

Volitional Faith: Trust

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[0:00] We have been examining the monumentally important topic of faith.

! In these initial lessons we have broken faith down into three categories.! The first two were knowledge and assent. It takes knowledge, it takes assent.

But tonight we are going to look at the trust aspect of faith. There must also be trust. And part of faith is certainly knowing and embracing truth.

Moses did this, so did Paul and other apostles. Blind Bartimaeus knew and embraced truth.

Nicodemus declared that Jesus was a teacher sent from God.

Agrippa believed in the Old Testament as truth from God. In the Gospel of Matthew we read this about Judas who would one day betray the Lord. In Matthew chapter 27 verses 3 to 5.

[1:17] Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders saying, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.

They said, what is that to us? See to it yourself. And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed and he went and hanged himself.

There we see at least a small level of repentance in Judas though not unto salvation. The fact is that none of the men mentioned above possessed at the time they were introduced in Scripture saving faith.

Judas never did. Some theologians believe Nicodemus was never saved though I respectfully disagree. I think he was and I think I could make a case for it.

But who would ever want to trust me to be right about something? What did these men and others like them lack when it came to saving faith?

[2:30] Well, we've already seen that faith begins with knowledge and assent, but it doesn't end there. It doesn't stop until that faith reaches the will's utter reliance on Christ alone for personal salvation.

Remember, it's Christ plus nothing. Nothing can be added, nothing need be added. If we do not totally trust the person of Christ and the finished work of Christ on the cross, we've not been redeemed by Christ.

John Murray, great Scottish theologian, co-founder of Westminster Theological Seminary, said this in his classic work, Redemption Accomplished and Applied.

Faith is knowledge passing into conviction and it is conviction passing into confidence. Faith cannot stop short of self-commitment to Christ.

Transference of reliance upon ourselves and all human resources to reliance upon Christ alone for salvation. It is receiving and resting upon Christ Jesus.

[3:46] Now, as Dr. Murray points out, saving faith moves beyond believing that certain things are true. Saving faith believes in certain things.

It goes beyond mental assent concerning the truth related to Christ and embraces Christ personally trusting in him.

There is a personal trust involved here. We exercise total dependence upon Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, for our reconciliation to God.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and the Trinity.

They're all active in our salvation. All of them. All of them. Now, Paul gives a narrative of his own personal conversion in Philippians chapter 3.

[4:54] I'm going to read that to you, but I'm not going to do some exhaustive, thorough exegesis of the chapter. But just listen to these words and just ponder them and get out your Bibles this week and this weekend and read in Philippians chapter 3.

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. Look out for the dogs.

Look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also, if anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more.

Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law of Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

[6:16] But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ.

The righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I may not have already perfect, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus had made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own.

But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

[7:42] Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if any of you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Brothers, join in imitating me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction. Their God is their belly and their glory is their shame. With minds set on earthly things.

But our citizenship is in heaven. And from it we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him to subject all things to himself.

Paul says a true Christian puts no confidence in the flesh. That is, you are not to look inward as the source of your faith.

[8:52] We cannot conjure up the righteousness required by God, indeed demanded by God, to be in a right relationship with him.

When Paul was still Saul and serving as a Pharisee, he had put his full confidence in his flesh. He based his relationship with God on his heritage, social standing, and religious activity.

Paul put most of his stock in his external observance of God's commands. He was proud of that. By doing so, he truly believed that he had been carried to the lofty heights of having attained God's standards for righteousness.

And we know that all of this came crashing down when Paul met the Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. That is why he said, whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

We know that on that road, the Lord Jesus opened the eyes of Paul. He was actually made temporarily blind, but in his blindness, and it was in his blindness, he began for the first time in his life to see.

[10:14] God opened the eyes of Paul's heart to regeneration. Now, everything but Christ became rubbish to him. Your version may say dung.

That's a good word. Especially his self-righteousness. He counted it as dung. Everything was garbage if it stood between Paul and gaining Christ.

All that mattered now was Paul's faith, which had been given to him by grace from the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. That is why he would later write this great passage in Ephesians, For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that is not your own doing.

It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. The faith we are talking about comes from God.

That is what we are to trust in. That's where we put our trust. We haven't mentioned the word trust in a while, but that is what we're talking about. Paul had turned from depending upon himself for righteousness to trusting in Christ alone for his righteousness applied to Paul's life.

[11 : 32] We see this clearly in Romans and in the Corinthian letters. In Romans 10, 4, Paul said this, For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

That believes is, has faith, trust, commit. In 2 Corinthians 5, 21, he wrote, For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Trust in Christ with saving faith is the greatest of treasures. There's no greater treasure. Paul was willing to lose everything in this life to gain the treasure of knowing Christ.

He never wavered from this, even in his martyrdom. Even when the Roman emperor said, I'm going to kill you, Paul, he never wavered.

The Lord spoke of conversion as finding a great treasure. In Matthew chapter 13, verse 44, The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up.

[12 : 51] Then in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. The next two verses in Matthew say this, Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who in finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The person who finds regeneration by the sovereign hand of God has come upon the greatest possible treasure.

Nothing in life equals it. Christ Jesus is our greatest treasure, and we should be willing to lay aside and forsake everything to lay hold of this Savior, for he is supremely precious.

I love to read Dr. Luke in his Gospel, chapter 9. If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.

And then Luke writes this in Luke 14, starting in verse 26. If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

[14 : 20] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

Otherwise, when he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish.

Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate, whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him who comes against him with 20,000?

And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

Amazing words.

There can be a high price exacted when we trust Christ. I remember the words and it reminds me of Christian and Pilgrim's Progress.

[15 : 35] It should be required reading for you to get into heaven. He was going to go on this journey. He was looking for this precious treasure.

And he had a whole backpack full of sin. He couldn't get rid of it. His wife and children did everything they could to persuade him, Don't go on this foolish journey.

He stood in his way. Well, he went anyway. And of course, at the end of his journey, he found Christ. He found the Lord Jesus Christ.

I remember with great fondness many of the words of the late Dr. J. Vernon McGee. He cited a passage saying this about trust in Christ.

He said, when you trust in Christ, you're supposed to separate yourself from the world. Of course, I'm listening to this on the radio. And then Dr. McGee says, don't worry about that.

[16 : 36] You don't have to do that. And I thought, whoa, Dr. McGee, you're having a bad day. And he says, don't worry about it. When you truly trust in Christ, the world will separate itself from you.

I love that old guy. Dr. McGee had him in his church one time. He said he was pretty neat. To a lot of people, both inside and outside the church, saving trust in Christ is seen only as a way of avoiding deserved punishment.

Jesus is much more than an escape clause. Okay. We trust Jesus eagerly and we trust him wholeheartedly.

We are delighted to embrace and be embraced by the king of the universe in the fullness of who he is. He's the king.

He's the Lord. He's the sovereign Lord. He's Yahweh. He's everything. He is the source of all righteousness and all life, including eternal life.

[17 : 54] There is another important point to be made as we discuss trust. Clearly, we see that we are to trust in him, but we're also to entrust ourselves to him.

So you have trust and entrust. And that's not saying the same thing in two different ways. We trust ourselves to Christ when we place ourselves in his custody, both for life and for death.

For life and death. This obviously involves personal commitment. I think of Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead. You know, they went to Lazarus.

They said, quit talking about this man, Jesus. Quit telling people he raised you from the dead. If you don't stop, we're going to kill you. Can you imagine Lazarus's answer?

Go ahead. I've already been there. It ain't bad. It ain't bad. It's pretty good. It's pretty good. Entrust ourselves to Christ.

[19 : 02] Personally commit our trust to him. We could put it in the form of some questions. Who do you turn to for spiritual counseling?

Who do you trust for an example of goodness? Who do you trust as the guardian of your eternal soul? I mean, it's Christ.

We are to embrace, that's a good word for trust, all of Christ. We lean totally upon him for redemption, for reconciliation, for righteousness, for counsel, for fellowship, for direction in our life, and for all in life that truly satisfies.

It's Jesus. The great outworking of true, saving, trusting faith is loving obedience. Paul had this to say to the Galatians in chapter 5, verse 6.

For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

[20 : 15] Only faith working through love. The 11th chapter of the book of Hebrews is a great place to go from time to time.

Great statement of saving trust, working itself out in action. We see trust in action in that great book. The writer of that great book begins with defining faith, which we've already looked at in a previous lesson.

I'll read it again. Hebrews 11, 1. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

And the writer then illustrates this great principle of saving trusting faith. And in doing so, he scans redemptive history to demonstrate that faith actually works.

It really works. It will do what it says it will do. Here is trust in action. By faith, Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice.

[21 : 30] And if you get copies of the lesson and you want them, I have the citations like that's Hebrews 11, 4. I won't read every one, but it's all written down here. By faith, Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice.

By faith, Enoch walked with God and escapes death itself. And I love Enoch. If you read that in Genesis, it says when Enoch was so old, he had a son.

And after the birth of his son, he began to walk with God. I'll tell you something happened when he looked down. We've got a little young dad here now. When Enoch looked down and he saw that little baby, something stirred his heart and he began to walk with God at that very point.

When my youngest son was born, I wasn't saved. And he had medical complications. He couldn't breathe on his own. I got home about 5.30. And women don't have babies at 5 in the evening.

I got home about 5.30 and I got on my knees. I wasn't even sure what I was doing. I wouldn't say, but I prayed the most, most believable prayer I've ever prayed. And I said, those nurses can't breathe for him, Lord, but you can.

[22 : 45] I'll never forget that. By faith, Noah built an ark. It hadn't rained. He was in a dry, he's in a desert.

It's like, I've been to the Sahara Desert many times. I go to the Sahara and build a boat. Okay, where are we going to put it on? Sand? But by faith, Noah built an ark. 120 years witnessing to his neighbors.

You better get ready, the flood's coming. Okay, what's a flood? You know? I love this. By faith, Abraham obeyed. Boy, that's astonishing.

You know what Abraham was? Abraham then. He was a moon worshiper. He didn't get selected because he was this great follower of God and Christ.

He was a pagan moon worshiper. And God chose him. And gave him instructions to leave his country.

[23 : 46] And Abraham obeyed. By faith, Abraham lived in a foreign land. By faith, Abraham offered up his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God.

Wow. Think about that, guys. Dads. Offered up his son Isaac. You know, the Bible says every step he took up Mount Moriah, he said, I'm going to have to kill Isaac, but God's going to raise him from the dead.

Because God told me through Isaac, all of my descendants will be born. So I know God is going to raise him from the dead. Of course, God didn't raise him, did he? He stopped at the hand.

Might as well have raised him. And then they both looked over and there's a ram with a crown of thorns. And that became the sacrifice.

A type of Christ. By faith, Isaac and Jacob blesses their sons. By faith, Joseph spoke of the exodus of his people.

[24 : 53] By faith, Moses' parents hid him from Pharaoh. And that was a death sentence to do that. That was a death sentence.

By faith, Moses rejected the passing pleasures of Egypt, embraced the reproach of Christ, and left without fear.

By faith, Moses kept the Passover. By faith, Israel crossed the Red Sea.

I love that debate where the learned atheist professor said, well, it wasn't the Red Sea that crossed over.

It was a sea of reeds. And it was only an inch deep. And the Christian that he was debating said, what a miracle, God drowned the whole Egyptian army in an inch of water.

[25 : 54] You know? By faith, Jericho was conquered. And it goes on from there. Read the 11th chapter.

Well, what does all this mean? It means that trusting faith is an obeying faith. If we really trust him, we obey him, right?

We obey him. And I'm sure I don't have to remind any of you guys that true saving faith is not passive. It's not passive. When we trust in Christ, we go to work.

That's when we go to work. We do not work in order to receive a divine favor. We work as a consequence of having received a divine favor, the grace of God that works mightily within us.

Paul told the Colossians this, For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

[27 : 02] Remember, as we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, it is God who works in us both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Paul says in the second chapter, Philippians, Just amazing.

Well, I'll tell you what we're going to do tonight. We're going to let John MacArthur close our time tonight. And this is from his great book, The Gospel According to the Apostles.

I recommend, it's a four volume set now. The Gospel According to Jesus, The Gospel According to the Apostles, The Gospel According to Paul, and The Gospel According to God.

The Gospel According to the Apostles, The Gospel According to the Apostles. Does this mix faith and works?

[28 : 21] And that's what John's accused of all the time, that he's a works guy. And he's not. Does this mix faith and works as some are fond of saying? Not at all.

Let there be no confusion on this point. Faith is an internal reality with external consequences.

When we say that faith encompasses obedience, we are speaking of the God-given attitude of obedience. Not trying to make works a part of the definition of faith.

God makes the believing heart an obedient heart. That is a heart eager to obey. Faith itself is complete before one work of obedience ever issues forth.

But make no mistake, real faith will always produce righteous works. Faith is the root. Works are the fruit.

[29 : 23] Because God himself is the fine dresser, fruit is guaranteed. That is why whenever scripture gives examples of faith, as in Hebrews 11, faith inevitably is seen as obedient, working, and active.

And I remember Dr. MacArthur one time, I heard him say this, but he was talking about faith and works and all that.

And he said he is convinced that every true believer produces godly fruit. He said, now you might have to get a magnifying glass and look carefully on some.

And he said, on all of us, we do produce a whole lot of plastic fruit. And it is going to burn up with wood, hay, stubble, and plastic. That is what the scriptures say.

Wood, hay, stubble, and plastic will be burned up. And the genuine fruit will remain. But he said, in a true believer, it is there somewhere.

[30 : 29] The moment is still there. The moment is still there. The moment is still there. The moment is still there. The moment is still there. The moment is still there. The moment is still there. The moment is still there.

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