

THE FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT

TITUS 1:1-4 • TV086A

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Titus 1:1-4

“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

I’m reading a passage of Scripture found in the book of **Titus chapter 1:1 and 2**. Paul the apostle writes to a young Titus and this is the way he begins this epistle; he says:

“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness in hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie promised before the world began.

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That's my subject today: **"THE FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT."**

And I want us to think about five things. Now, I'll give these to you before I begin the message. You may want to write them down but I'm going to deal with five specific things in this message:

First of all: Can a person know that he has saving faith? Is it possible to know, to have assurance and confidence that you have saving faith?

Secondly: I'm going to answer this question or deal with this specific area; saving faith is the most important thing in the world to you, in fact, it's more important than everything else in your life put together, to have a saving interest in Jesus Christ is worth more than everything else in this world put together.

Thirdly: How do we determine if our faith is saving faith? How do we determine if we have a saving interest in Christ? How does one go about examining his faith?

Fourthly: I want us to think about this, just exactly what is saving faith? What is the faith of God's elect?

Fifthly: Then I'm going to close the message dealing with this particular point; let's remove some mistakes about saving faith.

Now, does that get you interested in this broadcast, in this message? I hope that it does. Let's look at the subject now: **"The Faith of God's Elect."**

Paul writing to young Titus; says: *"I'm an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's elect."* Now, can a person know that he has saving faith? Is it possible to know that we have an interest in Jesus Christ?

Well, we're commanded in the Word of God to examine our faith and determine if it's genuine faith. God has commanded us to examine our faith. He says in **2 Corinthians 13:5**: *"Examine yourselves; (that's a command), examine yourselves whether you be in the faith. Prove yourselves. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you except you be reprobates?"*

And then Peter wrote in **2 Peter 1:10**: *"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things you will never fail."*

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We're commanded in the Word of God to examine our faith, to determine if we have a saving interest in Christ. God has commanded us. When we come to the Lord's Table what did Paul say? *"Examine yourself. Let a man examine himself and so let him eat."* So, we are commanded by God to determine if we have saving faith.

And then we have many examples in the Word of God of men who knew that they had saving faith; they were positive that they had an interest in Christ.

David said; *"The Lord is my shepherd."* Paul said; *"I know whom I have believed and I'm persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day."* John said, *We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."*

So, these are just three testimonies and we could go on for a long time giving you examples of men who knew that they had a saving interest in Christ. *"The Lord is my shepherd"* David said. Job said: *"I know that my redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day on this earth and I shall see the Lord, not another, but I myself, in the flesh will see the Lord."*

These men had confidence; they had assurance and they knew they were in Christ. And then I would say this; that a strong assurance of an interest in Christ is what enabled these men to forsake the world.

This is what enabled them to endure severe trials like the trial of Abraham when he sacrificed Isaac. What gave him the strength to go through such a trial? Faith in Christ.

Noah building the Ark, Daniel in the Lion's Den, the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, Moses leading Israel through the wilderness; these acts of faith were motivated by confidence in God and assurance that they knew the Lord and it enabled them to bear persecution and enabled them to live for the glory of God.

So, these men received strength from their faith. They knew they were in Christ and therefore, they had strength to endure whatever God called upon them to bear.

And then, a genuine assurance of faith in Christ enables a man even to rejoice on his death bed. Paul said, *"The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord shall present to me in that day, not to me only, but to all them that love his appearance."*

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He said, *"I'm in a strait betwixt the two. I have a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better."* He said, *"For me to live is Christ but to die is gain. I want to leave here and to be with the Lord."*

And David said this, *"Although it be not so with my house; God hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure. And this is all my salvation and this is all my desire."*

So, assurance of an interest in Christ will give a man confidence even on his death bed and will deliver him from fear of death and fear of judgment and fear of eternity, so we may know that we have saving faith; it's commanded of God.

We have examples throughout the Scripture of men who knew that they had a saving interest in Christ and these men received their strength from this faith and even to the day of death they received the strength of faith to enable them to bear whatever God called upon them to bear.

Secondly: A saving interest in Christ, saving faith, the faith of God's elect, is the most important thing in this world to you. In fact, to be in Christ is more important than anything else or everything else put together.

For our Lord said, *"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?"* Your interest in Christ is more important than your health, it's more important than your possessions, it's more important than your popularity, it's more important than your family, and it's more important than all of these things put together, to be in Christ.

Christ Jesus is salvation. Christ Jesus is eternal life and not to be in Christ, and not to have a saving interest in Christ is to lose everything and to perish eternally. In **1 John 5:11-13**, John wrote, *"This is the record. God hath given to us eternal life. This life is in his Son."*

That's where it is; everything is vested in Christ. *"It pleased the Lord that in him should all the fullness of God dwell."* That's where it is; that's where God's mercy is in Christ. That's where God's grace is, that's where God's love is, that's where the life of God is, that's where acceptance is, that's where approval is, that's where wisdom and righteousness and redemption is; it's all in Christ.

So, if a man misses Christ he is going to miss everything. He's going to lose everything. Finally, everything will be taken away from him. So, to be in Christ is worth everything. Our Lord said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me."* I must have Christ. One old hymn writer put it this way, "Give me Christ or I die."

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The apostles said, *“Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid in Christ Jesus. There’s none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”*

So, whatever I miss on earth is not nearly as important as missing Christ. Whatever I miss on earth I must not miss a saving faith, a saving interest in Jesus Christ: *“For of him, (of God) who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”*

So to be in Christ is more important than everything else put together. I might give up and bypass and surrender everything in this world but I must not miss Christ. I must not miss a saving interest in Jesus Christ for that’s where everything God has is; it’s in Christ. And to be in Christ is to be an heir of God and to be joint-heir with Christ; of immortality, of holiness, of perfection, of righteousness, and all things.”

Thirdly: Saving faith; how do we determine if we have saving faith?

God commands us to examine our faith. He commands us to know if we are in Christ. And to be in Christ is worth everything. It’s worth everything in the universe. Well, how do I determine if my faith is saving faith?

Almost everybody has some kind of faith; almost everybody believes in some God. Almost everybody has a religion. All right; in examining my faith and in examining my position, my spiritual position, how do I determine if my faith is the faith of God’s elect?

When Paul wrote to Titus he said: *“I’m an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God’s elect. There’s one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. There’s one God and one mediator between God and men.”*

I must not miss that faith of God’s elect, that one faith, and that one way. Christ said, *“I’m the door. By me, if any man enter in he shall be saved.”* To miss Christ is to miss everything.

So, how do I determine? Well, **Romans 10:17:** *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”* This is the foundation of faith. Now, Christ is the object of faith. Christ Jesus is the goal and the object of faith. Everything’s in Him.

But the foundation of faith is the Word of God, not my feelings but God’s Word. My feelings cannot be trusted because my feelings change. God’s Word never changes. My feeling depends a whole lot upon my circumstances or my environment or my emotions.

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But God's Word is sure. It's immutable. It's unchangeable. So, I cannot find out if I've got saving faith by how I feel because I may feel saved today and feel lost tomorrow. I may feel good today and feel bad tomorrow.

I may feel close to God today. I may feel spiritual and I may feel carnal tomorrow. So, my feelings change. I cannot base my eternal hope on my feelings because they change. But I can build my hope on the Word of God; it never changes.

And then I must not build my hope on experiences because experiences depend upon environment. Experiences depend upon emotions. Experiences depend upon circumstances, companions. All of these things give us experiences.

Even evil spirits can give us experiences. In fact, the Scripture says: *"Try the spirits whether they be of God."* Paul said, *"We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against spiritual wickedness in high places and the rulers of darkness."*

So, we can have experiences and it not be of God. And so, we must not build our hope on experiences.

And then, we must not build our hope on our works. Our works may be motivated by self-love. They may be motivated by selfish goals. But they are nothing but filthy rags in God's sight.

They may look good to us. Yea, they may even look good to people about us. But you see, our works are not judged by what people think of them or what we think of them but what God thinks of them. That's how they're judged.

So, I cannot; if I'm going to examine my faith and whether or not I have interest in Christ or whether or not my faith is a saving faith; I must not resort to my feelings. I must not look to my experiences. I must not look to my doctrine. I must not look to my works.

Where shall I look? God's Word never changes and because God's Word is true and because God's Word is the only foundation of faith; *"He hath said, so that we may boldly say."* And the only reason we can say something is because God has already said it. The only right we have to believe anything about God is because He said it in His Word.

Christ now is the object of faith. We don't believe in the Bible; we believe in a person, in Christ Jesus. We don't look to the Bible for life; we look to Christ for life. Our Lord rebuked the Pharisee's and he said: *"Now you search the scriptures for in them you think you have life. But they are they which testify of me."*

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We go to the Scripture for our foundation. We go to the Scripture for our instructions. We go to the Scriptures for our directions but we look to Christ for life. He's the object of faith but the Word of God is the reason for faith.

Christ is the goal of faith and the object of faith and we look to Christ for redemption. We look to Christ for forgiveness. We look to Christ for mercy. We look to Christ to make us accepted with the Father.

We look to Christ to redeem us but we look to the Word of God to tell us about Christ. The reason we look to Christ is because the Bible said to look to Christ.

How do I know that God will show mercy? How do I know? Can I go out and look at the sun or the moon or the stars or the trees or the rippling stream or the rivers, or the mountains, or valleys?

Will they tell me God will show mercy? They will tell me God's powerful for He made these things. They tell me that God is wise because only a wise God could create such beautiful things.

But, they do not tell me that God will be merciful to a guilty sinner like myself or like you. I have to turn to the Bible to find that out and the Bible says, Moses said, "*Lord; show me your goodness, show me your glory.*"

And God said, "*I'll make all my goodness to pass before you. I will be merciful, I will be merciful.*" That's the reason I believe God will show mercy to sinners; He said so. And that's the only reason that I can believe that. It's not because I feel it. It's not because I think it. It's not because I heard it but because God said it.

How do I know that Christ Jesus is the only Redeemer? Maybe the church is the Saviour. Maybe the Son is the Saviour. Maybe the moon or the stars or maybe my good works are the Saviour. No; God's Word says, Christ is the Saviour.

"God sent his Son into the world to save sinners;" that's what He said. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

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That's what the Scripture says: *"In the fullness of the time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."* That's what the Word of God says, so that's what I believe.

I believe that because God said it. You see; that's the foundation of faith. I believe Christ; He's the object of faith. I believe *"In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."*

I believe that He is our Surety, He is our Representative, Christ is our sin-offering, He is our Substitute, and He is our Saviour. He's all things to us but the Word of God tells me those things and the Word of God is the only rule of faith and the only foundation of faith.

How do I know that Christ died on the cross, was buried, and rose again? Is that just a rumor that came down through the past 1,900 years? Is that something somebody thought about or heard about or felt ought to should have happened?

No sir! God's Word says *"that he died for ours sins according to the Scriptures."* Christ Jesus fulfilled every type, every shadow, every symbol, and every promise and that He died for our sin and was buried and rose again. And He ascended to the right hand of God where He sitteth in glory and majesty, approval and acceptance. And that's what the Word says.

How do I know that he's the only Mediator? It's because God's Word says so. Take away the infallibility of God's Word and you have no foundation of faith. Now I know there are a lot of preachers and possibly some of you who doubt the inspiration of God's Word, who doubt the verbal inspiration of the Scripture, who doubt that the Word of God is just exactly that, the Word of God.

But let me tell you this, take away the infallibility of the Scripture and you take away every foundation of faith, every reason for faith and every right to believe anything. If you don't have the Word of God to tell you who God is and what God does and why God does it and to whom God does it; then you have no reason for faith at all. The Word of God is the only foundation of faith. Now, that's so!

So, how do I determine if my faith is saving faith, if it's the faith of God's elect, how do I determine if what I call a spiritual interest is a spiritual interest at all in the living God? What does the Word of God say, *"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God?"*

You can't go beyond the Scriptures; if you go beyond the Scriptures, you get out there in "Never, Never, Land;" there's nothing out there. There's no proof of it. Somebody said, "Well, I think

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this.” Why do you think it? “Well, I just think it.” That doesn’t make it so. You don’t receive anything because I say so; it’s according to the Word of God. That’s the foundation of faith.

Fourthly: What is the faith of God’s elect, what is saving faith?

Well, faith is expressed in the Scripture in several ways and I’m going to give you three things about this faith of God’s elect, this saving faith:

First of all: The faith of God’s elect is looking to Christ!

In **Isaiah 45:22** the Scripture says: *“Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else.”*

Now, Israel was out there in the wilderness and they had murmured and complained and found fault with God’s providence and they had said many times: *“It had been better for us to stay in Egypt. It had been better for us to die in Egypt than to die in the wilderness.”*

And God grew angry with them. And the Lord God in His judgment sent fiery serpents into the camp of the people and they bit the people and they were sick and they were dying.

Moses cried to God for help, for a remedy and God said, *“Moses; take a serpent in the likeness of the fiery serpent. Make it out of brass and put it on a pole and lift it up and whosoever shall look upon that serpent shall live.”*

And so Moses took the brass and he made a serpent in the likeness of the ones that had bitten the people and he put it upon a pole and the people looked and they lived. They just turned their eyes in that direction. They looked.

That was faith. They believed God. They believed the remedy. They believed that God would show mercy. They looked and they lived. And our Lord Himself referred to this incident in the Old Testament. He said, *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of man be lifted up.”*

Now, you and I in our murmuring, complaining, and ingratitude; we in our sin; we have been bitten by the serpent of sin, the flesh. And Christ came down here in the likeness of sinful flesh; just like that serpent of brass was made in the likeness of the fiery serpents. *“Christ was made in the likeness of sinful flesh.”*

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“And as Moses lifted up that serpent, even so, was the Son of man lifted up on a cross, that whosoever believeth looketh unto him should not perish but have eternal life.”

And so, we look to Christ. We turn in that direction. We believe God and we turn in that direction by faith and we just look to God, look to Christ and look to God in Christ, *“because God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.”*

Jesus Christ is the God-Man and we look to Christ in our helplessness as they did and in our dying condition as they did. We look to Christ for grace; we look to Christ to continue in grace. We look to Christ even yea, unto His coming for glorification, looking to Christ.

Secondly: Faith is looking to Christ and then faith is trust in Christ, trusting!

Isaiah 26:34 says this: *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever all the days of your life for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.”*

Now Paul is a pattern of faith, wouldn't you say that? God says that. You see, that's something else; we say, “Paul was a pattern of faith.” Well, the Bible says that, *“that he's a pattern of those who should afterwards believe.”*

What we preach and say; we must have the Scripture to back us up. And Paul said; he gave us a definition of his faith, he said: *“I know whom I have believed. I'm persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed to him.”* I trusted and entrusted my soul into His care.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.” It's not just a fleeting, passing thing but our mind is stayed on Him, we trust Him:

**“Other refuge have I none
Hangs my helpless soul on thee.”**

“Abraham was fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able to perform,” trusting Him.

Thirdly: What is the faith of God's elect?

It's receiving Christ. **John 1:12** says: *“As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become sons of God.”* It is to receive Christ as He is. Now listen to this, it is to receive Christ not as I think He is, not as somebody said He is, not as I want Him to be, but as He is.

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Who is Jesus Christ? He's the Messiah. He's the one who created the world. He is the Son of God. He is our Surety. He is the Prophet to teach us God. He's the Priest to intercede. He's the King to reign over us.

So, it's to receive Christ, not as I think He is, not as I want Him to be, but as He's revealed in the Word of God. And saving faith is to receive Christ, not partially, not in some of His offices, but totally.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord, (the Lord of your life, the Lord of your heart), thou shalt be saved."

All right; I do not hold out to you, "doormat named Jesus." I hold out to you the Lord of glory. It's to receive Him totally. That's what saving faith is. That's the faith of God's elect.

All right; let's remove some mistakes concerning saving faith.

First of all: The first mistake is this. It is a mistake to believe that everyone who is in Christ has a full and complete assurance.

Now, everybody is not going to have a full and complete assurance. Doubts and fears are not uncommon with God's people. Now, you will find that's so. You'll find David once in a while saying, *"The Lord is my shepherd."* Then he'll say, *"Is his mercy clean gone forever?"*

So, doubts and fears are not uncommon. Do not be disturbed because you have doubts and fears. Be disturbed when you doubt God but not when you doubt yourself.

Secondly: It's a mistake to believe that all who are in Christ have the same degree of assurance!

There's little faith and there's great faith. *"Lord I believe; help my unbelief."* Everyone doesn't have the same degree of faith, the same object of faith, but not the same strength, not the same degree of faith.

Thirdly: It's a mistake to believe that everyone who has assurance will always have that assurance. You may be confident in Christ for days and then have a difficult time, a struggle, and then the confidence comes back. It will come from the Word of God, though.

Fourthly: Then it's a mistake to assume that all who have an interest in Christ can answer all the objections and charges of an infidel world.

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Don't complain because you can't handle every difficult situation and every difficult question. Babes in Christ need to be taught. They need to grow to maturity. Even when you get mature in Christ you meet with obstacles that you cannot handle.

It's a mistake to assume that everyone who says: "*Lord, Lord, is going to enter the kingdom of God,*" or has saving faith. Looking to Christ, trusting Christ, receiving Christ; that's the faith of God's elect!