

The Gospel Herald

“As the truth is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21)

For The LORD’S PILGRIMS, STRANGERS & SOJOURNERS

by

Donald E. Martin, Sr.

The Faith of Christ

“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth 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” (Galatians 2:20).

It was a number of years ago, as a young Christian convert, that I was zealous to see others come into the same spiritual experience that I was blessed to encounter. I was out to convert the world and with every fiber of my being trying to persuade men to believe in the God man Jesus Christ as the only saviour of sinners.

I was convinced that all one needed to do was to exercise FAITH to initiate salvations work. After being met with numerous opposition from my loved ones and coworkers in my zeal to get many pressed into the kingdom of God. I was convinced I had the right message, yet it was as if it was falling on deaf ears in my efforts to get folks saved, In time as I continued my study of the Holy Writ, I was revealed that “without FAITH it was IMPOSSIBLE to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

I was emphasizing to all that FAITH must be exercised in order to believe and experience the salvation of God. This is a TRUE THING, yet how does one obtain this saving FAITH? What initiates FAITH? From whom does it evolve? From what is its source? The scripture is the ONLY answer to these vital questions.

First: *It is determined that faith is a “Fruit of the Spirit of God” (Gala.5:22). Therefore, “So they that are in the flesh cannot please God (the natural man). But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you, now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, HE IS NONE OF HIS” (Rom. 8:8-9). According to the word of God, an individual MUST have the SPIRIT of God within in order to manifest FAITH and BELIEF in the person of Jesus Christ.*

Do all men have the Spirit my nature? Absolutely not, man by nature is depraved by the curse of sin beyond rescue by their own efforts. Their will is bound by sins dominion, and they are DEAD in sin, spiritually deaf, and blind to the revelation of God's kingdom. Therefore, since man is exempt from having the Spirit of God within by nature, our Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, "YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN" to SEE and to ENTER the kingdom of God. This spiritual "new birth" experience is totally a work of divine grace alone apart form any assistance of the depraved creature.

Second: *Since FAITH is a fruit of the SPIRIT, the SPIRIT must first be present in the soul before FAITH can be manifested. And ONLY through the experience of the New Birth brought about by the means of the sovereign grace of God. The problem with modern neo-evangelism is the fact men are trying to persuade others to have FAITH to believe in Christ and man CANNOT believe until God by his saving mercy causes one to be Born Again, quickened and made alive by the SPIRIT. Then, and ONLY then, shall one be made able to believe upon the person of Jesus Christ through the evidenced manifestation of saving FAITH.*

Third: *Who initiates this saving FAITH; man or God? "Looking unto Jesus the AUTHOR and FINISHER of our FAITH" (Heb 12:2) Is there any question as to who is the AUTHOR or initiator of FAITH? Jesus Christ, is the AUTHOR, the originator, the creator of saving FAITH in the believer.*

That is why the apostle Paul declared, "the life he now lives in the flesh (natural mortal body) he lives by the FAITH "OF" Christ, that little preposition "OF" is the key to our understanding. "OF" expresses authorship and origin. Christ alone is the originator of FAITH and that the evidence of the SPIRIT of Christ in the believer. Paul further describes the "FAITH "OF" CHRIST" in the following, "Even the righteousness of God which is "BY FAITH "OF" JESUS CHRIST" unto all and upon all them THAT BELIEVE; for there is no difference" (Rom.3:22). Notice to whom it is addressed: "UNTO ALL and UPON ALL them that BELIEVE! That exempts the unbelieving, unregenerate, spiritually dead sinner.

I must say, natural man can have a type of faith in relying and trusting things and individuals in this time world, yet it is humanistic, and natural faith. A man can have a faith that his car will start as he attempts to journey somewhere. Man can have faith that the chair of which he sits in will again hold his weight and allow him to sit. So, in one sense, man by nature can have a type of faith, yet not a spiritual faith. Depraved, spiritually dead alienated sinners CANNOT obtain Spiritual FAITH apart from the presence of the SPIRIT of the living God within the soul through the means of the quickening new birth.

Fourth: *I have recently heard of some brethren who have taken a position that ALL MEN have faith. This supposed doctrine seems to have started from the apostle Paul's comment "According as God had dealt to every man the measure of faith"*

(Romans 12:3). Now, scripture MUST interpret scripture, and we are admonished to “prove all things,” therefore, we must determine to whom the apostle is addressing.

Is he addressing the world of mankind? Or, the brethren in Christ Jesus? The apostle declares in his initial greeting in Romans chapter one verse seven, “To all that be in Rome beloved of God (who? The beloved of God, is that all of mankind?) called to be saints (is that the totality of mankind?) Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:7). Those under consideration to whom the apostle is writing are those called of God, chosen in Christ and made heirs of grace through the new birth.

Further proof as to whom the apostle is addressing is the following, “I beseech ye BRETHREN” (Who? The BRETHREN.) This is the beginning of the chapter where the advocates of “mankind all having faith” get their argument. Yet, the apostle is addressing precisely the “BRETHREN” (Rom. 12:1). “EVERY MAN” under consideration is regarding those of the household of the “FAITH OF CHRIST,” those in whom the fruit of the SPIRIT dwells, which the natural, unsaved, lost man alien from God by nature is EXEMPT! ALL MEN DO NOT HAVE THE FAITH OF CHRIST AS NATURAL BORN CREATURES.

When the revelation of the FAITH OF CHRIST being bestowed upon the helpless, depraved and lost sinner as totally an operation of the Spirit of God alone, the concept that ALL men by nature have spiritual faith takes its flight as “untruth.” ONLY the heir of divine grace, chosen in Christ Jesus, and drawn by the cords of God’s merciful grace shall experience saving FAITH to believe upon HIM whom he has send to save sinners and assure their home in immortal glory. Yea, even Christ Jesus! the Justifier of the unjust who has bought us with a price, even his own life blood. To him be praise glory and honor forever without end.

October 29, 2007