

BELIEVE ON THE GOSPEL

MARK 16:15 • TV204A

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In Mark Chapter 16 verses 15 and 16, the Scripture declares that our Lord said unto His disciples; *“go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

Now my friends; these words require more serious attention than any other words spoken to the sons of men. There are four or five reasons for that:

First of all: These are the words of Christ our Lord.

This is no mere man speaking. This is not literature from denominational presses; these are the words of the Son of God. He said to His disciples; *“go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned.”* These are the words of Christ.

Secondly: These are the last recorded words spoken by our Lord after He was crucified, buried, and raised again.

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The last words of special loved ones are very, very, dear to us. We remember the last words we heard of a particular relative or friend speak; they are very important.

These are the last words of our Lord, the last thing He said to His disciples. **Verse 19** says, *“And He ascended up into heaven.”* But, He said to them, the final commission; *“you go and preach the Gospel.”*

Thirdly: These words are concerning the greatest issues that you can face; eternal life and eternal death.

We are not talking about something that may happen tomorrow or something that may happen next year; we are talking about eternity. *“He that believeth and is baptized shall have eternal life and he that believeth not, there is eternal condemnation, eternal separation from God.”*

Fourthly: Here are the terms of peace laid down by Christ himself.

We are hearing a great deal about terms of peace. There are terms of peace in the Middle East made at Camp David. There are terms of peace concerning the Falkland Islands off of Argentina. These are terms of peace laid down by the Son of God; He said, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned.”*

Fifthly: These words apply to every man regardless of condition, to you, to me, Jew, Gentile, rich, poor, bond, free, black or white. These words apply to all men.

“You go, He said, and preach this Gospel to every creature and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned.”

That is sufficient to show us that these words are the most serious and solemn words spoken to the sons of men. They are the words of Christ and they are His last words spoken. They concern such vital issues.

These are the terms that Christ has laid down for peace and they apply to everyone. There is nobody listening to me today left out of this verse of Scripture. They apply to all men, every creature.

All right; notice this secondly: Faith is necessary to eternal life. Our Lord said, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”* Faith is essential to life; it is necessary to life. Faith is the principle, saving grace.

When our Lord predicted the fall of the apostle Peter, He said; *“you will deny me. Before the cock crows tonight, you will deny me three times. But Peter; I have prayed for you. I pray for you, that your faith fail not.”*

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Faith is the principle, saving grace. Faith is the grace upon which all grace is built. Without faith there is no grace. Faith is the principle grace and unbelief is the chief, damning sin.

Listen to me a moment; this is what I am saying; “no work that you do can save without faith. No work that you do can be accepted of God without hope. No work is commendable without faith. Faith is the foundation. Faith is the principle, saving grace.”

Watch it now; no sin can damn without unbelief; no sin can damn without unbelief. Unbelief is the chief, damning sin. Listen to this Scripture; *“He that believeth on the Son hath life. He that believeth not the Son, whatever he believes, whatever he has, whatever he does, whatever he knows, he that believeth not the Son shall be damned.”*

Faith is the evidence of life. Unbelief is proof of death. Let me give you some Scriptures:

First of all: In **John 3:14**, it says; *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

When the Philippian jailer came trembling to Paul and Silas and asked, *“sirs; what must I do to be saved,”* what was Paul’s reply? *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”*

And then there is that blessed portion of Scripture in **1 John 5:11 through 13**. I believe that if I have a favorite Scripture, if I have a Scripture that I use it more than any other Scripture, it is right here.

Many times I write letters and I sign this Scripture under my name, it is one of my favorites, and it is **1 John 5:11**; *“this is the record; God has given us eternal life; this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*

“And these things are written to you that believe on the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life and that you might believe on the name of the Son of God.”

Faith is a necessary grace. The Scripture says; *“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”* And speaking of Abraham, the father of the faithful, our Lord said; *“he believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.”*

Now, I want to deal with three issues in this message:

First of all: I want to answer this question; “what is it to believe on Christ?”

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Secondly: I want to deal with this issue; “what is the soul object of faith?” Faith has to have an object.

Thirdly: There is this issue; “how does God work saving faith in a sinner’s heart?”

Those are three vital issues and I have shown you in introducing this message. I want you to think with me. I’m not up here just spending the time and occupying your time for a little while. I am trying to be faithful to the Gospel, true to the Word of God, preach to you the truth of the Gospel, to be fair and honest with your souls.

I am going to deal with these things; “what is it to believe; what is the soul object of faith and how does God work faith in a sinner’s heart?”

Now, have we in introducing this message, made it to appear to be as vital as it is? These are the words of Christ. Faith is essential and faith is necessary. *“Without faith it is impossible to please God. He that believeth shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned.”* Those are the terms of peace.

Now, what is it to believe? If faith is so necessary, so vital and so essential, and unbelief is so fatal it would be wise for preachers to quit hollering “believe, believe, believe” and tell people what it is to believe. What is faith? Here is the first thing; are you ready?

First of all: Faith is based on knowledge, but knowledge is not faith.

A person can have knowledge and not have faith. He can have knowledge of the Scriptures; Saul of Tarsus is an example of that.

He can have knowledge of the fact that there is a God; the devils believe there is a God.

He can have knowledge of eternity, that is, heaven and hell and judgment, but the demons spoke to our Lord and said; *“have you come to torment us before our time?”*

There is knowledge and knowledge is not faith. My friends; there can be no faith without knowledge. There has to be knowledge. The apostle Paul said; *“I know whom I have believed.”* Job said, *“I know that my redeemer liveth.”*

Then, Paul writing in **Romans 10** declared; *“whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, but how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed; now listen, and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?”*

Our Lord Jesus Christ said in **John 17:3**; *“this is eternal life that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”*

Faith is based on knowledge. A man cannot believe what he does not know. A man cannot believe what he has not at least heard; it is impossible. It can’t be; they can’t call

on Him in whom they have not believed and they cannot believe in Him of whom they have not heard.

The Scripture says; *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”* The Word of God is the foundation of faith and knowledge is the foundation of faith. We have to hear the truth.

God has promised to bless His Word. We have to hear the Word of truth; *“you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.”*

The Word of God is the foundation of faith for the Word of God declares who God is. The Word of God declares the fall and sinfulness of man or who man is. The Word of God declares God’s righteousness, holiness, and justice.

The Word of God sets forth Christ’s sufficiency. The Word of God declares unto us the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, in conversion, and in converting the sinner. *“Other foundation can no man lay in which that is laid, Jesus Christ the Lord.”*

We read Scriptures like this; *“We are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold from our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers but with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without blemish or spot.”*

How are we going to know that without reading it in God’s Word? How are we going to know that we are not redeemed by works, but we are redeemed by Christ, and be redeemed by Christ’s sacrifice, by the shedding of Christ’s blood, by His sin-offering?

We know because the Word says so, the Word says so.

First of all: Faith is based on knowledge.

Secondly: Faith is born of confidence.

Listen to Pau again; *“I know whom I have believed.”* I know who He is; I know what He did; I know why He did it, *“that God may be just and justifier.”* I know where He is now. *“He is at the right hand of the Father.”* I know; God taught me that in His Word, revealed it to me by His spirit.

Here is the second thing that I know about faith; faith is born of confidence. Paul said, *“I know whom I have believed. I am persuaded, confident, that He is able.”* He’s able to do what? *“He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him.”*

“He is able to keep us from falling. He is able to present us faultless and holy before the presence of His Father with joy. He is able to raise our vile bodies and make them like unto His own glorious body.”

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"I am persuaded." Now; this word is not only used by Paul in reference to his faith and I suppose Paul is the greatest preacher of the New Testament, but it is also used in regard to Abraham's faith, who was the greatest patriarch of the Old Testament.

It says, *"Abraham believed God. He was fully persuaded that God was able to perform all that He promised."* When we talk about Abraham in the Old Testament, he is called the *"father of the faithful."* He is called, *"the example of the believer."* It says, *"He was persuaded that God could do what He said."*

When Paul talks about his faith, he says; *"I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him."*

I know God is holy. I know that God Almighty will punish sin. I know that my works are not sufficient to satisfy His holiness. I know that God sent Christ into the world to be my redeemer. I know that Christ died on the cross and shed His blood that I might be saved.

I know that He was buried and rose again. I know that He ascended to the right hand of God and is seated there as my redeemer, as my mediator, as my high priest, as my reigning King. I not only know that but I am persuaded and confident that everything He has done and will do is accepted by the Father on my behalf. I am confident of that.

But, that is not all; that is not all. What is it to believe?

First of all: It is to know "in whom and upon whom" you believe.

Secondly: It is to be confident, absolutely persuaded, that all that He promised, all that He said He would do, He was able to perform.

Thirdly: Faith results in a committal to Christ.

Listen to Paul again; *"I know whom I have believed."* There is no question about who his Saviour is. It is not his works or his church ordinances. It is not some individual and it is not himself, it is Christ. *"I know whom I have believed and I am confident; I am absolutely persuaded, like Abraham of old that "He is able to do all that He said."*

But, that is not all; He said, "I have committed it to Christ; I have committed it to Christ." This is what our Lord is saying; "you go preach the Gospel to every creature and believe this Gospel." You see; you take the glad tidings, the good news. We take this message to men.

What is this Gospel? It is the Gospel of God's grace. It is the Gospel concerning God's Son. It is the Gospel of His perfect obedience. It is the Gospel of His substitutionary death. It is the Gospel of His interceding glory and it is the Gospel of a person.

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That is the Gospel that we preach; *“Christ died for our sin according to the Scriptures. He was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures.”* That is our Gospel.

Now, *“He that believes this Gospel and is baptized;”* now my friend, let me pause right here a moment; *“it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul,”* it is not water. Water does not put away sin.

The blood of animals in the Old Testament could not put away sin. *“It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats can take away sin.”* It is not possible that the waters of Jordan or the waters of the rivers of Kentucky or West Virginia can take away sin; *“it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”*

God said, *“I have given you the blood upon the altar to make atonement for your soul.”* It is the blood of Christ that cleanses, that redeems, that atones, not water.

Then, it is the obedience and the sacrifice of Christ that redeems me, not my baptism. You say, *“What part does baptism play?”* Baptism signifies a committal to Christ; that is what baptism is. It is a confession; it is a committal. Baptism is identification with Christ.

You can't separate faith and obedience; faith always acts. What our Lord is doing here, He is saying to His disciples; *“you go into all the world,”* not just Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, but to the uttermost parts of the earth.

“You preach My Gospel, the Gospel of redeeming grace, the Gospel of the Old Testament, the Gospel of the New, the Gospel of salvation, the Gospel of God's glory. You preach that Gospel.”

Now, he that believes and that person who truly believes will confess Christ. He will be identified with Christ. He will go to meet the waters of baptism in confessing that when Christ died, He died, when Christ was buried, he was buried, when Christ arose, he arose.

And this faith that saves is an acting faith. It is a faith that is experienced. It is a faith that is willing to be identified with Christ.

Baptism does not save and the lack of it does not damn. He said, *“You go preach this Gospel. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that is not baptized shall be damned.”* He did not say that; He said, *“He that believeth not, He that believeth not.”*

You can read it this way; *“You go take the Gospel and you preach it indiscriminately to every person; every person needs to hear it; it applies to all men. “He that believes this Gospel will be saved and He that does not believe it shall be damned.”*

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Now, those that believe it will act on it. Those that believe it will be identified with it. Those who believe it will step out publicly and own their identification with Christ, own their part with Christ; they will declare it publicly.

Do you see what I am saying? That is what our Lord is saying to His disciples. You see; you cannot separate faith and obedience. You cannot separate belief and conduct.

We don't elevate baptism and obedience to the place of Christ, it is Christ that saves. He alone is *"our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption."*

But, neither can you separate obedience from faith; you can't do it. *"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature."* If any man be in Christ he has a new life. *"He that loveth not knoweth not God."*

You see; these are identifying marks of those who are true believers. Those are the three parts of faith. I hate to try to define such a vital issue as faith but that will help you understand what it is to believe. Faith is based on knowledge, confidence, and committal, all three.

Secondly: What is the soul object of faith?

It says, *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."* I look to Christ for all things pertaining to God, all things. He is the fountain of life. He is the source of mercy. *"In Him, in Christ, dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."*

Now, faith believes the Word of God but it is not the Word of God that saves; it is Christ that saves. Faith believes the Word of God; it believes its histories, it believes its miracles, and believes everything that is written in the Word.

God's people love His Word and they believe His Word but it is not in believing the Word that saves me; it is not looking to the Word of God that saves me.

Faith also believes the mercy of God. God is merciful; *"He delights to show mercy."* God will be merciful but believing in the mercy of God does not save me. Mercy didn't die for me. Mercy does not intercede for me. Mercy is not my redeemer.

I believe the mercy of God but salvation is not in believing God's mercy; it is believing God's Son. Listen to me; *"Faith believes the benefits of the covenant but salvation is not in believing a covenant. Salvation is not in believing in God's mercy nor God's benefits; salvation is looking to God's Son. "Look unto Me saith the Lord and be ye saved. I am God and there is none else."*

2 Corinthians 5:21 says; *"He (Christ) who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."* So; we believe His Word. We believe in His mercies. We believe His benefits but these are secondary objects of faith.

I believe His Word. I believe His mercies and I believe His benefits because I believe His Son, for all of His mercies and His benefits are in His Son and His Son is the incarnate Word.

Listen to something I want to share with you that I read several weeks ago; “faith is the voice that calls on Christ; *“whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* Faith is the arm that embraces Christ.

In the **Song of Solomon** the church says of Christ, *“I loved Him, I sought Him, I found Him, I held Him, and would not let Him go.”*

Faith is the eye that looks to Christ; *“look unto me and be ye saved.”* Faith is the mouth that feeds upon Christ; *“eats His flesh and drinks His blood.”* Faith is the foot that runs to Christ; *“come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”* Faith is the lips that kiss Christ; *“kiss the Son lest He be angry.”*

There is no way my friend that I can over express this point. I believe that this is where many religionists are missing it today. They have faith in their faith and they have faith in prayer.

How many times I have heard people say “well, I believe in prayer.” Wait a minute! I believe Christ and prayer is calling upon Christ. Prayer is petitioning Christ; prayer is praising Christ and prayer is thanking Christ. Prayer can’t save; it is Christ that saves.

There are people who have faith in their faith. There are people who say they have faith in the Word of God. Wait a minute! I have faith in the Word because it is the Word of God. My faith is in Him not just in a Book; it is in Christ.

We better get this straight; *“He that believeth on the Son.”* Christ is our redeemer. Christ is our Lord. Christ is our Saviour. His name is *“Jesus, Jehovah, God my Saviour.”* Everything is in Him.

All of these other things are secondary objects of faith and they must take that place. You may say; “I believe in my experience.” It won’t save you; it is not interceding for you and it didn’t die for you. At the judgment it won’t plead for you.

Thirdly: How does God work saving faith?

Well; we can’t lay down a course or a pattern for the living God. He will work when He will, how He will, with whom He will. But, the Scripture does give us some examples of how God does work saving faith. Take for example the Samaritan woman:

God crossed her path; the Lord Jesus Christ crossed her path; He met her at the well. He created an interest in her, talking to her about living water, talking to her about never thirsting, talking to her about knowing God. He created an interest.

Fourthly: He presented to her a problem, that is her sins, past, present, and future.

When nothing could be done about that she said; *“I know that Messiah is coming and He will tell us everything.”* That is when Christ presented the cure, He said; *“I am He.”* So; that is the way that God worked faith in her heart and in her life.

Then, we have other examples. In working faith in the heart of a sinner, God is Sovereign. *“The wind bloweth where it listeth. Can you hear the sound that you can tell whence it cometh or whether it goeth? Even so, are those that are born of the Spirit?”*

There are some things that God always does in revealing faith and you may hear the word (faith) preached on television. You may hear the word preached in your home. You may read it in the Scriptures or you may be out in the barn.

There is no set course or pattern for God to work faith in the heart of His people. But, there are some things that God always does and I am confident of this:

First of all: There will be a discovery made of God’s holiness; that’s right!

Any man who is a partaker of the grace of God and a recipient of the free grace of God and of faith will discover the holiness of God.

Secondly: He will discover his own unworthiness and sin; yes he will.

He will discover his own sin. Like the Publican, he will cry; *“God, be merciful to me a sinner.”*

Thirdly: There will be a discovery of his inability, of his inability to please God.

There will be his inability to cleanse his own heart, and his inability to approach God in the flesh.

Fourthly: Then there will be a discovery of God’s justice.

“God will punish sin.” God will deal with the guilty.

Fifthly: Then, there is always a revelation of Christ the substitute.

There will be a revelation of His glory and His excellence, exactly who He is. He is not just a mere man; He is the God-man.

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Sixthly: There will be a revelation of His incarnation; He represented us in the flesh.

Seventhly: There will be a discovery of His righteousness. He obeyed the Law and imputed to us *“a perfect righteousness and holiness.”*

Eighthly: There will be a discovery of His sin-offering, His sacrifice; *“He died that we may live.”*

Ninthly: There will be a discovery of His priestly work, His mediatorial work as He intercedes for us before God and makes even our prayers to be holy.

Yes; how does God work faith? There is a discovery of His holiness and of our guilt and the sufficiency of His dear Son!