

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

CAREST THOU NOT THAT WE PERISH

And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

Mark 4:38

The natural man is unable to see anything of the nature and glory of the Kingdom of Heaven unless the LORD is pleased to awaken him from the darkness in which he dwells by nature, giving him "eyes to see and ears to hear." (see Deut.29:4; Mat.1:15) This "sight" and "hearing" are an evidence of the "new birth" (see John 3:3-8) and the subsequent "gift of faith" (see Eph.2:8; Rom 10:14) which is bestowed upon all who are ordained to receive it. (see Acts 13:48)

Men can talk of "faith", encourage one another to have faith, and measure such faith in one fashion or other amongst themselves. Yet the common concept of faith, which we hear much spoken of in the present day, is simply the operation of optimism or as has been described by many as the "power of positive thinking." There are some advantages to be gained in the natural realm by having such a viewpoint but this concept is not at all what the scriptures speak of as "faith". One must never confuse "true faith" (which is the gift of GOD) with the natural operation of optimism and hopeful expectation.

True faith is not simply a feeling of relief or an abiding confidence that whatever one wishes to come to pass will indeed occur. Rather true faith is the operation of the SPIRIT of GOD in the born again child of GOD to convince HIM of certain "facts". "*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" (Heb 11:1) Faith has both a "substance" and an "evidence". The man who is made to believe the truth of GOD must stand upon it, he can do nothing else. He may falter and fail in the flesh but he cannot escape from the knowledge and confidence that the TRUTH is found in the person of JESUS CHRIST to whom he is driven and drawn with cords of love which cannot be broken.

True faith is "objective", or we might say it has its basis not in "feelings" or in "hopeful expectations", but rather in the PERSON and work of the ONE who said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*" (John 14:6) When the Philippian jailer, cried out, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" Paul did not give him a formula nor did he tell him to simply believe. Rather he declared to him the basis of salvation which is JESUS CHRIST. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*" (Acts 16:31) It would be impossible for him to "believe" for every member of his house, but it is indeed true that the basis for the salvation of all who are saved is the PERSON and work of CHRIST alone.

Men are not "saved" on the basis of a decision to "believe" but rather because of the ONE upon whom they believe. Peter confessed this faith when HE said, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*" (John 6:68-69) The LORD described the source of this faith saying, "*Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*" (Mat 16:17)

Much emphasis is placed in the present day on trying to “get men saved”. This whole idea is built upon many mistaken notions, not the least of which is that “faith” is a subjective action which men can exercise just like deciding to put on a red pair of socks rather than a black one. Men are inundated with the exhortation to “just believe” but there is little preaching on the work and PERSON of the ONE who is the basis of “true faith”. Is it any wonder that the woods are full of folks who claim to be “believers” but have little or no knowledge of the TRUE CHRIST or the fullness and nature of HIS redemptive work?

When the disciples were overcome by their fear of destruction, in a tiny ship, in the midst of this storm, they upbraided the LORD JESUS for HIS seeming indifference to the howling elements and HIS apparent lack of concern for their safety. HIS response to them was, *“Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?” (Mar 4:40)* Does anyone suppose he was admonishing them for not having a more “positive outlook”? I think rather that HE was bringing them to focus on their inability in the flesh to comprehend the things of GOD (for did they not say, “what manner of man is this?) or to understand even the very basic truths of HIS purpose and work.

All of GOD’s children are given “perfect faith” as to the basis upon which it rests, yet clearly there is an increase in the understanding of it which is wrought in them by the HOLY GHOST. (see John 16:13) By HIS power; we (as brethren) may exhort one another to not be “faithless” but “believing”, (see John 20:27) not as though we have no faith at all but rather that our understanding of it, might be increased. *“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.” (Jude 1:20)* *“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.” (1Thes 5:11)*

Our LORD’s exhortation to HIS disciples might be paraphrased thus, “Why are ye so fearful, as though you had no faith at all. For If you had an understanding of who I am and what I came to do you would not be afraid.” HE would have them to know:

It is impossible that the ONE who created the heavens and the earth should be destroyed by HIS own creation. The winds blow only at HIS behest and the seas rage only at HIS command. HE is the PREDESTINATOR of all things. HE was indeed slain by “wicked hands”, yet this could only occur according to HIS determinate counsel in order to fulfill HIS purpose. (see Acts 2:23)

It is impossible that HIS purpose to redeem HIS elect Bride, should be short circuited and HE fall short of HIS objective to save HIS people from their sins. Therefore the life of HIS mortal body could not be taken from HIM except in the fashion which HE had designed as a SIN-OFFERING.

It is impossible that any “should perish” who belong to HIM. It is a devilish lie that would state, or even insinuate, that HE has in any wise failed to obtain the eternal redemption of any for which HE died on Calvary’s cross. If one sat down and designed a message specifically for the purpose of impugning the worth of the blood of the spotless LAMB of GOD he could not come up with any better one than to declare that some shall perish for whom HE died.

It is impossible to be separated from the ONE who is the LIFE of HIS saints even when death shall destroy these mortal frames. *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” (1Jn 5:11)* The children of GOD cannot be without this LIFE. This is that of which Paul spoke when he said, *“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” (Rom 14:7-9)*

The mortal demise of each one of GOD’s children is most precious in HIS sight. (see Ps.116:15) This event cannot occur except in the exact fashion and at the appointed time which HE has ordained. HE will never leave nor forsake HIS own; most assuredly not in the midst of the troubles which HE has ordained for their good.

Prior to their embarking on this perilous journey (as they perceived it) the LORD had said, *“Let us pass over unto the other side.” (Mark 4:35)* If the LORD had not said “us”, there would be reason to fear, yet HE has promised, *“And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Mat 28:20)*

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