mind and to our heart) the truths of our Covenant so that we can see ourselves as prosperous and victorious, living in complete health in mind and body - as our soul prospers (3 John 1:2). We need to see ourselves having all our needs met by our Heavenly Father (Philippians 4:19, Ephesians 1:3).

We need a heart-knowledge that our Father in heaven cares for us and wants to shower His grace upon us. He desires, constantly, what is best for us, and sickness, disease, bondage, poverty, worry, fear, etc., are not part of His Kingdom (1 Peter 5:7, Luke 12:22-32).

We need to see ourselves in this position, knowing that the One within us is greater than anyone or anything else (1 John 4:4, Philippians 4:13, Rev.12:11).

We need to know that because of the Cross our old life is dead, and our new life in Christ has given us power over the sin nature (Romans 6:3-4).

We need to see that through the Blood of Jesus we have been given authority over Satan and all his forces (Rev.12:11).

To see all these things means that we will have an understanding or a vision in our hearts and minds of their reality, imparted by God's grace (Hebrews 10:16). This is not an intellectual, mental assent but

a spiritual impartation of God's grace and power so that we can then have holy faith in that which we believe.

These are some of the truths we need to be regularly reminding ourselves of, trusting that the Holy Spirit will work first on our minds and hearts, then in our lives. Indeed above all we need to allow the Spirit to write these truths on our hearts, so that we may be empowered to believe what we are confessing - for we cannot do anything unless He empowers us (John 15:5).

We may need to meditate on these truths for a certain period (hours, days, weeks or months), depending on our openness and spiritual perception, until, with the help of the Spirit, our inner image of who we are in Christ begins to coincide with the truths of God's Word - with who God says we are. This kind of confession can aid us in the development of spiritual hope through giving us proper scriptural focus. Then as we continue to reinforce this lifestyle of faith, we will know victory, freedom and strength. Do not entertain thoughts of doubt or absurdity etc., which the enemy may use to try to discourage you. Reject all such lies in Jesus' Name and stand firm on the reality of the life-changing power of God's Word, trusting in the power within, the power of the Divine Nature, to help you walk in God's will.

Confession is not the answer, but it can be likened to a pair of crutches possessed by a man with broken legs. These crutches can help position him to be able to move from point A to point B. At least he is standing up, and readying himself to progress forward.

In doing all this we must also remember that we need to get to know the Author of our salvation at a personal level. This means not just reading what He has written but allowing Him to reveal to us His heart on that which He has given. Therefore we need to seek an intimate walk with the One who first loved us and died for us at the Cross. Let us always remember to be balanced in our walk - first relationship followed by knowledge. With this as our prescribed order, victory cannot help but come, in an experiential way, to those who are in Christ.

HOPE'S WORK IN US

Without an anchor to hope, man's mind will drift from God's Word. As he does this, His faith will gradually weaken until he retains no connection to the Word in regard to faith. This is because

trust must have something to trust in, and this something must be pure and right in regard to spiritual things - God's Word. Because of our weaknesses (e.g. forgetfulness) and emotional dictates, it is so important to continually meditate, day and night, on the things of God. By doing this we keep the Word afresh in our minds and hearts so that we stay anchored to our hope (God's promises), and do not drift off. Hope is the inner image built up in man through knowledge of His promises.

Hope based in God is a hope beyond this world, and is not dependent on this world. Hope of this kind is registered in the heart of the Believer as a "done deal," an absolute, a complete entity. This hope makes the promises of God more than just black ink on white paper. It makes God's written Words a living, vital, energizing reality even if their promise has not yet come to fruition, having not yet been realized in the present.

Hope is the anchor that gives us the proper focus concerning what God has said and promised. This hope can look forward to the future which then becomes so secure. God's promises are the foundation of our hope and the best is yet to come, "*For this corruptible must put on incorruption (the glorified body) and this mortal must put on immortality*" (1 Corinthians 15:53). With this guaranteed promise, hope sounds the horn of victory saying, "*Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?*" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55).

The Blood of the Cross has given us this hope. Let us then embrace it fully with the help of the Holy Spirit. Then no matter what may happen, because our hope is in God and His Word, we will be secure and at one with Him - because we anchor our lives now and in the future in the hope of His Word. In this atmosphere, faith is born in our hearts. We then speak God's language, that of Divine faith in the power of His Nature (2 Peter 1:4) concerning those things in which we hope. In this, the promises of God are in the present and become a reality in our hearts. Thus victory is assured concerning those of God's promises which we have digested and which are therefore written on our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10).

Again, hope begins its journey as God's promises are explained to us (two dimensional). Then hope in God's promises is given so that we can believe (three dimensional). Finally faith is the assurance of that which we "hope" for, through the union of belief and trust (four dimensional).

BIBLE FAITH

Background Reading: Hebrews Chapter 11; 1 John 5:1-4

As has been stated, faith comes from the union of belief (spiritual hope) and trust. Hope always precedes faith. Hope gives us the boundaries of God's Word, so that we gain the confidence to proceed. Hope is the foundation of faith, but trust in that in which we believe must be added if faith is to develop.

Jesus said in Matthew 21:21-22:

MATTHEW 21:21 “ . . . *Verily I say unto you, If you have faith, and doubt not, you shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say unto this mountain (problem or obstacle), ‘Be removed, and be cast into the sea;’ it shall be done (and nothing shall be impossible for you).*

MATTHEW 21:22 *And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing (having faith for), you shall receive.”*

Let's turn to Hebrews 11:1:

HEBREWS 11:1 *Now faith is the substance (title deed) of things hoped for, the evidence (assurance) of things not seen (faith is not based upon the senses but rather on the Word of God, both logos and rhema).*

Other translations of this verse read:

HEBREWS 11:1 *Now faith means that we are confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see. (Mof.)*

HEBREWS 11:1 *Now faith is a confident assurance of that for which we hope, a conviction of the reality of things we do not see. (Wey.)*

HEBREWS 11:1 Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title-deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality - faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses. (Amp.)

Bible faith is not mere mental assent to a set of doctrines or the outward acceptance of a particular legal code. It involves placing one's confidence in the faithfulness of God in an attitude of loving obedience to His will. In fact to have this faith, we could say, is to have in one's heart the title deed to a particular promise contained in God's Word.

Therefore faith should not be confused with intellectual assent to the doctrines of Christianity, though this is obviously necessary. This is because mental assent alone can only agree that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that every Word is true. When you are confronted with a crisis, however, it will not help you, for it has no substance. Faith involves trusting in the person of Christ, the truth of His teachings and the redemptive work He accomplished at Calvary. It involves much more than mental acknowledgement of these facts. Faith will give you the needed ground to stand on in a crisis, for when you have faith, you are trusting in the Lord of lords, and your feet are planted on the Rock of Ages.

Faith can be defined in terms of words such as: confidence, trust, reliance, persuasion.

The word "faith" is a noun. It is a conviction within, an inner knowing which is so strong that nothing can persuade you to the contrary. For example, no one would be able to persuade you to believe that you are called by a different name than your given name. To have faith is to possess the same kind of certainty.

So when we have the substance of faith we:

- have no doubt in someone or something.
- believe wholeheartedly.
- are fully persuaded with full assurance.
- have absolute certainty in the trustworthiness of someone or something.

Thus having holy Bible faith places us in a position of supreme confidence. Through Holy Spirit conviction, we will be fully convinced that what God has promised will come to pass.

Concerning God, to have faith is to have unshakable trust in the faithfulness of God and His ability and willingness to perform that which He has promised. Being in a position of faith is being able to entrust one's spiritual well-being to Christ, being able to rely totally on Him for salvation. Thus having faith is being in a position of supreme confidence, being fully convinced that what God has promised He will bring to pass. We see as we study this subject that it is the work of the Holy Spirit which brings us to this liberated position, or should we say condition.

It has been said that belief can be changed or even lost when confronted by a more compelling argument. However such is the strength and power of true faith that the person is identified with it to the extent that it can only be taken through death. One's faith expresses the very essence of one's identity, and helps define one's character. It is supremely solid and unchanging.

Faith in Calvary's atoning work is needed daily if we are to have a victorious walk. Every promise comes via this work of the Saviour, and us having faith in it. We must abide in Christ experientially (John 15:5), which means we are not to trust in our own strength or willpower but rather His power given to us through the Cross. This power causes sin, when the repentant nail it to the Cross, to be completely defeated, and no longer to have any rule in their lives. For this truth and legal position to be realized in the Saint's life, they must have faith in Christ's Atonement daily. Otherwise they will struggle to gain victory through self-effort. As Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians:

GALATIANS 2:20 I am crucified with Christ (being identified with Him in His death, burial and Resurrection - Romans 6:3-7): nevertheless I live (in "newness of life"); yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh (my daily walk with the Lord) I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

Wuest speaks of Galatians 2:20 as follows:

“I am crucified with Christ. The verb is in the perfect tense which speaks of a past completed action having present finished results. Paul uses it to show that his identification with Christ at the Cross was a past fact, and that the spiritual benefits that have come to him through his identification are present realities with him. By this statement he also shows how he died to the law, namely by dying with Christ who died under its penalty. The law’s demands were satisfied and therefore have no more hold on Paul. But thus being crucified with Christ, meant also to Paul, death to self. When Paul died with Christ, it was the Pharisee Saul who died. What he was and did up to that time passed away so as far as he was concerned, Saul was buried, and the old life with him. The dominating control of the Adamic nature had its power over him broken.”ⁱ

(underlines added)

GALATIANS 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God (by doing works in my own strength): for if righteousness came by the Law (indeed any law), then Christ is dead in vain (if we could please God and enter heaven by our own works then Jesus’ death was unnecessary).

“I do not frustrate the grace of God” (Galatians 2:21) means that Paul did not nullify this grace by self-effort (law). If we add to the message of the Cross by adding law (works) rather than faith in Christ’s finished work, then experientially we will frustrate God’s grace from being directed towards us. Summing it up quickly one could say: Religion says “I can do it.” Relationship says “Christ can do it through me as I acknowledge who I am in Him, reckon myself to be dead to the old man and yield to the Holy Spirit” (Romans 6:8-13). Then, as with Paul, the past is dead and the power of the Adamic nature is broken - all at the Cross. Amen.

HOW DO WE OBTAIN FAITH ?

Background Reading: Romans 10:8-17

Let's turn to Romans 10:17:

ROMANS 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing (accepting and believing the message of God, the Gospel), and hearing by (the reading, preaching and sharing of) the Word of God.

The normal way we obtain Bible faith is first through either hearing the Word of God being proclaimed or reading it for ourselves. The two senses used in this process are sight and hearing.

As we have said, as we read the Word or hear the Word being preached or taught, we can come to a position of acceptance that a promise of God is true and available to us. In this way we give our mind, with the Spirit's help, the opportunity to develop a two dimensional picture, or understanding, of one of God's promises, i.e. an intellectual understanding or belief that a promise of God is available to us.

As we meditate with proper focus upon this promise (or picture) and allow God to reveal the truth of this promise to our heart through the graces of the Divine Nature, it becomes three dimensional. This three dimensional picture is called spiritual hope, and this is the way it is developed in our heart. Spiritual hope is the mould into which trust can then be poured. Spiritual hope is also the blueprint on which trust is built, the anchor or foundation of faith. In other words, belief gives the boundaries to which trust can be applied, or into which trust can be poured. This is then the next step, the one in which faith is obtained. Once trust combines with belief it constitutes faith.

So once this three dimensional picture is established, we are then in a position to receive from God the trust needed to fill the mould. Through the empowerment of the graces of the Divine Nature we receive this deposit - this gift of trust from God. Such holy trust can only be obtained as the human nature enmeshes with the Divine Nature. To gain this trust is really to have the faith of God, but we must be readied to receive such a gift from Him. Only the enmeshing of the Divine Nature and the human nature at an

experiential level can ready us for this. Once we come to this position of trust, we gain a four dimensional picture which gives us illumination as to the spiritual height, length, width and depth of the particular promise we are believing for - for the union of belief and trust constitutes faith. This is a dimension beyond intellectual understanding which is itself based on the physical realm. To understand this dimension requires faith. With faith the promise will become a reality in our hearts, even though it may not yet be manifest on a sensory level.

Using our faith according to the Word of God will then bring into reality in the physical or sensory realm that which is already a reality in our heart. We will know the promise is ours as we, led by the Spirit, apply the faith we have received. In other words, to birth the promise in the physical realm we must then activate our faith by acting on it. This is necessary because “*faith without works (action) is dead*” (James 2:17-18). This may involve speaking into existence the four dimensional picture in our heart. As Jesus said:

MARK 11:23 “For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, ‘Be removed, and be cast into the sea;’ and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he says shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he says”
(the “mountain” is used as a symbol, i.e., “mountain of difficulties,” etc.; God is a Miracle working God, and will do so for any of His Children, “whosoever”; however, every petition must be predicated as well on the Will of God). (E.S.B.)

Only when the finger of God writes on both the mind and heart of man can proper renewal take place, resulting in holy faith. This is a work of God’s grace. As man cooperates with God, belief and trust are deposited in man’s heart (Hebrews 10:16) - for proper renewal results in faith.

We can also receive one of God’s promises by acting upon faith already stored in our heart. Dormant faith is that which has already been given by God and has been placed in reserve. All we need to do to activate it is to apply it according to the Word of God and the will of God.

Note: Normally the process by which faith is developed takes time. However, this process can, on occasions, as people receive the Word of God into their hearts, be very much speeded up. This will depend on the wisdom of God, the person concerned and their openness, the Anointing present and a whole range of other complex variables. Note too that confessing God's Word can assist the development of faith. This doesn't occur because confession drives away doubt but because "*faith comes by hearing . . . the Word of God*" (Romans 10:17). Confession is therefore not an end in itself but a tool which helps us focus on what God has said. Therefore as we confess God's Word, we will also be hearing it, which can help in the process of developing faith through helping us focus on what God has said.

Faith is not automatic, but God has placed within our grasp the means by which we can obtain faith. So the choice rests with each of us personally as to whether or not we place ourselves in a position to obtain the faith required to meet any particular need.

Many people think that faith is simply their own ability to believe a truth. This concept is usually based on people's own struggles to drive away doubt and unbelief through a process involving positive affirmations.

We need to realize, however, that faith is a gift from God, gained or developed as we cooperate with Him, and not a product of our own devices, however spiritual or noble these may seem. It cannot be manufactured for it is a Divinely imparted gift. Faith is a work of grace by the Spirit in a yielded vessel. In other words, faith is a gift which can only be imparted to the heart by God Himself. The resultant work is a gift of faith so that we believe and trust, like God does, in His Word. As James states, every good gift and perfect gift comes from God:

JAMES 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift (including faith) is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights ("God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all" - 1 John 1:5), with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning ("For I am the Lord, I change not" - Malachi 3:6).

If a Believer doesn't understand the message of the Cross, the only other object for their faith can be their works. This is not the means by which faith is obtained. Bible faith can only come from God's grace at work in us. The only legal means by which the power that produces trust within the Saint's heart can be obtained is by the energies of God's Divine Nature energizing our human nature.

This then is resurrection power at work. Faith can only be obtained through the energizing of our human nature, for only when the Divine Nature enmeshes experientially with our human nature can we really trust in the Word of God that has been given to us by the Spirit of Truth. This then produces holy faith in our life. Without the graces and energies of the Divine Nature being absorbed by our human nature, we can believe to some extent, but not fully trust at the holy level in which we were designed to trust. Only when we have a proper focus, and the energies of the Divine Nature are absorbed by our human nature, can we come to a position of trusting in that in which we believe. This is a work of grace from beginning to end, for it is the work of the Spirit within.

So proper holy faith, pleasing to the Father, can only be worked through the energies of the Divine Nature flowing in us. And as we have said, we cannot trust properly unless the grace of the Divine Nature is at work in us. It is this that causes us to have faith within, and therefore the mind of Christ in this particular area (1 Corinthians 2:16). Also, by this means, Christ lives through us. Without the Divine Nature engaged and enthroned in our heart, we cannot please God properly for this is the only way for us to do the will of God in thought and deed. Indeed we need to cease from our struggles to live a holy life, and avail ourselves of the power of God supplied through His Divine Nature, given when we were raised with Christ with this *"newness of life."*

It is impossible to please God except through faith. The reason for this is because not to believe and trust is to doubt in Him - and this displeases the Father that His child has no faith in Him. To believe God is to honour Him. Indeed faith is heaven's currency. The Israelites perished in the wilderness because they did not believe what God said. With *"an evil heart of unbelief"* (Hebrews 3:12) they tested and tried God until He was grieved and angered by their pathetic response - their rebellion and refusal to accept His Words.

The example of these people not entering into His rest, His promise, is presented as a warning by the writer of Hebrews for Christians today. We too, though saved, can resist God and refuse through unbelief to follow His given directions. Not to trust in Him stops the Lord from giving us what we need. It is the same as saying, “I don’t believe You so I cannot receive something that I believe is not real for me.”

At the most simple level, many receive from God not through faith but because they are humble, acknowledge their wrong, repent of it and then place their life in His hands. In other words, by God’s sovereign grace He supplies the need from heaven to the humble, even though they may not have reached and entered into faith concerning that need.

JAMES 4:6 But He gives more grace. Wherefore He says (in scripture), God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble (Proverbs 3:34, Psalm 138:6).

Simply, to be humble is to be yielded to God’s grace. In this letting go of self, forsaking all others, and focusing on God and His Word, holy communion can be entered into, giving Divine fellowship. As Moses came down from the mountain with vision and purpose, so too, when we enter into holy communication, we can partake in an experiential way of the wonderful grace of God. This communication may bring us to a position of openness, and therefore understanding, so that we can develop the faith needed to be as bold as a lion. It may be just a knowing within or it may be like a loud voice. One thing it will do, however, is touch the soul to change it.

We must all be humble as 1 Peter 1:6 says, so God can bring us out of defeat into victory. But this verb in the Greek translated “humble yourselves” should have been translated “be humbled.” In other words we are to allow God to humble us through the power of His Divine Nature.

1 PETER 5:5 Moreover, all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes Himself to those who set themselves above others, but gives grace to those who are lowly. (Wuest)

1 PETER 5:6 Permit yourselves therefore to be humbled under the mighty hand of God, in order that you He may exalt in an appropriate season, (Wuest)

1 PETER 5:7 having deposited with Him once for all the whole of your worry, because to Him it is a matter of concern respecting you. (Wuest)

Faith takes us on a journey. Therefore it is not to be just a goal. Holy faith is built on truth, God's truth and wisdom. The pathway to faith flows through truth and wisdom, but the pathway also brings us into deeper levels of relationship, therefore taking us on a journey beyond the specified goal of belief and trust.

In the journey towards faith can come fellowship, an acute awareness of God's presence and a Divine interaction whereby a two-way communication takes place. This will never happen, however, unless we allow God to help us take off the sandals of the flesh - self's thinking, opinions, wants and desires. If we only seek faith in order to obtain power to do God's work, we will miss the opportunity to build on our relationship with Him. How can we know Him unless we spend time with Him? Indeed we must be "God chasers" as well as seekers of truth.

In studying His Word the Lord will quite often bring to us a heightened awareness of His presence and power that then causes us to consider Him first in all things. With this will come a deepening of our love for Him that brings us an awareness and an appreciation of His love for us - and so a respect for every Word that proceeds from His mouth. Whether a particular Word was written thousands of years ago, or whether it was given to us personally moments ago by His Spirit, we cherish and appreciate His communication with us - for it demonstrates a living, vital connection with Him.

COMBINING HOPE AND TRUST

Background Reading: Colossians 1:21-23

Hebrews 11:1 tells us:

HEBREWS 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence (assurance) of things not seen.

The Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest defined faith in these terms:

“Faith apprehends as a real fact what is not revealed to the senses. It rests on that fact, acts upon it, and is upheld by it in the face of all that seems to contradict it. Faith is real seeing.

The word “substance” deserves careful treatment. It is *hupostasis* (ὑποστάσις), made up of *stasis* (στάσις) “to stand,” and *hupo* (ὑπο) “under,” thus “that which stands under, a foundation.” Thus it speaks of the ground on which one builds a **hope**. Moulton and Milligan report its use as a legal term. They say that it stands for “the whole body of documents bearing on the ownership of a person’s property, deposited in archives, and forming the evidence of ownership.” They suggest the translation, “Faith is the title-deed of things hoped for.” The Holy Spirit energized act of faith which a believer exercises in the Lord Jesus is the title-deed which God puts in his hand, guaranteeing to him the possession of the thing for which he trusted Him. In the case of this first-century Jew, his act of faith in Messiah as High Priest would be the title-deed which God would give him, guaranteeing to him the possession of the salvation for which he trusted God. Thus, he would have assurance. Vincent translates, “Faith is the assurance of things **hoped** for.” He says that “It is the firm grasp of faith on unseen fact.”

The word “evidence” is the translation of *elegchos* (ἐλεγχος) which means, “a proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested.” Thayer in commenting on its use here defines it as follows: “that by which invisible things are proved and we are convinced of their reality.” His second definition of the word is “conviction.” ” ⁱⁱ
(underlines added.)

People can have belief in a promise of God, but it is only when the spiritual substance of faith is obtained and applied to that promise that it can become a reality. Hence faith is the substance of things hoped for, the title deed of things hoped for.

Faith is realized when one believes wholeheartedly. And as we have learned, faith only comes from God through first the hearing of His Word. We must hear with our spiritual ears and not just our senses, for faith is the evidence of things not perceived by our senses. Faith pertains to God’s grace at work in the heart of man, namely the energies of the Divine Nature energizing man to believe and trust as Christ did when He walked on this earth.

Faith is a real spiritual force or substance. Spiritual hope (heart belief) can be defined as the blueprint, the plan, the goal or the mould into which trust can be poured. If belief is not accompanied by trust, which then constitutes faith, there will be no finished product (substance). Belief is the prerequisite if faith is to be obtained, but belief and trust are inextricably linked in the realization of any spiritual goal. We could also say that hope is the road (the God-directed boundaries) along which a man of faith travels in order to reach the required goal or destination.

What we obtain from God will depend on the size (in a figurative sense) of the inner mould (the three dimensional picture) that has been developed in our heart. This is because God can only give us trust in relation the size or depth of the mould that has been established.

Even though “size” is a natural way to describe the spiritual concept of little faith or great faith, it can help us gain an understanding of the growth factor in the individual Christian’s faith-walk, i.e. why some Christians have more faith than others. It all depends on the size of the inner mould they have developed - with the help of God’s grace of course. The size of the mould will grow as people become more confident in God, based on the knowledge of what He has done in the past.

The growth of this mould is dependent on the width, breadth and depth of knowledge possessed in regard to God’s Word and will in specific areas. Of course, without the development of real personal relationship, this knowledge will be extremely stunted. If fact, the inner mould, in this case, will probably be, at best, the size of a pea in comparison to the size it should be - i.e. the size of a house. In the relationship we have with the Father, we should be praying, praising and worshipping Him regularly, on both a personal and corporate basis. Without this and more, the surrender of our life in His service, our mould will not grow. And if this does not happen, our stance or standing in the things of God will be narrow. Then the first wind of circumstance or opposition will unbalance us and we will topple over into unbelief, worry, anxiety, etc. But our Heavenly Parent, God the Father, will protect, feed and cause us to be nourished as we take time to grow in the things of God.

We could say that when we first try to walk by faith in an area, it could be compared to a baby who begins to crawl towards a goal. After some time the baby walks, tottering unsteadily as he does so. Then, at a later date, he is able to walk confidently towards this goal, and then even to run without any fear of failure. We could even say that in the beginning we walk in infant faith, just like a baby. This faith is still effective but is limited because of the size of our inner mould, being at this stage only child-sized, and all that we can deal with anyway. The size of the inner mould will grow, however, as we continue to gain nourishment from God's Word and be led and empowered by the Spirit. Remember scripture declares that precept should be built upon precept (Isaiah 28:10).

Spiritual hope is needed before faith can be obtained, and it is active faith which births God's promises. This is God's rule for victory - *"for the just shall live by (active) faith"* (Hebrews 10:38). Therefore:

1. Faith is the substance and evidence of things hoped for (the assurance of the heart).
2. Spiritual hope is the living (or active) picture (three dimensional image) in our hearts and minds of that assurance.

As we have explained, to develop faith involves a two-part process. First one gains belief, and secondly one gains trust in that belief. Both will come through the work of the Spirit as we yield to Him. So faith is the union of belief and trust, which enables a Believer to step out, putting themselves on the line in that area of trust. With faith, the Christian ceases to sit in the corner, waiting for heaven's provision to fall on him. Instead he steps out into the unknown, with the confidence that heaven's power is at work on his behalf. Biblical faith is never just trust, but is always trust coupled with belief. In fact before we can trust, belief must first be present.

If our faith is built or based on sight (physical proof), then our faith is not the Biblical faith needed to run the race God has set before us (2 Corinthians 5:7). If this be the case, the appearance of negative circumstances will destroy our so-called "faith," and what we see or feel will cause us to stumble. Unless our faith is placed in the Lord and what He did at Calvary, we will walk by sight. Unless

we can step out into the unknown, trusting only in God's grace to sustain us in any particular area, we will only be walking by sight. This is why we say: Bible faith involves belief and trust in that belief - trust in our God Who is faithful, merciful and just in every situation.

Generally speaking, unless a person has revelation knowledge from God's Word concerning a particular promise, God will be unable to fulfill that promise in the person's life. If there is no inner mould, there is nothing to receive the trust that God's grace will bring. Therefore we can see that the combination of hope and trust is essential if one is to receive the promises of God by faith, and to be used effectively in God's Kingdom.

FAITH'S WORK IN US

"Now faith" it says in Hebrews 11:1, *"is the title deed of things hoped for, the proof of things which are not being seen."* Faith is the taproot anchored in trust, faith's soil is the presence of God in our lives. Faith brings heaven's waters, which proceed from the throne of God, to quench our thirsty souls. Faith is a journey of progression and increase in God which brings us to the Father to commune with Him. Faith is "Not my will be done but Yours Father." Faith is the growth factor, it is God's gift to His child. Faith is, in God, seeing the impossible become the possible. Faith is the Divine revelation of God's heart, given to us to cause our hearts to catch on fire with holy desire. Holy faith gives us power beyond fear, and causes us to love God with all we have and to love our neighbour as ourselves. Faith gives us the ability in Christ to forgive no matter how much we hurt.

Faith gives us a supernatural focus beyond the natural, taking us into heaven itself and bringing us into the throneroom in time of need. Faith lifts us up with wings as eagles to soar over mountains. Faith is a journey not taken alone. It takes us beyond our thoughts and connects us to God to be at one with His thoughts. This holy, God-given faith is the answer to compromise and despair. Faith, or lack of it, makes us what we are. It empowers us and can develop our character in God. Faith is the seal of our trust in the One Who loves us. It is the light in the dark, the warmth in the cold. Faith brings us to a place which depends on Him for all things. Faith always brings an increase and never a decrease. It is not a philosophy or a religion but a living relationship built on trust through Christ Jesus. Faith in

the Christ of the Cross gives us the guarantee of an eternal future with Him.

The question remains, what faith have ye?

May you have the victory in Christ. Amen!

For further information or teaching material to help you grow in the Christian faith, please visit:

CROSSROADS INTERNATIONAL
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crossroadsministries.org.au

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- i Wuest, K.S., Word Studies From The Greek New Testament, Galatians 2:20.
- ii Wuest, Kenneth S., Wuest's Word Studies From The Greek New Testament, Hebrews 11:1.