

Lesson # 6 -- The Enablement Regarding Faith

Introduction

- A. One of the most encouraging truths of the Bible has to do with the assurance that God has made an adequate provision for every facet of the believer's life. (Eph. 1:3; II Peter 1:3)
- B. As we discuss the important place of faith in the Christian life we must do so with an understanding of how faith itself is a part of this divine provision.
- C. This is a good place to remind ourselves of the personal nature of Christianity. Salvation itself is a relationship between God as a Person and the believer as a person. In this connection faith is a quality or characteristic of that relationship. Faith is my decision (as a Christian) to respond to God in trust.

I. The Biblical Instruction

A. The principle.

In the Fall the destructive forces of sin destroyed all the ability we had to trust God. As a result we are born into the world totally unable to respond to God by faith or obedience.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. Romans 3:10,11

The new birth, therefore, is not something we earn by good works of any kind. It is purely the gift of God (Rom. 6:23) as given by the Holy Spirit. Faith itself was included in that gift. The very evidence that a person is a believer is seen in what he believes (John 8:24; I Cor. 12:3), and that he does exercise faith (James 2:17).

Throughout the Bible, therefore, faith is traced back to the grace of God. It is not an ability shared by all people -- only believers -- through the work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3,5).

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith . . . Hebrews 12:2

For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Eph. 2:8,9 (See also Rom. 4:16.)

The Holy Spirit not only gives us the gift of faith but works in us to establish the foundation of faith, as we see in the following examples.

B. The examples.

1. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of God.

And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. I Cor.6:11

Comment: In this passage the work of salvation is traced back to the agency of the Holy Spirit. The benefits Paul lists have to do with the New Birth. There is also the emphasis upon the deity of the Holy Spirit in that He is described as doing that which only God can do. He is the One Who applies the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus described as "washed," "sanctified," and "justified."

2. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Life.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1,2

Comment: The word "law" in this passage could be explained as "pattern of operation." The way (pattern) the Holy Spirit works in the life of the believer is the opposite to the pattern which characterizes sin and death. The Holy Spirit has introduced life (in the place of death), as well as forgiveness and freedom (in the place of guilt and bondage).

3. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Adoption.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Romans 8:15,16

Comment: Again we are shown the foundational work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian. All the major areas relating to the expression and content of faith are due to His supernatural intervention.

4. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Grace.

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. Heb. 10:28,29

Comment: These verses describe the work of the Holy Spirit among non-Christians. His ministry to them is that of conviction (John 16:8-11). The spurning of the truths regarding redemption is here stated to be treating the Holy Spirit with "despite" (scorn, insult, abuse, contempt and hatred). The content of His ministry is shown to be that of "grace." This is so in that He not only brings illumination regarding the work of the Lord Jesus but applies the grace of salvation to the elect believer.

5. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. Even the Spirit of truth John 14:16,17

Comment: This title indicates that the Holy Spirit has been sent to teach the Christian. He is the One Who brought the Bible into existence through inspiration and has led in its preservation, translation, and exposition. It is overwhelming to realize that He dwells in us to enable us to understand the Word of God. This ministry is surely the most important to help the believer in his life and walk of faith.

6. The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter (Helper).

But the Comforter (Helper), which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things John 14:26

Comment: The title in this verse summarizes all the others. The Holy Spirit has been sent to be a divine "Helper" for the Christian. It is His officework to teach the believer and to lead him into the practice of the truth. In each of the above titles the believer's faith is implied and even more here as we contemplate all the ways the Holy Spirit seeks to lead us into the will of God.

II. The Biblical Illustration

Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem, and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, and much people was added unto the Lord. Acts 11:22-24

Comment: The description of Barnabas as "full of the Holy Spirit and faith" underlines the theme of this lesson. There is a close harmony between personal commitment, the will of God, our decisions of faith, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Every one of us can learn to live like Barnabas. He had given himself fully to God and had learned to live in the will of God. As a result every area of his life was under the control ("full") of the Holy Spirit and he was able therefore to exercise Biblical faith in all the areas of his life. The Holy Spirit is our divine Helper to enable each of us to live this way.

III. The Biblical Explanation

A. The principle.

The Holy Spirit has laid the foundation of our spiritual life and now desires to lead us into building the correct superstructure. Each of these areas is closely related to the practice of faith. The following examples indicate the type of life we should live.

B. The examples.

1. Divine enablement of faith regarding the joy of the Lord.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Comment: Notice the relationship between the work of the Holy Spirit, believing, and the products of joy, peace, and hope. He wants to enable us to learn how to live by faith so we may know such joy.

2. Divine enablement of faith regarding spirituality.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (self-control), against such there is no law. Gal. 5:22,23

Comment: What the Holy Spirit wants to develop in our person and life is found in these two verses. Essentially these characteristics are related to the virtues in the person of the Lord Jesus. As He lives out His life through us (Gal. 2:20), by the Holy Spirit, we manifest His love, His joy, His peace

3. Divine enablement of faith regarding prayer.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Eph. 6:18

Comment: All would agree that prayer is one of the most difficult areas in the life of faith. There is nothing the enemy will oppose more. The promise of the Holy Spirit is that He will be our divine enablement as we practice this truth by faith.

4. Divine enablement of faith regarding assurance of salvation.

For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Rom. 8:15,16

Comment: The Holy Spirit dwells within so we may be led into a realization that we are children of God. For many believers this is a major problem. Too often we test this truth by our emotions while the Holy Spirit is attempting to get us to accept the truth by faith.

5. Divine enablement of faith regarding sanctification.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Romans 8:13,14

Comment: This area of life is one of the most difficult as well as the most important. We are by the very nature of sin, self-centered people. The Holy Spirit has come to enable us to understand the will of God and to live that way through decisions of faith which result in obedience. He wants to make us holy people.

IV. The Biblical Application

- A. We must face ourselves with the question of priority. Do we want the will of God as spelled out in this lesson? Can we honestly say, "I want the Holy Spirit to change me as a person and lead me into a life of obedience to God by faith?"
- B. Then the next question is, "When do we start?" The answer is, of course, "Now." We start as an act (decision) of faith to live in obedience to what we know now to be the will of God -- and to do so by faith -- no matter what we feel emotionally. This is the pattern for each day -- obedience by faith. The Holy Spirit can only help us as we practice the truth, so we must choose to obey and do so by trusting Him.

Conclusion: We have a great Helper in the Holy Spirit. He is all-wise, all-powerful, and infinite in love, holiness, and truth. It is a terrible sin to have such a Helper and then not to cooperate with Him.