

Lesson # 2 -- The Basis of Faith

Introduction

- A. One of the most amazing truths regarding faith was considered in the previous lesson: it is an ability to trust God -- and given as a gift in salvation.
- B. Faith has been designed by God to enable the Christian to walk in fellowship with Him and to give as well as receive in the act of spiritual participation.
- C. A question that is often asked by the serious Christian has to do with the basis of faith -- "How can I be sure I'm praying and living in the will of God -- by faith?"

I. The Biblical Instruction

- A. Faith finds its basis in God and His character.

In profound simplicity the Bible describes those who know how to practice faith as "believers." They say "I believe God!" It is quite overwhelming to realize that The True and Living God, in all His infinite perfection, stands behind His Word and upholds it. We can trust His Word because He is trustworthy.

Since this truth will be considered in the next lesson -- The Object of Faith -- it will be developed there.

- B. Faith finds its basis in the Word of God as truth.

- 1. In the Holy Scripture God has made Himself and His will known to us.

- a. He has spoken to us in invitations.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matt. 11:28

- b. He has spoken to us in commands.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Matt. 6:33

- c. He has spoken to us in promises.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Matt. 6:33

- 2. Biblical faith is seen in the believer responding to God on the basis of His invitation, obeying His commands, and claiming the promises that He has given in His Word. We have the right to do this because He has given us His Word.

II. The Biblical Illustration

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither ye the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that, what he (God) had promised, he (God) was able also to perform. Romans 4:17-22

Comments:

1. Abraham and Sarah were given a promise that they would have a child and that through this child all nations of the world would be blessed. (It was a promise of a Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, and they understood it as such, John 8:56.)
2. In spite of not being able to have children, and both now quite old, they simply believed God -- took Him at His Word.
3. They are commended in this passage by the words, "giving glory to God," because their faith was a way of saying to God -- "We believe You have the wisdom and the power to carry out Your promise, and we trust You."
4. The basis of their faith was found in the promise given to them by God and through that promise the very character of God Himself.
5. An important key to their faith was in how they chose to believe God. They did not let their feelings (who against hope) nor their circumstances or resources (considered not his own body, now dead . . . nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb) hinder them in their walk with God. They made a choice, a decision to trust God in spite of the problems.
6. This illustration is given to us in the Scripture as a pattern for our response of faith. Their faith was not perfect -- but still described by God as "strong." If they could believe God -- all of us can learn to do so.

III. The Biblical Explanation

A. The Word of God can be the basis for our faith because the holy Scriptures were given by divine inspiration.

1. The Biblical statement of inspiration.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
II Timothy 3:16,17

2. An explanation (definition) of inspiration.

Biblical inspiration . . . is that . . . activity of the Holy Spirit through which He mysteriously filled the human spirit of the biblical writers and guided them, so that there arose an infallible, Spirit-wrought writing, a sacred record, a book of God, with which the Spirit of God evermore organically unites Himself. (Eric Sauer, From Eternity to Eternity. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957, p. 107.)

3. The implications of inspiration.

- a. God has revealed Himself to us.
- b. The Word of God is truth (trustworthy).
- c. The Holy Spirit of God (the Spirit of Truth) has come to enable us to understand the Scripture.
- d. The Word of God has been given to us as a blueprint so we may understand the will of God and how to practice it in daily life.
- e. The Word of God is the basis for our faith. We have been given promises, commands, and instructions which explain what we are to believe and how to trust and obey God.

B. The Word of God, as a basis of faith, was confirmed to us by the teaching and example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The Lord Jesus spoke of Himself and the Word of God as final authority.

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. John 12:48

2. The Lord Jesus spoke of Himself and the Word of God as the object of faith.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. John 15:7

3. The Lord Jesus spoke of the Word of God as the means of grace.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. John 8:31,32

4. The Lord Jesus held people responsible for the Word of God and He continues to do so today.

Now when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him. . . Matthew 12:2,3

5. The Lord Jesus used Scripture as His refuge in the most difficult hours of His life.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Matt. 4:2-4

Summary: The above material reminds us that we have been given a trustworthy basis, in the holy Word of God, so we can correctly respond to Him, and live for Him. This opens to every believer an unlimited potentiality for fellowship with God, Biblical success in daily life, and fruitful service for God.

IV. The Biblical Application

A. The application by way of encouragement.

(From extensive reading, talking with people, and working with myself, I believe there are three areas of primary concern for the believer. In each of these we have been given, in the Word of God, a firm basis for encouragement.)

1. Encouragement regarding the assurance of salvation.

And I (the Lord Jesus) give unto them (believers) eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. John 1:28

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life I John 5:13

Comment: These passages give us the basis for assurance. God has given us His Word. We trust HIM for salvation. HE is our Redeemer. We place our faith in the Son of God -- not a church, nor our works, nor the strength of our faith -- but in HIM.

2. Encouragement regarding the prayer life.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
John 14:13

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.
I John 5:14

Comment: We have a clear basis of faith for our prayers. We can ask for anything that is in harmony with the name of the Lord Jesus, the glory of the Father, and the will of God. This simply means -- no good thing has been withheld from us!

3. Encouragement regarding divine care.

For thy Maker is thine husband, the LORD of hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel, The God of the whole earth shall he be called.
Isaiah 54:5

I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. John 10:11.

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. John 10:14

Comment: The titles in these passages indicate the type of relationship God has established with all those who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He has assumed all obligation for us and assures us that He will care for us as a husband cares for the wife and family and the shepherd the flock. He is infinitely greater than any husband or shepherd.

B. The application by way of responsibility.

1. Because of the greatness of God we have a responsibility to honor Him by our response of faith.

Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh, is there any thing too hard for me? Jer. 32:27

2. Because we have been given the Holy Scripture we have a responsibility to believe and obey the Bible.

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh

Conclusion: The opportunity and responsibility belongs to each of us individually. We must make the necessary decisions of faith, and in dependence on God -- obey Him.