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RESTORING THE CHURCH - PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH LIFE

Faith Toward God

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this lesson is to help us to see that the Christian life is a life of faith-not a dead faith, but a faith that is alive and active, responding quickly to the Word of the Lord.

KEY VERSE:

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." **Hebrews 11:6**

I. HOW IMPORTANT IS FAITH?

- A. Faith toward God is the second principle of the Doctrine of Christ (Hebrews 6:1).
- B. Faith and repentance are inseparably linked together. They are mutually dependent upon each other (Acts 20:21; Mark 1:15).
 - E. Baxter puts it this way: "To profess to turn to God without forsaking sin in repentance ends in hypocrisy. To attempt to forsake sin without turning to God in faith, ends in failure and despair."
- C. Faith is the foundation for the entire Christian life. Nothing can be known or received from God unless man first believes in His existence and, secondly, that God has revealed Himself in His Word, the Bible (Hebrews 11:6).

*"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by **faith**."* **Romans 1:17**

II. WHAT IS FAITH?

- A. The Bible defines faith in Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." (NIV)
- B. The dictionary defines faith as a "trust, firm persuasion, assurance, firm conviction, confidence in another and another's word."
- C. Charles Finney put it this way: Faith is "a receiving of Christ for just what He is represented to be in His Gospel, and an unqualified surrender of the will, and of the whole being to Him."
- D. R.A. Torrey states, "To believe God is to rely upon or having unhesitating assurance of the truth of God's testimony, even though it is unsupported by any other evidence, and to rely upon or have unfaltering assurance of the fulfilment of His promises, even though everything seen seems against fulfilment."

III. WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF TRUE FAITH?

- A. The only source of true biblical faith is **the Word of God** (Romans 10:4-16).

"So, then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." **Romans 10:17**

- B. Abraham serves as an example to us of how to receive and respond to the Word of God (Hebrews 11:8-12, Romans 4:16-22).

The manner in which Abraham manifests faith is the manner in which we must manifest faith:

1. He heard the word.
2. He placed his hope in the future according to the word.
3. He refused to accept natural evidences that contradicted that word.

4. He did not waiver in his commitment to that word.

5. He rejoiced when the fulfilment of the word was realized.

Scriptural faith is **a condition of the heart**, not the mind. It is in the present, not the future. It produces a positive change in the behaviour and experience. It is based solely in God's Word and accepts the testimony of the senses **only** when it agrees with the text of God's Word.

IV. HOW IS TRUE FAITH EXPRESSED IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER?

There are two main ways in which faith is actively expressed in the life of the believer:

A. It is expressed by the **confession** of the mouth (Romans 10:9; Matthew 10:32).

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."
Matthew 12:34

B. It is expressed by a life of **obedience** to the word received. Faith and works are inseparably linked (Romans 1:5; 15:18; 16:25, 26; James 2:14-26).

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."
James 2:17-18

V. HOW DO WE APPROPRIATE FAITH IN SPECIFIC SITUATIONS?

A. Locate the promise in God's Word that fits the need (Philippians 4:19).

"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."
2 Corinthians 1:20

- B. Fulfill all the conditions attached to that need (Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 15)

“Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”

Psalms 37:5

- C. With patience accept the trying of your faith and God’s testing of your faith through time of delay (Hebrews 6:12-15; Psalm 105:19).

“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

James 1:3-4

VI. WHAT CAN ONE DO TO INCREASE IN FAITH?

- A. Settle in your hearts that God’s Word is true (James 1:6, 7; 2 Peter 1:19; Psalm 18:30).
- B. Put yourself in the place of hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17; Galatians 3:2, 5).
- C. Be hearers and doers of the Word, not hearers only (Luke 8:15).
- D. Exercise the faith that you have (Matthew 9:20, 22; 14:25-29), Even in the physical body as we exercise our muscles, they increase.
- E. Avoid natural reasonings and philosophies of man that speak contrary to the clearly revealed Word of God (1 Timothy 1:4-7, 6:20, 21; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; Romans 14:1; Colossians 2:8).

CONCLUSION:

Faith toward God is simply trust God, to have confidence in Him and His Word, to believe what God has said, that His Word is true and what He has promised He will perform. GOD makes a promise, FAITH believes it, HOPE anticipates it and PATIENCE quietly awaits it. The life of every believer in Christ is to be lived completely in this context. Faith must be the motivating factor for all that we do.