

SAVING FAITH

EPHESIANS 2:8-9 • TV-033A

A television broadcast sermon delivered

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH, 1977

By

HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published

JULY 15TH, 2019

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Zebulon Grace Church

6088 Zebulon Highway

Pikeville, KY 41501

PH: 606-631-9053

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 to speak to you today on the subject: **“SAVING FAITH.”**

Now, I believe this message will be very helpful to many of you. I preached this message some time ago and a person said that it was of more help to them on the subject of faith than any sermon they had ever heard in all their life.

Now, I want you to listen carefully. If you have your Bibles, you may open them to the book of **Ephesians chapter 2:8-9** in which Paul wrote: *“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, in dealing with the subject: **“SAVING FAITH;”** I want to talk about three questions:

First of all: What is saving faith?

Secondly: Why is faith the channel of salvation? Why did God decree that faith should be the channel of salvation?

Thirdly: How may I obtain saving faith?

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Now that's the subject: "*For by grace are you saved through faith.*" What is faith? Why is it the channel of salvation? And how may I obtain saving faith?

But before we answer these questions about faith; one thing needs to be emphatically emphasized and clearly understood. One thing needs to be strongly emphasized and that is; the fountainhead of salvation is the grace of God: "*For by grace are you saved through faith.*"

The fountainhead of salvation is the grace of God. We're saved, we're forgiven, we're pardoned, we're made sons of God by God's grace. We are saved, not by faith, but by grace through faith.

We're saved because God is gracious. That's the reason we have eternal life. "*It is the gift of God.*" Faith is the gift of God as well as eternal life is the gift of God.

Now listen to **Romans 6:23**; "*The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" **1 John 5:11**; "*This is the record; God hath given us eternal life and this life is in His Son.*"

The river of salvation, the river of life flows from the throne of God. God is the fountainhead of all salvation. It comes from Him. Whatever we have by way of faith, life, pardon, forgiveness, is the gift of God.

Paul says that in **Titus 3:5**; "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He hath saved us.*" So, it is because of God's grace that we have eternal life, that we have salvation. That needs to be clearly understood.

Secondly: It is because Christ died for our sins that we're forgiven!

We must not make a Saviour out of faith. Christ is the Saviour. Faith is not the Saviour. Faith didn't die for us, faith doesn't intercede for us, faith doesn't pardon us; we're saved by the grace of God.

It is because Christ our Lord as our substitute took our sins in His body and died on the cross that we have eternal life. Peter said that in **1 Peter 1:18**; "*You know you're not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers but with the precious blood of Christ.*"

Christ is the Saviour. It is Christ's work that redeems us, pardons us, and gives us eternal life. That needs to be clearly understood. Faith is not the Saviour. Christ is the Saviour. And we're saved by His grace.

But now watch this; faith is the channel; faith is the means through which we receive these spiritual blessings. If they come from God; He's the source of grace. He's the source of mercy. He's the source of forgiveness.

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It's because He's gracious that I'm pardoned and not condemned. It is because He's gracious that I'm forgiven and not punished. It is because Christ died for me. He took my place on the cross and paid my debt.

And because He suffered as my substitute I won't have to suffer. He's the source of life but we're saved by grace through faith. Faith is the means or channel by which receive those blessings.

Now let me see if I can illustrate that; electricity lights our home. It is the electricity that makes the bulbs burn, it's the electricity that makes the stove hot. It's the electricity that makes your iron work. But that electricity comes to us through wires.

The water in our homes meets our needs. But that water comes to us through the pipes. Now the pipes do not satisfy or quench our thirst; the water does. But it comes to us through the pipes. Do you see what I'm saying?

Food builds our bodies but we eat that food through our mouths by chewing it and swallowing it. It's the only way that the food has of getting into our bodies is through our mouth. We receive it but it's the food that builds the body.

So, Christ is our peace. He is our peace but we receive Him by faith. Christ is our righteousness. The Bible tells us that. *"He of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."* He is our righteousness but we receive Him by faith.

Christ is our atonement but it's faith that looks to Him and receives that atonement. So, this clear note must be emphasized and I believe it's a missing note today. I believe it's a missing note in present day preaching and it must be sounded loud and clear.

Two things:

First of all: We're saved by the grace of God!

That's what Paul says here in **Ephesians 2:8-9**. We're saved by the grace of God. We're saved by the work of Christ. We're saved by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God quickens and gives us life.

God is the Saviour. Christ is the Redeemer. And we're saved; these blessings come to us through faith, never without faith. They never come without faith. Our Lord said to His disciples; *"You go 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."*

In **Hebrews 11:6** Paul said; *"Without faith it's impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He's the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."*

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So, we've laid that foundation. You remember as we proceed through this message. It is by grace that we're saved. Faith is not the Saviour; Christ is the Saviour.

Christ Jesus our Lord is the source of all mercy and of all grace. It comes from the throne of God. *"Let us come boldly before His throne of grace that we may receive mercy, that we may obtain mercy, and grace to help in time of need."*

Now, let's get to the questions:

First of all: What is saving faith?

Now, there are many definitions of faith. I have heard definitions of faith all my life and unfortunately most of them leave us more confused than we were before. I hear people say: "Well, have faith." And then somebody else will come along and say; "Well, keep the faith."

And somebody else will come along and say; "Well, just trust the Lord." And then someone else will come along and say; "Well, only believe." Well what is it to trust the Lord? What is it to have faith? What is it to believe? What is saving faith?

Now, I have made some studies of God's Word and tried to preach the Gospel for about 30 years. And the best definition that I have ever found of saving faith is a three-fold definition. And it's taken from Paul's statement in which he said this; *"I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day."* There you have a definition of saving faith.

First of all: Faith is made up of knowledge, confidence, and committal.

That's the three-fold definition. Now knowledge comes first in saving faith. Will you listen a moment? Knowledge comes first. You cannot believe what you don't know. That's impossible.

You cannot trust a person whom you do not know. Paul said; *"I know whom I have believed. I know Him."* He deals with this again in **Romans 10**; listen to this; *"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

We believe that don't we? Certainly we do; *"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* A person in misery, in sin, in need, shall call, genuinely, sincerely, humbly, on the name of Jesus Christ, shall be saved.

But listen to what Paul adds: *"But how shall they call on Him in whom they've not believed, and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"*

A man cannot believe in a person who he does not know. A man cannot believe a truth that he has not heard. That's what Paul is saying here. So there are two ways by which we come to know Christ, hearing and seeing.

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Listen to the Scripture, **John 5:24**; our Lord said: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you; he that heareth my Word and believeth on Him that sent me hath eternal life.”* You can’t believe until you hear.

And then over in **Romans 10:17** Paul says; *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”* And John said in **1 John 5**; *“These things are written that you might believe on the name of the Son of God and believing you might have life in Him.”* You’ve got to hear: *“Faith cometh by hearing.”*

You’ve got to hear of ruined by the fall before you’ll understand the extent of that ruin. You’ve got to hear of redemption by the blood before you can understand how sinners are redeemed by the blood.

You’ve got to hear of the regenerating Holy Spirit before you’ll understand what the new birth is all about, hearing. You cannot believe in one of whom you have not heard. That’s the importance of preaching.

That’s the reason God has sent forth prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, that you might hear the Word of God and that you might believe. You’ve got to hear before you can believe.

And then seeing; our Lord said in **John 6:40**; *“This is the will of Him that sent me that everyone that seeth the Son and believeth on Him might have eternal life.”* Do you see these two things? *“He that heareth my Word and believeth on me hath everlasting life. He that seeth the Son and believeth on Him hath eternal life.”*

Now, we’re not talking about seeing the Lord with these eyes. We’re not talking about seeing the Lord in a bodily form. We’re not talking about seeing a vision at all. We’re talking about eyes of faith.

“Abraham saw my day,” Christ said. He saw the Lord. *“Moses saw me and he wrote of me.”* Isaiah saw Him; he said; *“He was wounded for our transgressions.”* That’s before He ever came. They saw with eyes of faith.

And to talk about seeing Christ; we’re talking about seeing Him in His eternal glory. He said, *“Before the world was, I had glory with the Father.”* We’re talking about seeing Him in His incarnate glory; *“He came into this world in the likeness of sinful flesh; He was made sin for us.”*

We’re talking about seeing Him in His redeeming glory, seeing Him there hanging on a cross between heaven and earth bearing our sins in His body on the tree. We’re talking about seeing Him in His resurrected glory, in His interceding glory.

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We're talking about seeing Him in His coming glory. *"Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard."* What's that talking about preacher? We are talking about the natural man, the unregenerate. We're talking about the unspiritual man.

They have not seen His glory. They have not seen His power. They have not seen His justice. They have not seen His redemption and His holiness. They have not seen these things; the natural eye can't see it: *"But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."*

So faith, first of all, is made up of knowledge. You cannot trust Him if you don't know who He is, and you don't know what He did, and you don't know why He did it, and you don't know where He is now. You've got to know Him.

Paul said; "I know who I have believed. I know the person I'm trusting, believing in, resting in, and hoping in. I'm trusting in Christ and I know who He is. I know He had eternal glory. I know He had incarnate glory and resurrected glory. And I know right now He's at the right hand of God interceding for me."

Where'd you find all that out Paul? The Word of God; that's where you find it.

Secondly: Faith is not only knowledge, but after knowledge comes confidence.

Now listen to Paul here; "I know whom I have believed. I've been introduced to Him by the Holy Spirit. I know Him. And I am confident that He is able to keep that which I've committed to Him against that day."

Now, what the ear hears and what the eyes see, the heart believes. What the ear hears, having heard who He is, having heard what He's done, having heard what He's doing now for us, having heard why He did it, *"That God might be just and justify the ungodly."*

Having heard where He is at the right hand of God, interceding for me, having heard of His glory, of His effectual, substitutionary work; I am confident, I am persuaded beyond the shadow of a doubt, that He is able to do all that He said He would do.

And He is able to do for me what no one else can do. That's what the disciples said; *"Lord; to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."*

There's no hope in the world. There's no hope in fantasy. There's no hope in religion as such. There's no hope in ourselves. There's no hope in one another; there's hope in me, there's hope only in Christ.

He's 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 before His Father's righteous, holy throne, without stain, without sin, unblameable, and holy.

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Paul said in Philippians; *“He’s able to raise our vile bodies and make them like His glorious body.”* He’s able.

Now that’s two parts of faith. It’s to know Him. It’s to be confident that He can do what He says, all that He promised.

Thirdly: It’s a committal to Christ!

“I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He’s able to keep that which I have committed to Him.”

Now my friends; the Scripture speaks of a two-fold committal to Christ, a two-fold committal and I want you to listen carefully to this; this will help you:

First of all: It talks about a committal of the heart!

Secondly: A committal of the mouth!

In **Romans 10:9-10**: *“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.”*

First of all: There’s a heart committal!

“God does not look on the outward countenance; He looks on the heart.” And we might walk down all the aisles in this country and shake the hands of all the preachers and make open, public, professions, of what we believe and what we’re going to do, and all of these other things, but if there’s not a heart committal to Christ it’s not worth the time that you take to do it.

The Scripture says; *“Keep thine heart for out of it are the issues of life.”* That’s the first committal. Before there’s any public committal or mouth committal or profession there’s got to be a heart committal to Christ. And that’s something that takes place between me and the Lord.

You’ve got nothing to do with that. You’re not involved in that at all. That’s between me and Christ, a heart committal. It is to believe in the heart who He is and what He did, that God raised Him from the dead, that He’s the only Mediator between God and men.

Secondly: It’s to confess with the mouth!

Now you say; “Well preacher, how does a man make a public confession of faith in Christ?” The Bible’s public confession of faith in Christ is baptism. That’s the way we publically confess Christ.

You can take your New Testament and go all the way through it and you’ll find all of these people who heard the Gospel and who believed the Gospel were gladly baptized.

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Now baptism is identification with Christ. It is going beneath the water and being brought out of the water saying this; “When Christ died, I died. When He was buried, I was buried. And when He arose from the grave I arose with Him.”

It’s identification with Christ. It’s confession of faith in Christ. And you’ll find the Philippian jailer was baptized; Cornelius, the Ethiopian Eunuch and Lydia, all of these people followed the Lord in baptism.

That’s the reason Christ said; “You go preach the Gospel. And as you preach the Gospel; the Gospel’s good news; you preach the Gospel to sinners. Preach it to all creatures, Jew and Gentile, black and white, old and young, rich and poor; preach it to every creature.”

And those who hear it; they hear the good news of Christ. They hear it with their hearts. They know they’re sinners and they know they’ve broken God’s law and they’ll offend in every point and come short of the glory of God.

They’re not able to save themselves. They’re not able to put away their sins. They’re not able to write their name in the Book of Life. They’re not able to do those things. There’s no hope, there’s no help. They’re without God in this world.

And to hear this good news that God gave His Son in human flesh to be our representative, to face the law as a man and “*Be tempted and tried in all points as we are, yet without sin;*” He lived a perfect life, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, in the likeness of our flesh on this earth, He met every law, the law of the home, the judicial law, the ceremonial law, the moral law, every law.

And He did it all without sin. And then He went to the cross of Calvary and there He bore our sins in His body on the tree, that almighty God might be just and pardon folks like us, that our sin debt might be paid, that our guilt might be put away.

He was buried as our scapegoat and He arose again our justifier. He ascended to the right hand of the Father where right now He’s our Mediator. I hear that; in my heart I say; “That’s it, that’s it; that’s what the Bible teaches. That’s what God says.”

That’s the only way that a guilty sinner can be accepted by a holy God is for somebody as a man to do for him what he couldn’t do for himself. And I believe that.

And so then I confess it. I say to my family and to my friends; “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins. I believe that Jesus Christ was buried and rose again for my justification.”

“I believe that Jesus Christ, right now, is on the right hand of God interceding for me and I believe that!” Well how am I going to confess it? I go to the baptismal waters and there I go

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down beneath the water, dead to the old life, dead to the old way, and I rise to walk in newness of life with my crowned King, with my resurrected Lord.

And I want the whole world to know this is my hope, this is my refuge, this is my foundation; Christ died for me.

Now you say, “Well why is faith the channel of blessing? Why did God choose this way to save sinners, “*By grace through faith?*” Well, you know, anytime we deal with why did God something we have to be careful. We have to be modest and humble and approach it with great, exceeding, caution.

But I want to give you three reasons why I believe that faith is the channel of blessing:

First of all: Because it gives all the glory to God!

Now that’s why. There can be no human boasting by those who have received forgiveness and pardon as a gift. The pauper, the hand that receives charity, cannot boast. “*And it’s not of works lest any man should boast.*” That’s what Paul said.

And we would; we’d boast if we could. If we made a contribution to the salvation of our souls we’d brag about it. They’d never hear the last of it in heaven. We’d brag about what we did for God and what we gave up for Jesus and what we sacrificed for eternal life.

“*So it’s by faith, not of works, lest any man should boast. He that glorieth; let him glory in the Lord.*” God’s going to have all the glory for saving sinners.

Secondly: Faith is the channel of blessing in order that all who desire might be welcome!

Now my friend; you can’t keep the perfect law can you? But you can believe. My friend; you cannot satisfy God’s justice can you, God’s perfect, holy, immaculate, justice? No you can’t. But you can believe.

My friend; you can’t write your name in the Book of Life can you? But you can believe. There is no condition, there’s no position, from which I cannot believe. The people who are bitten by the fiery serpents out in the wilderness; “*Moses lifted up the brazen serpent.*” And what did he say do?

Walk to it, run to it, draw a diagram of it, and figure out all of the things about it? No; look, look, a four-letter word and two of them are just alike, l-o-o-k, anybody can look. You can look. You can turn your eyes on Jesus. You can believe. And that’s the reason it’s by faith so that it opens the door of mercy to all who will come.

Thirdly: Faith is the channel of grace because it brings men to union with Christ!

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Now, if a man is floating down the Niagara River and he's headed for the falls; the falls are just ahead, he can grab a log, or a board, or a boat, or anything else and he can just go on over because those things are out there in the same shape he's in.

And if I trust my church membership and trust my good works and trust all these other things; I'm going to perish with them because they are all flesh. But if somebody throws me a rope from the shore and I grab that rope; I'm not going to perish unless he does because he's stationed on the shore. He's stationed in a fixed position.

When I hold that rope on one end and he holds it on the other; he's got to perish if I perish. And when I believe in Christ who is in the fixed position at the right hand of the Father, the position of power, love, acceptance, and glory; if by faith I can look to Him and establish a union with Him, I can't perish unless He does. That secures me in Christ.

How is it to be obtained, saving faith? Well; I urge you to look to the Word of God. God will bless His Word. Forsake tradition, customs, ceremonies, and all these things; let God speak to you, let God speak to you.

And my friend; pray for faith; the disciples did. They said; "*Lord, increase our faith.*"

Thirdly: Let this be a matter between you and God!

Sue for mercy. Cry out; "Lord, you save me or I perish." Don't get somebody in between!