**7 May 2017**

**Living by Faith**

**Foundation Scriptures**

Romans 1: 15 – 17

* The ‘just’ shall live by faith.
* **Just** means righteous (innocent, holy, right with God)
* Righteousness springs from faith and leads to faith
* (NLT – It is through faith that a righteous person has life)
* Justified freely by his grace (Romans 3: 24)

Galatians 3: 11 - 12

* The law is not of faith, that’s why it can’t make you right with God.

Hebrews 10: 38

* Draw back – to cower, shrink or withdraw

**The gospel connection**

The gospel reveals righteousness which enables us to live in newness of life (Romans 6: 4 & 7: 6)

* ***Gospel is ‘good news*** ‘– about the grace of God, not the weakness of man
* Living by faith is eternally connected to the gospel of Christ
* The gospel of grace is the gospel of Christ. There is no other gospel, no matter who is proclaiming it (Galatians 1: 6 – 8)
* Acts 20: 24 (The gospel of the grace of God)

2 Corinthians 5: 7 (we walk by faith and not by sight – seen and unseen realm)

**What is faith?**

Hebrews 11: 1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11: 6 (NLT – Those who sincerely seek Him)

***Faith*** means – assurance, believe

***Substance*** means – confident assurance

***Hope*** means – expectation or trust (hope is an anchor of the soul)

***Evidence*** means – Proof or conviction (only used twice in New Testament)

2 Timothy 3: 16 – All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for ***reproof***, for correction, for instruction in righteousness)

* Faith is always NOW
* It is a spiritual force which enables us to access the grace of God, His free gift to humanity (Romans 5: 17 – 18)
* Faith does not change God. He is unchanging
* Faith positions us to receive that which belongs to us
* Fail will however change things and circumstances
* Always remember, Jesus never fails and God never fails
* Preaching ***proclaims***, teaching ***explains***.

**Faith in God and His Word alone**

Mark 11: 22 (Have faith in God)

Having faith in God is having faith in His word.

God and His word are one

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1: 1)

It’s God’s faith

* God is a faith God (Hebrews 11: 3)
* God has dealt (apportioned or distributed) to every man **THE** measure of faith, not “**A**” measure (Romans 12: 3)
* Galatians 2: 20 – I live the faith of the Son of God
* Mark 11: 22 – Have faith in God (or the faith of God)
* 1 Peter 1: 23 – Born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible by the word of God which lives and abides forever.
* The Word of God is impregnated with faith (written & spoken)
* John 6: 63 – The word is living (Hebrews 4: 12)
* We are given **God’ s faith** to get **His grace**, to enable **His glory** to be manifest in our lives. *Now that’s mercy*.

**Faith requires believing**

Hebrews 11:6

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God ***must believe*** that he is and that he is a rewarded of them that diligently seek him”.

* 1 John 5: 1 – 5 (believers only are born of God)
* John 5: 47 – If we can’t believe His written word, how can we believe God.
* Luke 16: 27 – 31 – Jesus said that raising someone from the dead, in itself, won’t persuade someone to believe.
* John 6: 28 – 29 – Believe on him who he has sent.

The faith of Abraham (Romans 4: 16)

* Romans 4: 3
* Abraham believed God instead of trying to earn his favour.

Genesis 15: 1 – 6

* Abraham believed and the Lord declared him righteous
* God’s vision for Abraham was BIG. We are Abrahams seed and heirs.
* Hebrews 11: 17 – 19 (NLT). Abraham believed that God would raise His only son Isaac from the dead. Because of this amazing faith, God had to offer His Only Son (Genesis 22: 1 – 10)
* His “right believing” accessed God’s grace
* Our “right believing” also accesses the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ
* We are putting our faith in Jesus (Romans 3: 21 – 23)

**How does faith come?**

Romans 10: 17

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Based on the facts of God’s Word. We must ***feed our faith*** like we feed our body.

* They ***hear*** first
* Then they ***believe***
* Then they ***call*** upon the name of the Lord (they receive)

The hearing **must** precede the believing (How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard – Romans 10: 13 – 15 *(Send, preach, hear, believe, call)*.

Hebrews 4: 2 – “The word of hearing” did not profit them

* They did not believe what they heard. Faith did not come.
* They were not ***united*** to them that ‘***heard’*** (Joshua and Caleb)

Unbelief comes by hearing the theories of men and listening to the word of the world (satanically ruled world system)

It is His Word that gives birth to faith. Faith would not exist apart from God’s spoken and written word.

***Note:*** *Faith doesn’t come because of need or circumstances. Otherwise we would all be faith giants. The word ignites faith in a believer’s heart.*

Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. It starts and ends with Him.

Hebrews 12: 2 (*NLT – Jesus initiates and perfects our faith*)

Luke 5: 15

But so much more went there a fame (Logos) abroad about him: and great multitudes came to *hear*, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

Bible examples of this principle:

Matthew 4: 23 – 25

Matthew 9: 35 – 36

Mark 3: 7 – 8

Mark 5: 27

Mark 7: 25

Mark 10: 46

Luke 6: 17

Luke 7: 1 – 2

Luke 9: 28 (Transfiguration – this is my Son, hear Him)

-The proclamation of the gospel is the same as sowing seed into the soil

-The life is in the seed. The word is incorruptible seed and faith filled

-No word, No faith. No faith, no grace. No grace, no glory.

The preached word must be heard **and** believed to profit

Mark 6: 1 – 6

* They didn’t ***hear*** the word
* Their hearing resulted in questioning, not believing
* Jesus ***couldn’t*** heal (except a few people with minor ailments).
* Unbelief was the reason (not mixed with faith in them that heard it).

**How is faith released**

Faith is released by words

* Hebrews 11: 1 - 3
* Genesis 1: 1 – 3 (‘*and God said’*…..11 times).

Faith speaks

* 2 Corinthians 4: 13 (we also believe and therefore speak)
* Romans 10: 6 (faith speaks)
* Mark 11: 22 – 25 (believe what you are saying)
* Believes in the heart – it is not hoping and praying!!!
* Believes in the words
* You can doubt in your head but still believes in your heart, because faith is produced in the heart (or spirit)
* Thoughts may come into your head, but thoughts that are not put into words and action, die unborn.
* Faith words come from the heart, so do words of doubt and unbelief
* *We believe what we speak and speak what we believe - good or bad*

What defiles a man (defile means – pollute or make unclean)

Matthew 15: 16 – 20

Those things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart. They defile the man

* James 3: 5 - 6
* Proverbs 4: 20 - 24

Psalm 119: 130 – The entrance of his word gives light. It gives understanding unto the simple (foolish, open-minded or seducible). As soon as light comes, faith is there.

There is no active faith without words

Faith always has a good report no matter what the circumstances

The woman and Jairus- respected religious leader v outcast (Mark 5: 22 – 43)

* Jairus was a ruler of the Synagogue in Capernaum.
* Remember (Sent, preach, hear, believe and call – Romans 10: 13 - 15)
* Jairus spoke words – v23
* The woman spoke words – v28 (Leviticus 15: 25 - 27)
* Power went out (Dynamis) same word used in Luke 5: 17)
* Disciples said “You see” – v 31. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
* Apparent delays can rob us of our faith (*2 Corinthians 4: 17 – For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*)
* John 11: 1 – 6 (Lazarus - sickness not unto death. Jesus abode two days).
* Death didn’t trouble (Harass) Jesus v35
* Jesus dominated fear with words – v36 (be not afraid, only believe what you have said)
* Jesus is no respecter of persons. He responded to their faith with equal love, mercy, power and willingness to heal
* Faith calls those things that are not as though they were – faith is the evidence of things not see (child was dead but he called her alive). Romans 4: 17
* Jairus got exactly what he said v 41.

The Centurion (Matthew 8: 5 – 10 & Luke 7: 1 - 10)

* Heard about Jesus
* Recognised that he wasn’t worthy
* Understood the power and authority of words. He concluded that if soldiers responded to his commands, the sickness would respond to Jesus words. We now have authority to speak in the name of Jesus.
* His faith spoke – “Speak the word ***only*** and my servant shall be healed.
* Note: Psalm 107: 20 – Had the centurion read the Scriptures?
* Jesus marvelled at such ***great* faith** (to admire or wonder). Great faith is simply believing God at His word.
* Compare quantities of faith
  + Mark 4: 40 (***no* faith** – The words Jesus spoke regarding the parable of the sower and the kingdom weren’t mixed with faith)
  + Matthew 14: 31 (***little* faith** – why did you doubt)
  + John 20: 27 (***Faithless*** – unbelieving / without trust in God)
* We have all been give ‘the measure’ of faith (Romans 12: 3)
* The centurion got what he believed for – Mark 11: 23
* Faith always speaks (2 Corinthians 4: 13)

Psalm 89: 34 – God’s word is unchanging

Proverbs 4: 24 – avoid all perverse talk

Proverbs 12: 18 – The tongue of the wise is health

Proverbs 13: 2 – A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth

Proverbs 18: 21 – Death and life are in the power of the tongue

Luke 6: 45 – what’s in the heart in abundance ***will*** be spoken

Luke 17: 6 – faith is activated by spoken words

Matthew 12: 36 – 37 – Idle words (inactive, barren, lazy, useless or slow)

Romans 10: 8 – The word of faith is in your ***heart*** and in your ***mouth***.

Our words dominate us. We never rise above the confession of our mouth

Malachi 3: 13 – Your words have been *stout against me* saith the Lord (words that are rigid, hard or strong against the Lord). Never talk failure or defeat. Faith won’t rise above our words. *Remember, we can have what we say.*

**Israel got what they said**

They wouldn’t place their trust in God.

They doubted his love for them

Exodus 5: 21

Israel began to complain about Moses.

Exodus chapters 6 to 11

God then demonstrates His power over Pharaoh – (Ten plagues)

* Blood
* Frogs
* Gnats (bugs)
* Flies
* Egyptian livestock
* Boils
* Hail
* Locusts
* Darkness
* Death of the Egyptian first born

Result of the plagues:

* Commanded by Pharaoh to go (Exodus 12: 31)
* They left enriched by the Egyptians - wealth transfer. (Exodus 12: 35 - 36)
* 600,000 men besides woman and children left Egypt (Exodus 12: 37)
* Celebrated the Passover and then they left Egypt
* The plague of death did not touch the Israelites because of the blood on the door posts.
* Jesus became a lamb sacrifice at the Passover and shed His blood for us.
* Psalm 105: 37 – Brought them forth with silver and gold and there was not one feeble (weak) person among there tribes.

The wilderness detour

* Long way not the short way – for their own good. They were not ready (Exodus 13: 17 – 18)

The power of their words

Exodus 14: 10 – 12 – Complained at the Red Sea – Moses responded with words faith

Exodus 15: 22 -24 – Three days later complained about bitter water at Marah

Exodus 16: 1 - 3 – One month out, they complained that there was no food. God responded with quail and manna.

Exodus 17: 1 – 4 – Complained about a lack of water to drink. God commanded Moses to strike the rock and water flowed.

**Note:** On each occasion, God extended grace to Israel.

Exodus 19 and 20

Two months later they arrived in the wilderness of Sinai where the law was given. That is when everything changed. Israel was now under a performance based covenant.

Numbers 10: 11 – 12.

They remained two years in the wilderness of Sinai.

They then moved on to Kadesh-Barnea in the wilderness of Paran. It was here that they were sentences to wander 40 years in the wilderness.

Numbers 13 & 14

Two years had now passed since the exodus from Egypt

* God told Moses to search out the land of Canaan
* He had already given it to them
* Send leaders (12 men including Caleb and Joshua).
* Searched the land forty days

Numbers 13: 26 - 33

* They took their eyes off God and focused on natural circumstances
* Caleb spoke words of faith according to what God had said.
* The 10 leaders brought up an evil report of the land (slander or defaming).
* Reduced to grasshoppers in our own sight and theirs.

Numbers 14

* V2 & 3 – they spoke words of death, not life. They did not trust God’s love for them
* Caleb and Joshua encouraged the people, but they would not listen. There words over the past two years had developed a hardness of heart toward God.
* V11 – God said, how long before they believe me?
* Moses interceded and God pardoned them (Numbers 14: 13 – 19)
* However, God gave Israel exactly what they had spoken.
* They murmured (obstinate or grumbled)
* The leaders who brought up an evil report perished (death and life is in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18: 21)
* The price – 40 years in the wilderness instead of an 11-day journey.

1 Corinthians 10: 5

God was not pleased. This was an example for us so that we should not lust after evil thing. Our trust must be in Christ and Christ alone.

Hebrews 3: 17 – 19 (Hebrews 4: 1 -2)

The word of God will not profit us without faith.

Faith will shrivel if you keep rehearsing negative circumstances, just like the Israelites.

**Believing is an action word. Believing = acting on the Word of God**

Faith will always involve an encounter with Jesus (The Word)

Faith also requires corresponding action

* James 1: 22 – 24
  + Doer means – performer (not just a hearer only)
  + Word means Logos (something said)
  + Luke 6: 46 – 49 – Building a house on the rock of faith (Jesus) or the sands of doubt and unbelief.
  + Only one foundation (1 Corinthians 3: 10 -11)
  + Digging deep comes at a cost – Proverbs 2: 1 – 5
    - Receive the word and hide it
    - Incline your ear to wisdom and heart to understanding
    - Cry for knowledge and lift your voice for understanding
    - Seek her as silver
    - Search for her as hid treasure
    - Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God
* James 2: 26 (faith without corresponding action is dead)

**Examples of faith in action:**

Rahab who protected the spies (Joshua 2: 1 – 21)

* Hebrews 11: 31 (Rahab had faith)
  + Probably operating an Inn (Bed and Breakfast – with emphasis on the ‘bed’).
  + She had heard of the God of Israel and knew that he was the Supreme God of the heavens (Joshua 1: 11)
  + The spies had to put their trust in a pagan prostitute who believed in their God.
  + Yes, Rahab told lies to protect them, but God looked on her sincere heart
  + She put her life at great risk. Treason would have resulted in a torturous death.
  + The ‘Scarlet Rope’ (v. 17 - 18) was a type of blood covering. It worked for Rahab much as the blood of the Passover lamb had worked for the Israelites during the exodus from Egypt. It represented a covenant with Joshua via his messengers.
  + Rahab was interested in her family’s salvation also, not just hers
  + About 21 days passed from the time the spies left Rahab to the walls of Jericho falling down. This was a great test of Rahab’s trust in God.
  + The result we find in Joshua 6: 23 – 25 – God’s faithfulness
  + Rahab became an ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1: 5)
* James 2: 25 – Rahab put action (works) to her faith
* The result – Joshua 6: 23 – 25 (Her faith saved her and her family)

Real faith will always be demonstrated by action

The Spirit was upon Jesus and anointed him to bring recovery of sight to the blind (Luke 4: 18).

Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10: 46 – 52) Also Matthew 20: 29 & Luke 18: 35

* He was not moved by the opinions of men.
* He heard and believed in Jesus – He wasn’t spiritually blind
* He called him “Son of David”. He was affirming his belief that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.
* Many religious leaders of the day would have believed poverty or blindness of bad circumstances were a result of God’s judgement
* He pressed in when opposition arose. No political correctness or protocol
* Will your miracle pass you by?
* Faith is bold. God recongnises the cry of faith.
* He cast away his garment (his old identity, his license to beg, his position in society, his limitations).
* He sought mercy but Jesus asked for specifics – “What would you like me to do for you”?
* He simply told Jesus his desire.
* Jesus emphasized the necessity of faith – “Your faith has made you whole”.
* Bartimaeus had a ‘God pleasing” faith – a wholehearted trust in the healer
* He didn’t go back for his garment, but followed Jesus – a new life in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5: 17 & Philippians 3: 13 – 14)
* Our faith releases the power of God through corresponding action

Paralysed man lowered from the roof (Luke 5: 17 – 26)

* They didn’t leave discouraged on first attempt to access Jesus
* They didn’t interrupt Jesus. He is always ready to meet man’s needs
* Jesus saw their faith. He saw corresponding action (faith and works)
* He had an encounter with Jesus (The Word) and left healed.

**Two kinds of faith**

John 20: 24 – 29

Thomas declared that unless he could “***see***” he would not believe

*Believing is a choice of the will*

History of Thomas (Didymus which means twin)

* He walked with Jesus during his ministry on the earth
* Tradition records he became a missionary to India and martyred there.
* He was a logical thinker and had a skeptical mind.
* Unlike the other disciples, he put his doubt into words. He wasn’t the only disciple Jesus rebuked for their unbelief and hardness of heart (Mark 16: 9 - 14).

Other scriptures about Thomas

* John 11:16 – He was fiercely loyal, courageous and not afraid to die
* John 14:5 – Relied on natural reasoning.

Two kinds of faith

* ***Seeing Faith***. Sense Knowledge Faith

(Trusts in and relies on the natural realm)

* ***Believing Faith***. Revealed knowledge Faith

(Trusts in and relies on the spirit realm)

2 Corinthians 5:7 –We walk by faith, not by sight

There is no blessing attached to sense knowledge faith. The blessing accompanies the believing. *“Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet believe.”* (John 20: 29)

Example: Mark 6: 1-6

First the people were amazed and then they scoffed.

They allowed their natural experience of Jesus to rob them of faith. As a result, the blessing of healing was severely limited. He was seen as the carpenter, not the conqueror.

John 6:30

The people wanted a sign that they could see and believe. Jesus didn’t give signs because he didn’t want their believing to be based on sight.

Religious faith

* In creeds
* In doctrines
* In denominations
* In kind deeds / good works
* In churches or ministers of the gospel
* In experience (physical evidence must precede believing)

*However, Bible faith rests in quite confidence in what God has stated.*

2 Kings 4: 8 – 37

Elisha and the Shunammite woman

* She would not be moved by natural circumstances
* She maintained a declaration of faith – ALL IS WELL
* She wouldn’t let go of her faith
* She got what she believed for (her son returned to life)

2 Kings 6: 14 – 23 (NLT)

* King of Aram wanted to seize Elisha
* The young servant of Elisha saw in the natural and was afraid.
* The eyes of Elisha’s servant were open

To some people, preaching that Jesus is the healer is irresponsible and even cruel. NO – someone left suffering with a debilitating sickness or disease is cruel.

Sense knowledge faith

* Look at the facts only
* Believes what it sees only
* Trusts in feelings & emotion, rather than the Word of God
* Mark 5:36 - Jesus had to remind Jairus to “*be not afraid, only believe*”

Jesus Disciples operated in ‘Sense Knowledge Faith’. They didn’t have the revelation that we have through the writings of the New Testament.

The disciples thought that Jesus died as a martyr for his ideals. They had no idea He was dying for their sins.

There was no faith in Jesus from a spiritual point of view. People believed because they **saw** miracles, signs and wonders. That’s why Jesus had to go to the Father and send the Holy Spirit who would lead and guide us into all truth.

The sense rule mind talks “Faith” and acts “Reason”.

Proverbs 3: 5-6

Trust in the Lord with ***all your heart*** and lean not on your own understanding. It didn’t say ***trust in all your senses****.*

The spirit believes the word regardless of seeing, hearing or feeling.

2 Corinthians 4:18

The things which are seen are temporary. That means they are subject to change. The things which are unseen are eternal.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SEEING FAITH BELIEVING FAITH | |
| Doubts the unseen | Believes the unseen |
| Demands evidence | Accepts truth |
| Believes what it sees | Sees what it believes |
| Receives at time of possession | Receives at the time of believing |
| Relies on the five physical senses | Relies on the Word of God only |
| Rejects truth and accepts fact | Rejects fact and accepts truth |
| Trusts in man (natural realm) | Trusts in God (spiritual realm) |
| Believes through natural eyes | Believes through Spiritual eyes |
| Speaks what is seen | Speaks what is believed |
| Will change the word to fit circumstances | Will change circumstances to fit the word |
| Declares what is | Declares what will be |
| Hopes in the promises of God | Claims the promises of God |
| Is uncertain of the will of God | Knows the will of God |
| Believes the Bible is true but does not act | Believes and acts on the Word of God |
| Allows experience to determine belief | Allows belief to determine experience |
| Wavers under pressure | Stands under pressure |
| Relies on self-effort (works) | Relies on finished works of Jesus (grace) |
| Does not please God | Pleases God |