

THE FAITH THAT SAVES

EPHESIANS 2:8-9 • TV076A

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Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

I want you to open your Bible today to the book of **Ephesians** and I will be speaking to you from **chapter 2:8-9**.

My subject: **“THE FAITH THAT SAVES.”**

Now let me read the text: **Ephesians chapter 2:8-9**. Paul writes: *“For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”*

Now my friend, if words can mean anything at all, the Bible clearly states that men and women are saved from sin and made heirs of eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s what Paul writes in this Scripture; *“For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”*

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Let's read several Scriptures from other parts of the Word of God:

First of all: Let's read from **Mark 16:15**. Our Lord had been crucified, risen from the tomb, and was going back to the Father. And before He ascended He spoke to His disciples and said these words: *"All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth: go ye therefore, into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned."*

And then, in **John chapter 3:14**, the Master speaking again and He said; *"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. For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life."*

Then in **John 5:24**; the Saviour said this; *"Verily, verily, I say unto you: He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me shall not come into condemnation but is past from death unto life, (he that believeth)."*

The Bible teaches that salvation from sin is by faith in Jesus Christ, not by works, not by human merit, but by faith in Christ.

When Paul was in prison at Philippi, God sent the earthquake to shake the jail and to shake loose the doors. And when the Philippian jailer saw the power of God and what had taken place, he came trembling and fell at the feet of Paul and Silas and asked this question; **Acts chapter 16:30**: *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* And Paul answered and said unto him, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house."*

And then in **Romans chapter 10** the apostle Paul is writing concerning the people of Israel and he said in **verse 1**; *"My heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they might be saved."* Then down in **verse 9** he said this; *"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord and believe in thine heart God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*

So, if words can mean anything at all, it is clear that salvation from sin is by faith in Jesus Christ. If we would be heirs of eternal life, if we would know the living God, if we would pass from death to life, it is by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly: I want you to see that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is that saving grace upon which all other grace depends.

In other words, to believe on Christ is the foundation of redemption, it's the foundation of sanctification, it's the foundation of justification, and it's the foundation of eternal inheritance. Everything depends upon believing in Christ; everything comes through that grace, that's the foundation grace.

When our Lord talked to the apostle Peter about denying him, He said; *"You will deny me but Peter I have prayed for you that your faith fail not."*

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This is the foundation grace. This is the foundation upon which all other graces depend. We must believe and we must continue to believe. And before the apostle Paul died he said, *“I have finished my course. I have kept the faith.”*

So faith is the foundation grace upon which all other graces depend. For example; listen to this, **Hebrews 11:6**, *“Without faith it’s impossible to please God.”* Whatever I do, whatever I know, whatever I say, whatever I claim, or whatever I give, is empty without faith. It’s impossible to please God without faith.

Without faith there can be no saving call for mercy. Now we know that the Scripture says; listen to this in **Romans 10:13-14**; *“Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* But now Paul asked this question, *“How shall they call on Him in whom they’ve not believed?”*

So, there can be no saving call for mercy without faith. What I’m saying is, faith is the foundation grace and everything else depends upon my faith in Christ. If I have not faith in Christ I cannot please God and I cannot effectively call on God for mercy.

And then listen to this, without faith I cannot work the works of God. They asked the Master in **John 6:28**, *“What shall we do that we might work the works of God?”* And He said: *“This is the work of God that you believe on Him whom God hath sent.”*

So, our works without faith are vain. Our works without faith are empty. Our works without faith are unacceptable to God. Faith is the foundation grace. It is by faith that we are saved. It is by faith that we call on God. It is by faith that we work the works of God.

Prayer without faith is a mockery. Back in the Gospels our Lord Jesus Christ said; *“Therefore I say unto you, whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”*

Now listen to this in **James 1:5**, *“If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like the troubled sea. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of God.”*

Faith is the foundation for prayer. *“He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”* It’s useless to come to God if we do not believe that He is and that He is merciful and that he is the rewarder of them that do come to Him.

So, without faith prayer is a mockery and there’s no reason to engage in prayer without faith. Without faith the blood of Christ avails you nothing. He said in **John 3:36**, *“He that believeth on the Son hath life. He that believeth not the Son shall not (never) see life but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

So, look to your faith. That’s the importance of the subject that I have this morning: What is saving faith, what is this thing called faith?

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First of all: It's the way that God saves men!

"We are saved by grace through faith." We are kept by the power of God through faith. And faith is the foundation grace of all other graces. It's the foundation of regeneration, of repentance, of sanctification, of justification: *"Without faith it's impossible to please God."*

Without faith prayer is a mockery. Without faith we cannot work the works of God. Without faith the blood of Christ avails you nothing. Without faith there can be no call for mercy.

Faith is the foundation of peace. Paul wrote in **Romans 5**, *"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God."* Peace comes to us through faith.

Secondly: Then faith is the foundation of all blessings!

When that man came to our Lord and asked Him to heal his son, the Lord Jesus said: *"If you can believe, all things are possible to them that believe."* So, faith is the foundation of blessings. Blessings come by faith.

Thirdly: Then faith is the foundation of assurance!

One of the apostles said: *"I believe, therefore, have I spoken."* There's no need to speak if we do not believe.

Now one other thing before we get to several points that I want to bring out in this message; saving faith can be and should be known. In other words, we know whether or not we have faith in Christ.

God commands us to determine whether or not we believe on Christ. He said in **2 Corinthians 13:5**: *"Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith. Know ye not your ownelves how that Christ dwells in you, except you be a reprobate?"*

Do you have saving faith? Do you have living faith? Do you have a heart-faith in Jesus Christ? Examine yourselves. He said in **2 Peter chapter 1:10**: *"Wherefore, the rather brethren, give diligence; (make this an important searching of your heart and soul), to make your calling and election sure."*

God commands us to know and to determine whether or not we have faith. The people of God in Scripture knew that they had faith. Listen to Job; *"I know that my redeemer liveth and that on this earth again He shall stand. And I shall see Him with my eyes."* Job said I know that, I trust Him, I believe Him, and I know that He lives.

Listen to David; *"The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever;"* (because He is my Shepherd)."

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Listen to Paul; *“I know whom I have believed. I am persuaded He’s able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.”*

Listen to John; *“We know that we have passed from death unto life.”*

So this thing of faith; it’s not guess-work. It is a certainty. We can know that we have saving faith. God commands us to determine whether or not we have faith. He commands us to examine ourselves and determine if we have saving faith. And the men of the Scripture knew they had faith. *“I know whom I have believed,”* said Paul.

And then our assurance that we have faith must be determined by the Word of God: *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

I’m not talking about searching to see if you’ve had an experience. I’m not talking about searching to see if you have a certain feeling. I’m not talking about searching to see and determining if you have experienced certain emotions. I’m talking about searching the Word and determining by the Word of God that we have faith in God.

In the book of **Hebrews chapter 13:5-6** the Scripture says: *“He has said I will never leave you nor forsake you. So, we can boldly say the Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man can do unto me.”*

He said it; therefore, I can say it. He promised it; therefore, I can claim it. He purposed it; therefore, I in my heart can receive it, but the basis of it is the Word of God.

Now, with those introductory remarks, I want to point out four basic facts about faith. And as I bring you this message on, **“What is Saving Faith,”** you remember these three things with which I opened the program:

First of all: If a man is saved; he’s saved by faith!

That’s what God’s Word says: *“He that believeth on the Son hath life. He that believeth not the Son shall not see life.”* Faith is the way; we’re justified by faith.

Secondly: Faith is the foundation grace of all other graces!

It’s the foundation of redemption, of sanctification, of justification, of peace, of comfort, of assurance, of all things. I cannot please God without faith.

I cannot work the works of God without faith. I cannot pray without faith. I cannot sue for mercy without faith. I cannot claim the blood of Christ without faith. That’s the foundation grace.

Thirdly: Remember this; you can know your faith because God commands it, God commands it

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Fourthly: And then the Old Testament and the New Testament believers; they knew they believed!

But now; here are four facts about faith:

First of all: Saving faith is born of need. That's where it's born, that's where it comes from; that's the source of faith is need!

Now let me show you that. Turn if you will in your Bible to **Matthew chapter 9 verses 10-13.**

Our Lord was eating with Publicans and sinners. He was eating with a group of people who were looked down upon by the Pharisees and religious leaders because they were sinners, Publicans and harlots and sinners.

And Christ was eating with them and Christ was talking with them, and they were talking with Him. They were asking Him questions. He was answering their questions and He was preaching to them.

And the Pharisees were standing off to the side, these religious, ecclesiastical, leaders. And they asked His disciples; they said: *"Why does your Master eat with Publicans and sinners? Why does He fellowship with those people? Why does He put Himself in such a position as to be called the friend of sinners?"*

Christ knew their thoughts and He replied; (now you look at it in **Matthew 9:10-13**) He said; *"The well do not need a physician (people who are well do not need a physician, or a doctor), but they that are sick: I am come, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. You go learn what that means."*

Who needs a doctor, sick people? Who needs a Saviour, sinners? Who needs a Redeemer, guilty people? Who needs a Mediator, those who because of their guilt and shame and sin have been separated from a Holy God?

And if you will go through the Scriptures you will find that all who savingly believed on Christ, all who savingly came to Christ, did so out of a need. They were in trouble and they needed salvation. They were in trouble and they needed grace. They were in trouble and they needed mercy.

"Two men went up to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and one of them was a Publican." One of them was a moral, religious man, and one was a sinner. The moral, religious man, prayed thus with himself; *"God I thank you I'm not like other men."*

Here the Pharisee is stating his sufficiency. He's stating his merit. He's declaring he has no need. "I am all right, I'm not an adulterer, I'm not an extortioner, I'm not unjust, I tithe, I fast, I give alms to the poor. I'm not like this Publican over here."

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Christ said: *“The Publican would not so much lift his eyes to heaven,”* (but because of his guilt, and because of his sin, and because of the shame of his soul; he would not lift his eyes to God), but he smote on his breast in repentance and he cried, *“O God; be merciful to me a sinner.”*

Christ said, *“That man, went to his house justified,”* while the other departed from that place, guilty before God, still unsaved. So, the faith of that Publican was born out of need.

Even so, blind Bartimaeus sat by the wayside. He was blind from birth and he was begging. And he heard a commotion; he says: *“What’s going on?”* They said, *“Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.”*

And he began to cry. He began to cry out of a need. He began to cry out of darkness. He began to cry out of helplessness. He began to cry: *“Jesus, thou Son of David; have mercy upon me. (I need help, I need mercy).”*

And the Scripture says; Christ stood still and Christ beckoned him to come to Him and He healed him. He met his need. He met the need of the Publican. He met the need of Bartimaeus and the thief on the cross. He cried out of need.

He said to the other thief who cursed and blasphemed God; he said: *“Don’t you fear God seeing we are in the same condemnation, and we indeed justly? We are getting exactly what we deserve. But this man’s done nothing amiss.”*

And he turned to Christ and he said: *“Lord; remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom, (his need, his emptiness, his guilt, crying for mercy, crying for help, crying to be remembered).”* And Christ turned to him and said; *“Today, shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”*

The harlot who washed His feet with tears and dried them with the hair of her head came to the feet of Christ because of her need. The Canaanite woman came to Him crying: *“Lord; have mercy upon me.”*

The woman with the issue of blood; she had spent everything that she had on doctors, physicians, home remedies, and all types of cures and was no better; she was just worse, and she came to Christ and she said: *“If I can just touch but the hem of His garment I shall be made whole.”* She came out of need.

Faith is born of need. There will be no cry for mercy until the need is felt. There’ll be no saving grace until there is a cry for mercy. But that cry is born out of need. And when your sins become real to you; you can say with David, *“My sins are ever before me, I’ve sinned against God.”*

Like the Prodigal Son, who came home saying; *“Father; I’ve sinned against heaven and in thy sight I’m no longer worthy to be called thy son. Just make me a hired servant but let me come home,”* (he had a need).

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When your sins are before you, when death and judgment are real to you, when the wrath of God and condemnation is upon you, when Christ becomes your only source of help, you cry and you'll be saved, you'll be delivered, and you will be forgiven.

But faith is born of need. The well do not need the physician, therefore, they don't call him on the phone. They don't go to his office. They don't summon his aid. But those who are sick do. The minute they get sick and find out they can't help themselves and can't cure themselves, they call on someone who can.

And one day Peter was walking on the water. Our Lord had sent for Peter to come to Him out of the boat; He said: "*Come to me.*" Peter stepped out and walked on the water and then he began to be afraid; he began to sink.

And in his helplessness, in his need, in the urgency of the moment, he cried: "*Lord; save me or I perish.*" That's when faith is born. Why do men not have faith in Christ? The basic reason is they do not feel their need of Christ.

Secondly: I mentioned this a moment ago; saving faith rests upon the Word of God!

Now true faith does not require a true sign, only the Word of God, the naked Word of God. True faith does not require a dream, a vision, even a feeling or even an experience; it rests on the Word of God.

Noah built an ark on the basis of the Word of God; Noah moved with fear and prepared an ark to the saving of himself and his household. He believed God's Word. There was no sign given. There had never been a rain. There had never been a flood. He had never seen anything like this but he believed God.

"Abraham, get out of your father's house and land, the land of idolatry, and go to a land that I will show thee and I will make of thee a great nation." And Abraham arose and left not knowing where he was going, not knowing what God was going to do, but he believed God's Word.

God said to Moses; "At midnight I'm coming through the land of Egypt. I shall smite the firstborn, even of the cattle on the hillside, in every home. Now you slay a lamb and you eat the flesh of the lamb and put the blood on the door. *And when I see the blood I will pass over you.*" No sign, no dream, no vision, just God's Word.

And my friend; I'll tell you another illustration of this that I think is one of the best. The disciples were out fishing. They had fished all night and they caught nothing. These men were professional fishermen. But they had fished all night and they had caught nothing.

And the Lord appeared on the shore and He said: "*Children, do you have any meat?*" They said, "*None.*" He said, "*Cast your nets on the right side of the ship and you will catch some fish.*"

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And Peter looked at Him and said, *“Lord; we’ve toiled all night and caught nothing. Nevertheless, (and this is the key, nevertheless), at your word I’ll let down the net.”* And they let down the net and they caught fish.

But here’s what I’m saying, this faith is resting upon the Word of God, not upon signs, dreams, visions, experiences, motions, and feelings, just the naked Word of God. *“Whatever you say, that’s what I’ll do. I’ve toiled all night and have caught nothing. But Lord, nevertheless, at your Word, I’ll let down the net.”* If you have a need, and if you can have that kind of confidence in the Word of God, you can be saved.

Charles Spurgeon said one time; *“When I came to Christ I had no assurance of any personal or saving interest in the death and work and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But I knew that it was written in God’s Word; ‘He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.’ I knew that it was written in God’s Word, ‘Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I’ll give you rest.’ So, I came to Him. I came to Him on the strength of His Word, on the strength of His promise. I trusted Him; I trusted my soul to His care, on the strength of His Word, sink or swim, I go to Him. And God spoke peace to my heart.”*

Saving faith is born of need and saving faith is based entirely on the Word of God.

Thirdly: Saving faith is a heart work!

Now the Scripture says: *“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord and believe in thine heart God hath raised Him from the dead; thou shalt be saved: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*

It’s true that in order for a man to believe on Christ; there must be a head-work. There must be an understanding: *“He hath come and giveth us an understanding.”* We’ve got to understand who He is.

Who is Jesus Christ? He is God in the flesh. What did He do? He came to this earth and obeyed the law and died on a cross for our sins. Why did He do it? That God the Father might be just and justify the ungodly. Where is He now? He’s at the right hand of God.

We understand the ruin of sin. We understand the redemption by the blood. We understand regeneration by the Holy Spirit. But Christ is received in the heart.

Faith is not just mental acceptance of a creed. Faith is not just mental acceptance of a few facts. Faith is receiving a person. When our Lord sat down by the seashore and talked to the apostle Peter He said, *“Peter; do you love me?”* And he said, *“Lord; you know all things, you know that I love you.”*

In **John 1:12** the Scripture says: *“As many as received Him,”* (not just facts about Him, but Him, not even the truth about Him, but Him) *to them gave He the right to become sons of God.”*

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Fourthly: Faith is a committal to Christ!

Now in **2 Timothy 1:12** Paul said: *“I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.”*

And the old-timers use to say and this is the best destination of faith:

Knowledge, *“I know whom I have believed.”*

Confidence, *“I’m persuaded He’s able to keep (to save, and to raise me from the dead).*

Commitment, *“That which I have committed to Him.”* It’s a conscience committal of my heart to Jesus Christ!