



"FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH"

EPHESIANS 2:8

Paul's concern over the teaching;

Salvation as past: Delivered from the just wrath/penalty of sins and trespasses;

MATTHEW 1:21

"...She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for *he will save his people from their sins.*"

Salvation as present: Being delivered from the power/enslavement of sin and deadness to God;

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who *are being saved* it is the power of God.

Salvation as future: To be delivered from the presence of sin;

ROMANS 5:9-10

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more *shall we be saved* by him from the wrath of God...

Grace: The predetermined and intentional disposition of favor on the part of God toward the lost and helpless sinner. This disposition is in no way conditioned by anything in the sinner, but is solely the decision of God.

True understanding of the nature of grace is offensive to people—both the converted and the unconverted;

MATTHEW 20:1-16 (the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard)

ROMANS 3:24

[We] are justified by his grace *as a gift*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...

What is "this"?; Faith as a gift/work of God;

PHILIPPIANS 1:29

For it has been *granted to you* that for the sake of Christ you should not only *believe in him* but also suffer for his sake...

2 PETER 1:1

...To those who have *obtained a faith* of equal standing with ours *by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ*...

Rightly understood, faith is less "my part," and more "the point at which God's salvation touches the lost sinner."

False understandings of faith;

1. Thinking too highly of *faith*
2. Thinking too lowly of *faith*

Faith that does not save;

JAMES 2:19

You believe that God is one; you do well. *Even the demons believe*...

LUKE 8:13

And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; *they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away.*

Unbelief: The crowning sin of the damned;

JOHN 16:8-9

[The Holy Spirit] will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: *concerning sin, because they*

do not believe in me;

Saving Belief: The necessary mark of the saint;

JOHN 6:29

Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, *that you believe in him whom he has sent.*"

JOHN 7:38

"...*Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'*"

JOHN 11:25

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. *Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live...*"

JOHN 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that *whoever believes in him* should not perish but have eternal life.

ACTS 10:43

"...To him all the prophets bear witness that *everyone who believes in him* receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

ACTS 13:38-39

Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him *everyone who believes* is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

GALATIANS 2:16

...we know that a person is not justified by works of the law *but through faith in Jesus Christ...*

Understanding the nature of saving faith;

- The most powerful life-shaping force in your existence
- You cannot understand faith without understanding something of the human need for acceptance, approval, and love from our father

The binding quality of faith;

GALATIANS 2:20-21

I have been crucified with Christ. *It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.*

Saving faith utterly depends upon a right perception of God's love and grace;

ZEPHANIAH 3:17 (see 1 John 4:15-16)

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

1 TIMOTHY 2:4

[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

ZACHARIAH 2:8

...for he who touches you touches *the apple of his eye.*

Biblical pictures of saving faith: The fearful, dying person looking, and finding life in the look;

JOHN 3:14-15

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

Biblical pictures of saving faith: The empty hand receiving;

JOHN 1:11-12

...*But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...*

Biblical pictures of saving faith: The hungry and thirsty person eating and drinking;

JOHN 6:35

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; *whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall*

never thirst.

JOHN 6:50-51

This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. *If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.*"

Biblical pictures of saving faith: The hunted criminal/endangered soul finding refuge and safety;

HEBREWS 6:18

...so that by two unchangeable things...*we who have fled for refuge* might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

MARK 4:39-40

And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "*Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?*"

Biblical pictures of saving faith: The weary and burdened person casting their heavy burden upon Him;

MATTHEW 11:28-30

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...

Essential commonalities of all the biblical pictures of saving faith;

1. The driving impulse—the sharp perception of need
2. The direction of the impulse—away from self and toward Christ

ACTS 16:29-30

And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and *trembling with fear* he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*"

ROMANS 10:13

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Saving faith: Having been made alive to a right view of God and self, the redeemed sinner perceives, joyful surrenders to, and lives in the deeply-needed acceptance and approval of the Father that is rightly deserved by Another and given freely to the sinner. Rightly understood, saving faith frees the sinner from thoughts of guilt and disappointment in self, and binds the redeemed sinner to God with a bond that rejects all boasting in self, and necessitates boasting in the Lord.

Questions for Discussion

How has this passage changed your understanding of faith—both saving faith and unsaving faith?

How does the understanding of your "most powerful life-shaping force" aid in your understanding of saving faith? Your spiritual growth? Your relating to your Father?

Have you witnessed the living out of this deepest of needs in the lives of others? Of yourself?

Can you see how this great need for approval and acceptance has the power to shape everything about one's life?

How does the Bible's teaching that faith is God's gift/work affect your life in Christ?