

DAY BY DAY

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

2-1: FAITH

1. DEFINITION OF FAITH

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1. “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.” Hebrews 11:6.

Basically, Faith is believing that God means what He says, and acting on that belief. It needs to be based on the Word of God, not just some idea we get in our own minds. Faith is not just making one’s self believe something, think that if we believe it hard enough—God has to do it for us. This is not true faith. True faith claims God’s actual promises, and fulfills the conditions He specified.

“True faith lays hold of and claims the promised blessing before it is realized and felt. We must send up our petitions in faith within the second veil, and let our faith take hold of the promised blessing, and claim it as ours. We are then to believe that we receive the blessing, because our faith has hold of it, and according to the word it is ours.

“What things so ever you desire when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.” Here is faith, naked faith, to believe that we receive the blessing, even before we realize it. When the promised blessing is realized and enjoyed, faith is swallowed up.

“But many suppose they have much faith when sharing largely of the Holy Spirit, and that they cannot have faith unless they feel the power of the Spirit. Such confound faith with the blessing that comes through faith. The very time to exercise faith is when we feel destitute of the Spirit. When thick clouds of darkness seem to hover over the mind, then is the time to let living faith pierce the darkness and scatter the clouds.

“True faith rests on the promises contained in the Word of God, and those only who obey that word can claim its glorious promises. “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7. “Whatsoever you ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” I John 3:22....

“I asked the angel why there was no more faith and power in Israel. He said, “You let go of the arm of the Lord too soon. Press your petitions to the throne, and hold on by strong faith. The promises are sure. Believe you receive the things you ask for, and you shall have them.” . . . Said the angel, “Gird the armor about thee, and above all take the shield of faith; for that will guard the heart, the very life, from the fiery darts of the wicked.” If the enemy can lead the desponding to take their eyes off from Jesus, and look to themselves, and dwell upon their own unworthiness, instead of dwelling upon the worthiness of Jesus, His love, His merits, and His great mercy, he will get away their shield of faith, and gain his object. They will be exposed to his fiery temptations. The weak should therefore look to Jesus, and believe in Him; they then exercise faith.” Early Writings, pages 72, 73.

“The truest faith is that which not only rests in the Lord, but which waits patiently for Him. Though the good be far off, though it be quite invisible, still it will not be turned aside or cast down, but will both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God.” Julian K. Smytil

2. ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

“In His promises and warnings, Jesus means me. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that I by believing in Him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. The experiences related in God's word are to be my experiences. Prayer and promise, precept and warning, are mine. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” As faith thus receives and assimilates the principles of truth, they become a part of the being, and the motive power of the life. The word of God, received into the soul, molds the thoughts, and enters into the development of character.

“By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Savior. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live “by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” This is eating the bread that comes down from heaven.” The Desire of Ages, pages 390, 391.

O my Father, much I need Thee, Vile and full of sin am I,
Prone to wander, slow to follow; Lead me, Father, lest I die.
Fold me in Your arms of mercy, Cleanse from filthiness and shame,
Make me ever watchful, prayerful-This I ask in Jesus' name.

Make me pure in heart, my Father, Pure in body, mind, and soul;
Put to death my carnal nature, Make me spiritually whole,
Sin hath weakened me, my Father, All my efforts seem so lame;
Grant me grace to do Thy bidding- This I ask in Jesus' name.

Kind and loving, faithful, trustful, Living by Thy heavenly chart;
True and loyal to my Savior Is the purpose of my heart.
But my heart deceives me, Father, Seems it is not ever the same;
Make me constant, heavenly Parent- This I ask in Jesus' name.

Long as time shall last, my Father, May I keep my humble place
Just beneath the cross of Jesus, Looking up into His face.
And when time has ended, Father, And the heavens are all aflame
With the glorious king's appearing, Save me then in Jesus' name. -Weldon Taylor Hammond.

3. ASKING AND RECEIVING

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Enter ye in at the strait [narrow] gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matthew 7:7-14.

“When we do not receive the very things we ask for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears, and that He will answer our prayers. We are so erring and shortsighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us, and our heavenly Father in love answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good. That which we ourselves would desire if with vision divinely enlightened we could see all things as they really are. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise. For the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon His sure promise, “Ask, and it shall be given you.” Matthew 7:7.

“If we take counsel with our doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that we cannot see clearly, before we have faith, perplexities will only increase and deepen. But if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts. Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love; but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness.” Steps to Christ, pages 100, 101.

“We must stretch out the hand of faith, and lay hold of the salvation freely offered us. And it is just the same with the promised blessing of rest and peace. God has promised it; God is ready to give it; but we must receive it by faith.” A. H. K. Boyd.

“However dark the world seems, I know it is governed by a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness. However much there is which is dark in my own lot, provided I walk in His way I know all must be well.” E. Peabody.

4. THE TRIAL OF FAITH

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” I Peter 1:3-9.

“In this time of trial we need to be encouraged and comforted by one another. The temptations of Satan are greater now than ever before, for he knows that his time is short, and that very soon every case will be decided, either for life or for death. It is no time now to sink down beneath discouragement and trial; we must bear up under all our afflictions, and trust wholly in the Almighty God of Jacob. The Lord has

shown me that His grace is sufficient for all our trials and although they are greater than ever before, yet if we trust wholly in God, we can overcome every temptation, and through His grace come off victorious.

“If we overcome our trials, and get victory over the temptations of Satan, then we endure the trial of our faith, which is more precious than gold, and are stronger and better prepared to meet the next. But if we sink down and give way to the temptations of Satan, we shall grow weaker and get no reward for the trial, and shall not be so well prepared for the next. In this way we shall grow weaker and weaker, until we are led captive by Satan at his will. We must have on the whole armor of God, and be ready at any moment for a conflict with the powers of darkness. When temptations and trials rush in upon us, let us go to God, and agonize with Him in prayer. He will not turn us away empty, but will give us grace and strength to overcome, and to break the power of the enemy. Oh, that all could see these things in their true light, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus! Then would Israel move forward, strong in God, and in the power of His might.” Early Writings, page 46.

“True faith is that which receives Christ as a personal Savior. God gave His only-begotten Son, that I, by believing in Him, “should not perish, but have everlasting life.” When I come to Christ, according to His word, I am to believe that I receive His saving grace. The life that I now live, I am to -live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

“Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which, through the grace of Christ, the soul becomes a conquering power.” Ministry of Healing, 62.

5. THE POWER OF FAITH

“What shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae. Of David, also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire. Escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mocking and scourging, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” Hebrews 11:32-40.

“Faith such as this is needed in the world today, faith that will lay hold on the promises of God's word, and refuse to let go until Heaven hears. Faith such as this connects us closely with Heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. Through faith God's children have “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” And through faith we today are to reach the heights of God's purpose for us. “If thou can believe, all things are possible to him that believes.”

“Faith is an essential element of prevailing prayer. “He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” “If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, we

may present our petitions to the Father, claiming all that He has promised. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word." Prophets and Kings, pages 157, 158.

"Faith is needed in the smaller no less than in the greater affairs of life. In all our daily interests and occupations the sustaining strength of God becomes real to us through an abiding trust. . As a shield from temptation and an inspiration to purity and truth, no other influence can equal the sense of God's presence. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." Hebrews 4:13; Habakkuk 1:13. This thought was Joseph's shield amidst the corruption of Egypt. To the allurements of temptation his answer was steadfast: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God." Such a shield, faith, if cherished, will bring to every soul." Education, page 255.

6. OPENED BEFORE ISRAEL THE RED SEA AND THE JORDAN

"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." Hebrews 11:29, 30.

"For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:" Joshua 4:23.

"God in His providence brought the Hebrews into the mountain fastness before the sea, that He might manifest His power in their deliverance, and signally humble the pride of their oppressors. He might have saved them in any other way, but He chose this method in order to test their faith and strengthen their trust in Him. The people were weary and terrified, yet if they had held back when Moses bade them advance, God would never have opened the path for them. It was "by faith" that "they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land." In marching down to the very water, they showed that they believed the word of God as spoken by Moses. They did all that was in their power to do, and then the Mighty One of Israel divided the sea to make a path for their feet.

"The great lesson here taught is for all time. Often the Christian life is beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, "Go forward." We should obey this command, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness, and we feel the cold waves about our feet. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty disappears, and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey at all. Unbelief whispers, "Let us wait till the obstructions are removed, and we can see our way clearly;" but faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things.

"The cloud that was a wall of darkness to the Egyptians was to the Hebrews a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp, and shedding brightness upon the path before them. So the dealings of Providence bring to the unbelieving, darkness and despair, while to the trusting soul they are full of light and peace. The path where God leads the way may lie through the desert or the sea, but it is a safe path." Patriarchs and Prophets, page 290.

A little girl was to undergo an operation. As the physician was about to place her upon the operating table, he said to her, "Before we can make you well, we must put you to sleep."

The little girl looked up, and smiling said, "Oh, if you are going to put me to sleep, I must say my prayers first." Then she knelt and said, "Now I lay me down to sleep; I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take."

The surgeon said afterward that he prayed that night for the first time in his life. "A little child shall lead them." Isaiah 11:6. The Standard Bearer.

7. INFLUENCED THE CHOICE OF MOSES

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to he called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." Hebrews 11:24-27.

"Moses was fitted to take pre-eminence among the great of the earth, to shine in the courts of its most glorious kingdom, and to sway the scepter of its power. His intellectual greatness distinguishes him above the great men of all ages. As historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator, he stands without a peer. Yet with the world before him, he had the moral strength to refuse the flattering prospects of wealth and greatness and fame, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

"Moses had been instructed in regard to the final reward to be given to the humble and obedient servants of God, and worldly gain sank to its proper insignificance in comparison. The magnificent palace of Pharaoh and the monarch's throne were held out as an inducement to Moses; but he knew that the sinful pleasures that make men forget God were in its lordly courts. He looked beyond the-gorgeous palace, beyond a monarch's crown, to the high honors that will be bestowed on the saints of the Most High in a kingdom untainted by sin. He saw by faith an imperishable crown that the King of heaven would place on the brow of the overcomer. This faith led him to turn away from the lordly ones of earth, and join the humble, poor, despised nation that had chosen to obey God rather than to serve sin." Patriarchs and Prophets, page 246.

"It was implicit faith in God that made Moses what he was. According to all that the Lord commanded him, so he did. All the learning of the wise men could not make Moses a channel through which the Lord could work, until he lost his self-confidence, realized his own helplessness, and put his trust in God. Until he was willing to obey God's commands, whether they seemed to his human reason to be right or not.

"It was not the teaching of the schools of Egypt that enabled Moses to triumph over his enemies, but an ever-abiding, unflinching faith, a faith that did not fail under the most trying circumstances. At the command of God, Moses advanced, although apparently there was nothing ahead for his feet to tread upon. More than a million people were depending on him, and he led them forward step by step, day by day. God permitted these lonely travels through the wilderness that His people might obtain an experience in enduring hardship, and that when they were in peril they might know that there was relief and deliverance in God alone. Thus they might learn to know and to trust God, and to serve Him with a living faith." Counsels to Teachers, pages 408, 409.