

# 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*

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## SO GREAT FAITH

*When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

*Matthew 8:10*

Most people think that faith is an activity of their free will. Most would lean towards the notion that something is more likely to occur if one just believes strongly that it will. Hence, we hear the clichés, “keep the faith”, “faith moves mountains”, “faith conquers all”, etc. This idea is closely tied to the concept which is at the heart of “the power of positive thinking” which is the central theme of modern motivational teaching. These concepts, which are quite satisfying to the flesh, have even permeated and perverted the understanding of many who would claim to believe the Bible and its teachings concerning faith, some of whom would confess to being the followers of CHRIST.

We would not undertake to overturn the natural thinking about these matters in the rank and file who have no regard to the Word of GOD or its teaching on the matter of faith. We will let the dead bury their dead, nor seek to cast pearls before swine. However, we would seek to set forth the concept of “faith” as it is taught by the SPIRIT of GOD through the Bible, which is the written Word of GOD. Those who are led by HIS SPIRIT, seek no other AUTHORITY than that which is set forth in Holy Writ. When a man is awakened from the deadness of his mind and heart by the HOLY SPIRIT, he will seek to follow the TRUTH as it is in JESUS and can accept no substitute for it. As the LORD JESUS said, *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”* (John 16:13-15)

We have modern day “medicine men” (i.e.; shamans, masquerading as preachers) parading around the country and filling the air waves with the notions that you can be healed of whatever disease you have (whether physical or financial) by just believing that it is so. Of course, a love gift to the “teacher” gives greater assurance that such will be the case. The greater the amount the more effective the “faith” becomes and when coupled with a prayer cloth or water from the “Holy Land”, there is no limit to what one might expect.

Such notions as this are unadulterated error espoused by those who *“Creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* (2Tim 3:6-7) They have a “form of godliness”, but are *“wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.”* (2 Pet 2:17) The Scriptures tell us that there is *“One LORD, one faith, one baptism”* (Eph.4:5). This is the only “FAITH” which the sons of GOD desire to be found in.

This is that “FAITH” which the Roman Centurion expressed upon asking the LORD to heal his servant who was stricken with “palsy” (i.e.; probably some form of paralysis). The LORD remarked that HE had not seen (i.e., demonstrated or manifested in men) such “faith”, in all of Israel. Yet here is a Roman who recognized the power and station of the LORD JESUS, which Israel (for the most part) was blind to see. HE characterizes this “FAITH” as being “great”, (i.e., unwavering, absolute). This Gentile, of pagan descent is able to see something, that those to whom the *“oracles of GOD”* (Rom. 3:2) were committed (i.e.; the Jews) would not and could not receive.

This occurrence is a demonstration of the fact that *“faith is the gift of GOD”*. Who enabled this Roman soldier to see who this MAN, JESUS of Nazareth is? *“Who maketh thee to differ from another and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Cor.4:7)* Is this not the same GIFT, which was given to the Philippian jailer, the woman with the issue of blood, the Samaritan woman, and one of the thieves upon the cross? *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” (Eph 2:8)* This one scripture, alone, should lay to rest any notion that men have that “faith” as an activity of their own “free will”.

The “FAITH” of this Centurion, was not “great” because of the amount of it but rather because of the “OBJECT” of it. His “FAITH” was not “great”, because he was determined to ask for the LORD to heal his servant, but rather because of his recognition that the LORD JESUS was a MAN of Authority and Power. How did he come by this recognition, except that the LORD revealed it to him? It was his “FAITH” that moved him to ask, and it was his “FAITH” that gave him the answer to his request.

When we look at the two thieves who were crucified on either side of the LORD, we recognize that they both mocked and chided HIM. Yet in a moment’s time, (we might say at the appointed time) one of them was given eyes to see who HE is. Then we see him confess this *“great FAITH”*, as he said, *“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” (Luke 23:42)* He was enabled to behold CHRIST as the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords; and it was his “FAITH”, who said unto him, *“Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)*

Peter confessed this “GREAT FAITH” when the LORD asked him who he thought the LORD JESUS was. *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Mat 16:16)* Then the LORD declared the SOURCE of Peter’s “faith”, *“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)* Did Peter “decide” to have faith? No a thousand times no, he merely expressed that TRUTH which was burned into his soul by the power of a Sovereign and Holy GOD. Could such ever be overturned? No, for the LORD said, *“upon this rock (i.e.; not Peter, but that “GREAT FAITH” which Peter expressed) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Mat 16:18)*

Abraham is often held up as the “father of the faithful”, and well he is. Three different times in the NT (Rom.4:3; Gal.3:6; James 2:23) we read that *“Abraham believed GOD”* and righteousness was laid to his account (i.e.; imputed to him). The scripture does not say that Abraham’s activity of faith, was the basis of this imputation. Rather the scripture says that “Abraham believed GOD”, not simply that he believed. The basis of this imputation was due to the OBJECT of his FAITH. The FAITH of GOD’s elect is not an activity but rather the PERSON of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. HE is our FAITH. Upon this ROCK is our HOPE. HE is the GREAT FAITH of HIS people. *“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” (Rom 10:11)*

CHRIST is the FAITH of all of HIS children. It does not matter if they are weak (as judged by men) or strong, their FAITH faileth not. When there seems to be a flicker of a flame which may simply seem to smolder, or there is that which burneth with white hot heat, the FAITH is the same and the activity of faith stems from the same SOURCE. *“A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.” (Isa 42:3)* *“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.” (2 Cor 2:14)*

What various ways do men invent, To give the conscience ease!

Some say, Believe; and some, Repent; And some say, Strive to please.

But, brethren, Christ, and Christ alone, Can rightly do the thing;

Nor ever can the way be known, Till he salvation bring.

What mean the men that say, Believe, And let repentance go?

What comfort can the soul receive That never felt its woe?

Christ says, “That I might sinners call To penitence, I’m sent;”

And, “Likewise ye shall perish all, Except ye do repent.”

Those who are called by grace divine Believe, but not alone;

Repentance to their faith they join, And so go safely on.

But should repentance, or should faith, Should both deficient seem,

Jesus gives both, the Scripture saith; Then ask them both of him. (by J.Hart, #240, Gadsby’s) mam