

SAVING FAITH

1. WHAT is faith?

“Faith is the *substance* [margin, *ground*, or *confidence*] of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen.” **Hebrews 11:1.**

2. How important is faith?

“*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.*” **Verse 6.**

3. How only can we truly know God?

“Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, *and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.*” **Matthew 11:27.**

4. In whom must we believe in order to be saved?

“For God so loved the world, that He gave *His only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in *Him* should not perish, but have everlasting life.” **John 3:16.**

5. What challenge does the apostle James make as to the evidence that one has genuine faith?

“Show me thy faith *without* thy works, and I will show thee my faith *by* my works.” **James 2:18.**

6. How did Abraham show that he had perfect faith in God?

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, *when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?* Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and *by works was faith made perfect?*” **Verses 21, 22.**

7. By what practical example does the apostle illustrate the difference between genuine, living faith, and a dead faith?

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” **Verses 15, 16.**

8. How necessary are works in maintaining, living faith?

“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that *faith without works is dead*? . . . For as the body without the spirit [margin, *breath*] is dead, so *faith without works is dead also*.” **Verses 20–26.**

NOTES — The apostle was not here arguing for justification or salvation by faith *and* works, but for a living faith—a faith *that* works.

“There are two errors against which the children of God—particularly those who have just come to trust in His grace—especially need to guard. The first . . . is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God. He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy. The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption. . . . Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. . . . Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience. We do not earn salvation by our obedience; for salvation is the free gift of God, to be received by faith. But obedience is the fruit of faith. . . . That so-called faith in Christ which professes to release men from the obligation of obedience to God, is not faith, but presumption.” “*Steps to Christ*,” pages 64–66.

Says Luther: “If Christ alone takes away sin, we cannot do so by all our works. But good works follow redemption as surely as fruit appears upon a living tree.” *D’ Aubigne’s “History of the Reformation,”* book 2, chap. 6.

9. What does the hope of salvation lead one to do?

“And every man that hath this hope in Him *purifieth himself*, even as He is pure.” **1John 3:3.**

10. Upon what condition are we made partakers of Christ?

“For we are made partakers of Christ, *if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.*” **Hebrews 3:14.**

11. Upon what conditions has God promised us cleansing and the forgiveness of our sins?

“But *if we walk in the light*, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. . . . *If we confess our sins*, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” **1John 1:7–9.**

NOTE — Intelligent faith as to what God will do for us touching any matter must be gained by what God’s Word says concerning that point. No one can consistently hope for that which God has not promised. To expect that God will do that which He has never promised to do is only presumption. Faith is distinct from presumption. To have abiding confidence in the promise of God is faith; but presumption may rest entirely on feeling or desire. Feeling cannot therefore be relied on in the matter of faith. Faith is a pure belief, a confiding trust, in the promises of God, irrespective of feeling. This perfect trust enables one to surmount difficulties under the most trying circumstances, even when the feelings are depressed or well-nigh crushed.

12. Upon what, then, is genuine, saving faith based?

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by *the word of God.*” **Romans 10:17.**

13. What was the cause of Peter’s sinking after he had started to meet the Saviour on the stormy sea?

“And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*” **Matthew 14:31.**

NOTE — The boisterous sea caused Peter to doubt the strength of Christ’s word, “Come.”

14. With what is it our privilege to be filled?

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

NOTE — Faith may be strengthened by daily exercise. It is not some great thing, done once for all, that gives an individual faith; but an every-day, simple, childlike trust in God, and an implicit obedience to His Word. Some make faith a more difficult matter than God would have them, because they try to embrace too much at one time. They take on the burdens of tomorrow or next week, when the Lord supplies strength only for *today*. When tomorrow comes, grapple with its duties, but not until it does come. We should remember the precious promise, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” **Deuteronomy 33:25.**

AWAY, my unbelieving fear!
Fear shall in me no more have place:
My Saviour doth not yet appear,
He hides the brightness of His face;
But shall I therefore let Him go,
And basely to the tempter yield?—
No, in the strength of Jesus, no;
I never will give up my shield.

CHARLES WESLEY.

