

Volitional Faith: Knowledge

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[0:00] The men in the church are the leaders, ordained by God.

If anyone has a problem with that, you've got to take that up with God. I'm labor, not management. He said if you're in a church that has a ministry for men, you're in one of every 500 churches in America.

For every church in America, now this is 20-year-old data, but every church in America that has a men's ministry specific to the men of the church, 499 don't have.

Pretty amazing. I'm privileged to be the teacher in here, and especially so, because there's so many of you in here that can do a much better job than me. And by God's grace, we can perhaps learn some things in here over this current coming year.

I'm going to ask Wes to do a little handout for you, and while he's doing that, I'm going to keep talking. But you may recall that we have been looking in detail at the Ordo Salutis, which is Latin for the order of salvation.

[1:21] We're actually going to continue that study tonight. This is a continuation when we left off last year, last April. I'm not sure when we'll complete this study, but it'll be sometime this cycle.

We'll leave that in God's hands. If this is your first night here, don't panic. You can pick it up from this point and fit right in. And tonight, I'm going to kind of review briefly the order of salvation.

You've all been given a copy. So far, we've looked at the decrees of God and foreknowledge, predestination, election, effectual call, and regeneration.

That's also the new birth, being born again, being born from above. And last spring, we began to look at conversion.

And we covered repentance. And I've put a circle there. It might show up on yours. That's where we're at. We're going to pick it up with faith.

[2:26] So we're in the middle of conversion. But conversion is best described as a two-sided coin. One side has written on it the word repentance.

The other side has written on it the word faith. And we've completed the look at repentance, although we'll be touching on it. And we pick up our lesson by examining that very important topic of faith.

Now, there's something interesting about studying faith as part of the order of salvation for this reason. Coming on the heels of our study of faith will be our next study in the order, which is justification by faith.

Justification is a declaration of right standing before God. And so we are going to study faith, and then we're going to study justification.

But I don't see any way that those two topics are not going to just blend into each other. So we may not even know when we've transitioned.

[3:40] I wanted to say transmorgified. Transitioned into justification by faith. They'll blend together. So we'll begin.

Remember now, I've already said that faith and repentance are two sides to one coin. They go together. You can't have saving faith without repentance, nor can you have repentance without saving faith.

It's very interesting. In this regard, repentance can be described, in this one aspect, stay with me, as the negative side of conversion.

Now, what do I mean by that? I don't mean by saying that it is something sinister or dark. It's not. It's an essential. Essential to our salvation.

But it can be described as a negative in the sense that it is a turning away from something. And of course, the things we're supposed to turn away from are sin.

[4:46] It's sins. So if repentance can be described as a negative, only in the sense just described, then faith is the positive of those two.

It is a positive in the sense that having turned away, we turn to something. That positive occurs when we turn to God, place our trust in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ, in exercising faith, we are looking to Christ to provide forgiveness, righteousness, His righteousness, eternal life, so many things.

When we turn to Christ in genuine faith, and I strongly add, having been prompted to do so by the Holy Spirit, some amazing things happen.

We are born again. More accurately, we are born from above. Anophon is the Greek word. A spiritual birth that comes down to us from heaven.

[6:00] We are transported from spiritual death to spiritual life. Amazing. The blindness that we have been operating under is banished.

We are given a set of spiritual eyes with which to see. I think you could also call that discern. We get discernment. But God gives us a set of spiritual eyes.

With a recreated heart and a new set of eyes, we see the glory of Christ Jesus. Jesus, perhaps for the first time. Diane's niece was here this weekend, and she found all kinds of reasons not to come yesterday morning.

And Diane gave her a very strong witness. And basically she said, I don't see it. And Diane said, you won't without faith.

You're going to be blind. But she said, I don't see it. Who knows what God has in store? We haven't given up. Looking at Christ, perhaps even for the first time with a set of spiritual eyes, we find Him to be an utterly sufficient Savior.

[7:27] John MacArthur wrote a very great book called Our Sufficiency in Christ. We find Him to be perfectly able and perfectly willing to cleanse us from all sin.

We find Him perfectly willing to provide a perfect righteousness that is most satisfying to the soul. In this new relationship, the sinner embraces Christ with all his heart. We trust and commit our lives to Christ.

We embrace Jesus as Savior, advocate, provider, sustainer, counselor, and the Lord God. The Lord God. Now I hasten to add at this point, I'm not sure how this worked for you, but I can tell you how it worked for me.

And bear in mind, the Bible describes the new believer as a baby in Christ. New creation.

[8:38] A baby in Christ able to handle milk, but not yet meat. I didn't come out craving pork ribs. That came later.

But I craved milk. And while all the things that I've read to you are true, which, and you're going to be given copies of this at the end, for most of us, and certainly for me, it takes a lifetime to embrace the depths of these truths as we grow in the knowledge of the Lord.

Believing these things about Christ are not instantaneous in the fullest sense of the word, although I think with a new believer and the energy of a new believer, you could sit down and read those, yeah, I believe that now, yeah, I believe that.

I think they would do that. But a depth of knowledge comes with years. Another major point we must dwell on is the fact that the twins of repentance and saving faith are intellectual and emotional and volitional.

And by volitional, I mean we are made willing. By that will, we can make certain choices, especially when it comes to embracing and following Jesus.

[10:06] Now we can break these elements down into three parts for the person of faith. Knowledge, assent, and trust.

That's the three majors. With our minds, we are now able to embrace knowledge. Why? We got a new mind.

We're getting the mind of Christ. And again, that takes a lifetime. But it's a new mind. Prior to salvation, the human mind is fallen.

We are in the grip of sin. But when the new birth comes, by faith, the human mind, now redeemed, embraces knowledge, and with it, a recognition of the truth surrounding the person, the words, and the works of Christ Jesus.

There is a recognition of who Jesus is and what He has accomplished. Ascent originates in the heart. That brings with it the settled recognition that salvation provided by the Lord Christ is what we

need as it pertains to salvation.

[11:41] It's all we need. Nothing need be added to the redeeming work of Christ. Christ. And nothing can be added to the redeeming work of Christ.

It's not Christ plus. Christ plus good works. Christ plus speaking in tongues. Christ plus giving the right amount of money. Christ plus joining the right Baptist church.

It is all sufficient and the heart recognizes that. It fills all our spiritual needs. Christ fills all of our spiritual needs. Christ. And then the will.

The will responds in trust. In trust. I'm told that even the Greek word pistou, which we translate believe is a deeper word, of course, in Greek.

It means to trust, to commit our life to. Trust is very important. We're going to be talking about that. Not tonight. Not tonight. Trust is our personal commitment to an appropriation of Christ as our only hope for eternal salvation.

[12:56] We all know we have no other hope. We have none of the other hope. We recognize that there's nowhere else to go and no one else to turn to.

It's Jesus. And because these three elements are so vital, we're going to elaborate on them starting tonight with the topic of knowledge.

Knowledge is a very basic element of faith. Ironically, the unsaved world believes that faith in a supreme being or spirit or God and they have other names and other descriptions is a sign of weakness.

The world thinks what we're doing in here tonight is foolishness. And I remember hearing Bill Gates one time and he never goes to church.

He says, I can be making money. I can go to work and make money. I don't need to go to church.

Well, what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?

[14:11] The world of unbelievers sees faith as the very opposite of knowledge. This teaching, by the way, is the mantle of secular humanism.

Secular humanism is the belief for the teaching that there is no God and man is the center of all things. We're the crowning achievement.

We're the center. They would argue that if faith takes over a person's life it's because they do not have sufficient knowledge about the world around them.

They haven't really embraced evolution, for instance, and other things. And they haven't looked at human psychology, which has an explanation for everything and so forth.

The biblical concept of faith is seen by many who believe themselves to be on this higher intellectual plane. It's often described as a leap in the dark, not grounded in reality.

[15:19] reality. But the true reality is far different. Far different. True faith is based upon knowledge and such knowledge is built upon the foundation of divinely revealed truth.

The Bible is God's book. He wrote it. He wrote it through the agency of men, but if he had decided to write it without their assistance, without their pen in hand, it wouldn't read any differently.

He wrote it. Our faith is built upon great truths taught to us by the Spirit of God. I'll read a few of them to you and there are hundreds of examples.

Here's what Dr. Schaefer would refer to as true truth. In Galatians 2.16, we know, I like that, don't you like that? We know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ.

So we also have believed in Christ Jesus. Why do we believe? Because we know we're justified by Him and not the works of the law.

[16:46] You can't be justified by the law and you can't keep the law. Anybody in here ever keep the greatest commandment for three or four years? What about three or four minutes?

I mean, really? Why do we not depend upon our own human efforts described as works in order to develop a relationship with God? Because we know that works do not justify a man.

Our faith in Christ leads to justification. Now, we have been given knowledge of our future resurrection by the knowledge of the resurrection of Christ.

Listen to Paul in Romans. Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live in Him knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again.

Death is no longer master over Him. We know that Christ has promised a resurrection to all who possess faith unto salvation in Him.

[17:55] We know He resurrected. The tomb is empty. The stone was rolled away. The stone wasn't rolled away to let Him out. The stone was rolled away to let the world in to see that the tomb is empty.

Remember Dr. Schaefer, when he was still alive lecturing, and he said, you know, a lot of us wear crosses. And he said, there's nothing wrong with that. There's nothing wrong with it at all. But he said, the more fitting symbol of Christianity would be to make a little piece of jewelry or something of an empty tomb.

If you could figure out a way to make an empty tomb, that is really our symbol. I tell my Catholic friends, I've been to several funerals at the Catholic church downtown. They've got a beautiful cross, but Jesus is up there.

And I tell my good friends in the Catholic place, He ain't up there. He's not on that cross. He's on the throne. We know that Christ has promised a resurrection.

Therefore, we have sufficient grounds to believe in our future resurrection. So we're going to be really talking about this theme of biblical faith.

[19:08] Tonight, we're just scratching the surface. I haven't even defined it. That'll come later. But what are some of the essentials of true biblical faith? What is it that we must believe?

if we can honestly say we have faith in Christ unto salvation? And this list is not all-encompassing. I'm sure we could come up double in size. What is it that we must believe? Essentials. That Jesus is God.

Jesus is God. He's not a created being. He's not the highest order of creation. He's co-equal, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit.

Jesus is God. John 13, 19. I'm telling you this now before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am He. I am God.

[20:11] But we also must believe that Jesus is the great I am. And I am is a beautiful thing to study in the Old and New Testament.

Remember the burning bush? I am that I am. Exodus 3, 14. I am who I am. He said, say to this people of Israel, I am has sent me to you.

And we saw dramatic results when He identified Himself as the I am in Scripture. He goes to the Garden of Gethsemane just before the cross and the soldiers and the temple police come in and He says, whom seek ye?

And they said, Jesus of Nazareth and your Bible says, I am He. He didn't say that. He should be in italics. He looked at them and He said, I am.

The sacred name for God. And it says they took a step back and all of them collapsed. I'd love to have seen that. I'd like to be the fly on the wall for that one.

[21:16] They all collapsed. At just Him breathing forth His holy name of Yahweh, I am. We must believe that Jesus is the great I am and that Jesus is one with the Father.

John 10, 30. I and the Father are one. I have people all time. He never said He was one with the Father. He didn't?

How do you interpret that? That Jesus is one with the Father. I and the Father are one. John 10, 30. We must believe that Jesus is the unique Messiah.

The very Son of God. John 11, 27. woman at the well. No, I'm sorry. Not there.

This was at the raising of Lazarus. One of the sisters said to Him, Lord, I believe You are the Christ, the Son of God who is coming into the world.

[22:24] I believe You're the Son of God. What a dramatic confession on her part. Now I get to the woman at the well. They're having this long discussion.

A Samaritan woman. Jewish men had nothing to do with Samaritan women, especially a rabbi. Well, Jesus proved that wrong. So they're having this long discussion and she gives quite a confession.

This is a woman who had been married five times and is now living out of wedlock. She says to Jesus that know who He is. I know that Messiah is coming who is called Christ.

When He comes, He will tell us all things. And Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am He.

I just get chills when I read that. And again, I have people say, He never said He was the Messiah. Messiah. The Messiah is coming. I who speak to you am He.

[23:37] We have to believe that. Another essential, that Jesus was sent from and by the Father. John 11, 42.

I knew that you, this is the great high priestly prayer. John 7, no, I'm, yeah, I'm off track again. Forget that. I know that you always hear me, but I said this is Lazarus. I said this on the account of the people standing around that they may believe that you sent me. He prayed a prayer out loud. He said, I want these people, I'm praying to you. He could raise Lazarus without praying, but he prayed to the Father because he said, I want them to know you sent me. And then in John 16, 27, these are just a few hours before the crucifixion. for the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

[24 : 39] Talking to his followers. And essential. John 16, 30, Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you.

This is why we believe that you came from God. John 17, 8, Now we're in the high priestly prayer. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them, and have come to know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me.

We must believe that Jesus was sent from the Father. John 17, 20 and 21, now he talks about us. Highland Park Baptist Church, 21st century.

Jesus says, I do not ask for these only, but also for all those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you Father are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

[26 : 00] The Father sent him. You've got to believe that. And I added another one here, that Jesus as Messiah would be born of a virgin.

Isaiah 7, 14, Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.

This virgin will conceive. She's a virgin. And then in Luke 1, verse 30-34, the angel says, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God, and behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, he who saves.

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

And Mary asked a very logical question. Very logical. Mary said to the angel, How will this be since I am a virgin?

[27 : 23] She was a virgin. And he goes on to explain how the Holy Spirit was going to accomplish this. We must believe that Jesus died and rose from the grave.

For since we believe that Jesus dies and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 1 Thessalonians 4.14 And then in Romans 10.9, If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

We also must believe that God exists and rewards those who seek him. Hebrews 11.6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

And finally, being my list, that sinners are saved by grace through faith alone.

And in Acts 15.9 and verse 9 and verse 11. And he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith, but we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus just as they will.

[28 : 54] And then that great passage of Paul's in Ephesians 2.8 and 9, especially 8, but I'll read 9. For by grace you have been saved through faith.

And this is not of your own doing, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, that no one may boast. I remember a man, we had a video, I don't remember his name, but his ministry was focusing on some of the cults.

and there was a little Jehovah Witness lady in her 80s standing on a down sound city street, like I can't remember LA, Chicago, wherever, and it was 100 degrees.

And she was in her 80s, and she's trying to sell copies of their magazine. They're interesting, they want to sell you a copy of the watchtower, but if you refuse to buy it, they'll give you a copy. And she's just about to pass out, and he walks up to her, and he's going to ask what you're doing.

She said, I'm working my way to heaven. And he read that passage, for by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is a gift of God, not a result of works.

[30:05] And when he read that, she started crying, and she said, what am I doing standing out here on this street corner in 100 degree temperature? That was her question for him. This is the knowledge that faith produces, and where does such knowledge come from?

It comes from hearing the gospel, the good news concerning Christ Jesus. That's where knowledge comes from.

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. I'm told by guys that know the Greek language, that says, I haven't verified this, but so faith comes from hearing, and hearing through speeches about Jesus.

You just listen to people talking about Jesus. It is impossible to believe without hearing that message. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Romans 10, 14. biblical faith and biblical knowledge are not enemies, obviously.

[31:22] Instead, they are the most intimate of friends. They are intimate friends. In fact, the very ground of saving faith is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Christ. It is there we see and hear of God's holiness, of sin's penalty, of Christ's identity, and what he accomplished in his death, burial, and resurrection.

It's all based on biblical faith and biblical knowledge. Believing, having faith, is not, and never has been, a blind leap of faith.

Kierkegaard once wrote a book and talked about Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, and Kierkegaard wrote and said it was a blind leap of faith on the part of Abraham.

Francis Schaeffer came along decades, centuries later, and said he used a real great biblical word, he said malarkey. It was not a blind leap of faith.

[32:38] Abraham had heard from God, had talked to God, had been given promises from God, and God had fulfilled them. He had every reason to believe God, and God had told him, through your son Isaac, your descendants will be as many as the sands of the sea, and the stars in heaven.

And you remember as they were heading toward Mount Moriah, Abraham reasoned, yeah, I'm going to sacrifice my son, because God told me to, but God's going to raise him from the dead, because he promised me that through Isaac, all my descendants will come.

He thought there would be a resurrection. He didn't see God stopping, his hand coming down. God will come down. He is not a blind leap of faith.

It is not a mindless leap into the dark. We trust based upon an abundance of sufficient knowledge, that knowledge by the way is contained in 66 books, in the true gospel, the scriptures provide us with a factual, historical, and intellectual basis for faith.

We do not believe based upon subjective whims. We believe based upon solid truth revealed to us by God.

[34:16] Faith that is not grounded in truth, is in reality not faith. We'll dig deeper next time, and we'll pick it up next time we'll look at the topics of ascent and of trust.

Thank you.