

THE TRIAL OF FAITH

1 PETER 1:7 • TV059B

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1 Peter 1:7

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

I spoke to you last week on the subject “THE TOUCH OF FAITH.” I’m speaking today on the “**TRIAL OF FAITH.**”

Now I have a text which will be taken from the book of **1 Peter chapter 1:7**. I’m not going to try to preach to you so much today as just talk to you. And I wish you’d listen. I wish you’d give me a few minutes and listen carefully to this message.

I believe it may be that the Lord of glory will bless it to your heart, to your spiritual growth, maybe to the opening of your eye of faith to hear the Son of God and to believe on Him.

In **1 Peter 1:7** Peter writes: *“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, (whether He comes for you in death, or whether He comes for you in glory).*

Let me ask you a question; do you have saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you have saving faith, not religion now, not what we call a general faith in the existence of God? James

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said this; *“You believe in one God; you do well. The devils also believe in one God and they tremble.”*

I’m not asking you if you have religion. I’m not asking you if you belong to the church. I’m not really asking you if you have a general faith in God. I want to know if you have a living, vital and personal saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you believe; do you have faith in the incarnation of God? What do you mean preacher? I mean this, *“That God was made flesh and dwelt among us.”* He made the world and was in the world. *“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”*

You know, our Lord said to His disciples one day; *Whom do men say that I am? Well, some say that you’re a great prophet. Some say that you’re a great healer. Some even say that you’re John the Baptist or Elijah.”*

But Christ said to His disciples, *“Whom do you say that I am?”* And they replied, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God almighty, that He came down to this earth; that the one who sits on heaven’s throne once laid in Bethlehem’s manger? Do you believe that? The Ancient of Days became the infinite of days; do you believe that?

Do you believe that God almighty came down here in human flesh because He loved us and took our place and died for us on the cross? Do you believe that, in the incarnation of God?

Do you have faith in the identification of Christ with sinners? Do you know what that means, the identification of Christ with sinners? Here’s what it means; *“He who knew no sin was made sin for us,”* that He was numbered, actually numbered with the transgressors, that He became one of us in order that He might redeem us.

He became a man, the God-man, the Son of God, Son of man, the God-man in order that, *“He might be tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin,”* that He might obey the law in our place and impute to us a righteousness which we couldn’t produce. Do you believe that?

Do you have faith in the sacrifice of Christ? Can you say, *“He was wounded for my transgressions; by His stripes I am healed?”* He died for my sins on the cross. Can you say with Peter, *“I’m not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ?”* Do you really believe that?

Do you have faith in the resurrection of Christ? It’s no fairytale. Our Lord actually came forth from the tomb. The angel said to the women who came to the tomb on that resurrection morning, *“Why are you looking for the living among the dead; He’s not here, He’s risen.”*

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Do you believe He arose for our justification? Well now Paul said, *“If Christ be not risen you are yet in your sins. If Christ be not risen we are false prophets; we lied on God. If Christ be not risen you are of all men most miserable.”* You have no hope. You’ll never rise.

Do you believe He arose from the grave? Do you believe that He came forth on that morning, on that Sunday morning 2,000 years ago and *“because He lives we shall live?”* That’s saving faith.

Do you believe that Christ is seated at the right hand of God? Do you believe in the mediatorial work of Christ? *“There’s one God and one mediator between God and men,”* only one, and that’s Jesus Christ the Lord.

You need not pray to anybody else. Prayer is never to be addressed to anybody but God. Don’t pray to a dead saint. Don’t pray to a dead martyr. Do not pray to a dead disciple; pray to God.

Our Lord said, *“When you pray say our Father which art in heaven.”* All prayers are to be addressed to the Father through the Son. Christ said, *“Whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, (not in the name of anyone else, my name) it will be done.”*

“He maketh intercession for us.” He pleads our case. He pleads our cause. He’s our Advocate. Do you know what an advocate is, a lawyer? You people that have been to court; you had an advocate. You didn’t go up before the judge and claim anything. Your lawyer pleaded your case.

And Christ pleads our case. He pleads not our merit; He pleads our guilt but His merit. He says, *“Yes they’re guilty but I died for them. Yes, they’ve broken the law but I kept it. Accept them in me; I pray for them.”*

Do you have faith in the coming of Christ? He said, *“Let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. If I go to prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself that where I am, there you may be also.”* Do you believe that?

That’s saving faith, the incarnation of God, the identification of God, the sacrifice of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the mediatorial work of Christ, the coming of Christ; that’s saving faith. It’s particular faith.

And my friend, there’s no greater gift, there is no greater gift than saving faith. Peter calls it *“precious,”* you talk about precious.

You know; He ranks faith right along with the Word and the blood. He calls in his writings; Peter calls three things precious; the precious promises, and the precious blood, and precious faith, that’s what it is.

All men don’t have this faith. All men do not have this saving faith. Most men don’t have it.

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But I'll tell you this, where you find this saving faith in Jesus Christ, not a general faith in God, not a general faith in religion, not a general faith in things to come, but a particular, personal, living faith, in Christ Jesus, where you find this faith you'll find the favor of God.

I like what the angel said to Mary. The angel came and announced that she would bring forth the Lord Jesus Christ, that she was the vessel that God chose to bring Christ into the world, through her.

And He said, *"Mary, you've found favor with God."* Oh think about it, *"You have found favor with God."*

And I'll say this, where you find this faith, this saving faith; somebody has found favor with God because we don't produce that kind of faith. That kind of faith doesn't grow, that flower of faith doesn't grow in the garden of human depravity. God almighty gives that faith.

Listen to **Ephesians 2:8-9**; *"For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it's the gift of God. It's not of works lest any man should boast. For we're His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

Yes, faith is the gift of God. You found favor with God. If you have this faith, grandmother or grandfather, mom or dad, or young person; if you have this saving faith you've found favor with God.

I'll tell you something else; where you find this saving faith it's a mark of election. Somebody's always writing me and saying, "How can I know if I'm one of the elect?" This is the faith of God's elect, **Titus 1:1**; Paul calls it the, *"faith of God's elect."* That's right, Christ said, *"All that my Father giveth me, shall come to me."*

And the way you know that you were given to the Son is when you come to the Son: *"Whom He predestinated He called."* Everybody whom He calls, He calls them because He ordained them to have eternal life.

He said, *"My sheep; they'll hear my voice and they'll follow me."* How do I know I'm one of the sheep? Are you following the Lord? Has the Lord branded you?

The sheep of Christ have two brands; do you know where they are? One is on their ear and the other is on their foot. *"They hear His voice and they follow Him."*

Now you look for the brand. If you're not hearing His voice you're not one of His sheep. If you're not following Him you're not one of His sheep.

There was a bunch of people who came to Him there in **John chapter 10**; read it, **verses 23, 24, and 25** and they said, *"Now if you be the Christ; tell us plainly."* He said, *"I told you, but you*

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didn't believe me. You didn't believe me because you're not one of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice and they follow me."

Oh yes; where you find this faith, it's an evidence of spiritual life. That's right! "*He that believeth on the Son hath life.*" Yes sir, this faith is the eye of the regenerate soul that sees the Lord. We can say, "We have seen the Lord."

You say, "Preacher; what did He look like?" I haven't seen Him in a vision or in a dream; I see Him in His Word. I've been to Calvary; I've seen the Lord and He will look like what God says He is in His Word.

So, you can say the same thing, not with natural eyes but I've seen Him in His revealed character and attributes; I know who He is.

Faith is the hand of the renewed spirit that reaches out like that woman I was talking about last week that touched the Lord. That's faith. Faith is the tongue of the born again that confesses Christ. Where you find this saving faith you'll find evidence of spiritual life.

And then fourthly where this saving faith is found; it's the assurance of Sonship. "*To as many as received Him, to them gave He the power, (the privilege, the right) to become Sons of God.*"

Sons of God are men who have received Christ. Now all men are not sons of God. I wouldn't offend you if I could help it but Christ said to those people in His day; they said, "We're God's children."

He said; "*No you're not. If you were God's children you'd hear me, you'd believe me. You are of your father the devil. He was a liar from the beginning and his works you do. My sheep hear my voice, (my people; my sons follow me).*"

God's children know Christ and if they don't know Christ they're not God's children: "*As many as received Him, to them gave He power, (the privilege), to become sons of God.*"

John said, "*And whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Beloved; now are we the sons of God. And it doth not yet appear what we shall be but when He shall appear we shall see Him and be like Him. And he that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself.*"

And that brings me to the next point; where you find this saving faith, you'll find obedience. Faith produces obedience. James says: "*Show me your faith without your works.*" It can't be done. "*I'll show you my faith by my works.*"

"By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen, built an ark and saved his household, by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, believing that God was able to raise him even from the dead."

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“By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer the afflictions of God’s people by faith.” By faith Rahab dropped the scarlet line out of the window and God was pleased to deliver her.

Yes sir, my friend; time would fail me to speak of the power of faith, or the privilege of faith, or the prospects of faith, or the possessions of faith, except to say this; that he that has saving faith is blessed above all people. Happy and holy and blessed is the man to whom God will not charge sin.

Listen to me, three things; remember this:

He that hath saving faith hath justification before the throne of holiness. He that hath saving faith hath access to the throne of grace. He that hath saving faith is already seated having past from death unto life on the throne of glory.

That’s how important saving faith is. All those things come not by works, not by law, but by faith. It’s by grace and grace alone. We’re justified not by works but by faith.

We have access to the throne of grace by faith. *“He that cometh to God must believe that He is and He’s the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”* That’s the only requirement for coming before God is faith.

Why couldn’t Israel enter the Promised Land? It was because of unbelief. That’s the reason. You can’t come up with any other reason. They could not enter in because of unbelief. Paul said, *“Take heed brethren, lest there be found in you an evil heart of unbelief.”*

But my subject today, believe it or not, is not saving faith but the trial of this faith. Now, if you have this saving faith you’re going to be tried, the trial of faith. You cannot have faith without trial.

You cannot have a crown without a cross, just as you cannot have a rose without a thorn; they go together. God only had one Son without sin. God has never had a Son without trial. That’s right; listen to James; *“My brethren; count it all joy when you fall into different trials, knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience.”*

1 Peter 1:7: *“That the trial of your faith might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the coming of Christ.”*

Now, if you have saving faith, your faith will be tried. Now I know that you may feel very obscure. You may be sitting there all alone in your room, nobody but you. And you feel like you’re the least in the kingdom of God.

You have few gifts and few talents and you’re just an obscure person that nobody knows anything about. But if you’re God’s child He knows you. He knows about you and He’s going to try your faith. Yes He will!

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God didn't let up trying Abraham did He? Somebody said, "There were nine trials of faith Abraham experienced." And do you know something; God reserved for Abraham the most severe trial for his old age.

The last one was the toughest one of all. Let me show you just some of them: God almighty called him out of his father's house; He said, "Leave home. Go to a land I'll show you." And he left not knowing where he was going. He believed God. That was a trial.

Then He led him through the wilderness and Abraham who was used to having the best of everything lived in tents and *"looked for a city whose builder and maker was God."*

And then he was tried by his nephew Lot. They went out there and their herdsmen were in conflict and they both had so many cattle and they didn't have room for all of them. Abraham told Lot; he said, "Well take the land you want and I'll take what's left." Well Lot was selfish. He took the best. Abraham headed for the hills but he believed God.

And then he was tried with the wealth of the kings. The king of Sodom tried to make him rich, you know. And he said, "God's my inheritance; He'll give me what I need."

And then God left him childless. He never had an heir until he was an old, old, man, 100 years old. He never had a son. He never had a child. God left him without a child. And finally, God gave him a child.

But you know that first born son was Ishmael; he loved that boy; it was his son. And one day God told him; He said, "Get rid of Ishmael, you've got to send that boy away with his mother Hagar." You see, the son of the bondwoman can't live in the same house with the son of the freewoman; works and grace can't go together. They can't live together. What you do and what God does can't live together. You've got to have one or the other, either works or grace. And Abraham had to send that boy away.

And then God reserved for those last days the most severe trial of all. He came to him and said, "Take that son whom you love upon a mountain and sacrifice him to me on an altar."

Oh yea my friend; God tried Abraham again and again and again. And God will try you. Your faith will be tried; now I promise you, if it's saving faith.

Now, if you be without chastisement, if you be without trial, if you be without God almighty's affliction, then you have every reason to put a question mark on your faith. It may not be saving faith because God's going to try the reality of your faith.

Actually, we can't be sure that we have saving faith unless it's tried. How can you be sure? Christ said, "Those men built their houses, one on the sand and one on the rock." What revealed the true foundation?

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The trial, it had to come. The rain from heaven, the flood from earth, the wind; it had to come. And when the trial came we found out who was built on the rock and who wasn't. And faith has got to have trial to prove the reality of it.

And then God will try the purity of your faith. That's right! He'll take away from you the arms of flesh to see if you're really leaning on Him. How do you know what you're leaning on till God starts moving some of the props?

He did Job. God said, "Have you considered my servant Job? There's none like him, a man who hates evil and loves righteousness." Do you know what Satan said?

He said, "God I'll tell you why Job fears you; he doesn't fear you for nothing. Why you blessed him. You hedged him about. You prospered him. He has everything. He wants nothing."

The Lord said; "All right, take it all away. Let's see who he believes. Let's see who he trusts. Let's see where his faith is." And every bit of it was taken away. And it revealed; what did it reveal?

When God let Satan take everything that Job had away he still had God. He said, "Though he slay me I'll trust Him." His wife said, "Why don't you curse God and die?" Oh no, "*The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.*"

Let me ask you this, if every earthly prop you have and upon which you depend, if every earthly prop were knocked away could you stand? Could you stand on the strength of faith in Christ alone?" Job did.

Now; God may not send you Job's trial but I'll guarantee you this on the authority of God's Word that God will send you sufficient trial to prove the reality and the purity of your faith; I guarantee it.

If your faith is saving faith God is not going to let it alone until He proves the reality of it and the purity of it and the sincerity of it. Now this is important.

God came to Abraham and He said; "Abraham you take that son, (and listen how He words it) you take your son, your only son, whom you love, and sacrifice him to me." And Abraham took that boy to the top of that mountain and raised the knife to slay him and God said, "Abraham, touch not your son; I know that you love me."

Now that's what God's going to prove. He's going to prove the sincerity of your faith. The trial of faith; now listen to me, if you don't hear anything else hear this; the trial of saving faith is necessary; you can't have faith without trial.

And it's necessary to prove, to reveal to you the reality of your faith, the purity of your faith, the sincerity of your faith, and to remove the sham and the hypocrisy and the dross.

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Now my friend, trial leaves only the real thing. When the wind of trial blows it destroys all the hypocrisy and all the sham and all the religious show and all the veneer and all of the sham and dross and just leaves one thing standing.

Have you ever driven out in the country and fire has struck a farmhouse and there's nothing standing but what, the stone, the chimney, made out of rock or brick? The rest of the wood, hay, and stubble, have been consumed by the fire.

That's what trial does; it leaves faith standing, faith in God, faith in Christ, faith in the cross, and faith in the blood. It leaves that standing and destroys everything else. And it's got to be.

You and I are apt to claim a whole lot more than we actually have. That's right! We mistake quantity for quality. We mistake a whole lot of religious talk for faith. We mistake a whole lot of zeal and enthusiasm and activity for faith.

But boy, when the trial comes, when God reaches into your home and takes the dearest object of your love; the only thing that's going to be left standing is your faith in God; everything else is gone.

When God takes your health, when God takes your happiness, worldly happiness, when God is pleased to remove everything, every earthly prop, and that old chimney of faith is standing, pointing toward God: *"Though He slay me I'll trust Him."*

God has to do that and He's going to do it. He's going to do it to saving faith. *"Count it not strange my brethren when fiery trials come upon you. They are sent to try your faith that it may prove to be to the praise and honor and glory of Jesus Christ at His coming."* You're not going to get any glory. I'm not, Christ is.

Now how does God try faith? Let me give you this; now the trial of faith does not come to all persons in the same way, God is sovereign. And God will deal with His sons and His daughters as it pleases Him, in the way it pleases Him, when it pleases Him. That's right!

God may not try you until you get old. He'll try you in His own time. But there's some common ways in which faith is tried. Let me give you a few of them:

First of all: Faith will be tried by the Word of God!

That's right! If your faith cannot endure the trial of the Word of God you can be sure it's not saving faith. I'm talking about from creation's story to the coming of Christ.

All the Word of God is given by inspiration of God; all of its infallible, inerrant, and unbroken and it is God-breathed. *"Not one jot or tittle shall pass till it all be fulfilled."* The Word of God; do you believe the Word of God? His Word cannot fail.

Secondly: Faith will be tried by the so-called wisdom of men!

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Human wisdom and human philosophy never lets up; it's attacked on God's worth. Oh they appear to be smart but God says; *"It's foolishness. My thoughts are not your thoughts. There's a way that seemeth right unto men. Can you by searching find out God?"*

Your faith's going to be tried by the philosophers and the psychologists and the so-called liberals and the modernist's and people who deny the miracles and who deny the stories of God's Word, who deny the cross, who deny the virgin birth, who deny God's Word.

Watch out! Why, He said, "They're so subtle they'll deceive the elect if it were possible," they are anti-Christ.

And then your faith will be tried by persecution. Christ said, *"I didn't come to bring peace but a sword. And a man's enemies shall be in his own household. If you love father, mother, brother, and sister, more than me. You're not worthy of me."*

Faith will be tried by afflictions; that's right. Faith will be tried by prosperity. Who am I? Yes sir; this is a fact people miss. Spurgeon said, "For every one man that I know who has fallen because of poverty; I've known 50 to fall because of riches."

Faith will be tried by years, *"He that endureth to the end shall be saved."*

Faith will be tried by disappointment and by disagreements.

And then Faith will be tried last of all by death. Paul said, *"I've kept the faith. I'm ready to depart. The time of departure is at hand."*

Let me die the death of the righteous. Let my latter end be like his, dying in faith, amid all the trials!