

IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 • TV093A

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2 Corinthians 13:5

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

I’m speaking to you today on the subject: **“IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?”**

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians Chapter 13:5**: *“Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith.”*
And then again he wrote in **Timothy**: *“There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.”*

Now, I am deeply concerned about this thing called *“faith,”* are you? I’m concerned about my faith. I’m concerned about your faith. I don’t want to miss faith in Christ and I do not want you to miss faith in Christ.

Let me read you a few passages of Scripture that show the importance of this thing called *“faith,”* faith in the redeemer, faith in the substitute, faith and confidence in Christ our Lord and Saviour.

IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

In **Hebrews 11:6**; the Scripture says: *“But without faith it is 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. Without faith it is impossible to please God.”*

And then in **John chapter 3:36** the Scripture says: *“He that believeth on the Son hath life. He that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

This is where it is; it’s faith in Christ. *“This is the record that God hath given to us, eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”* It’s not in the church, it’s not in the ordinances, it’s not in the law, and it’s not in the works or deeds of religion; eternal life is in a person, it’s in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And he that hath the Son of God hath life and he that hath not the Son of God.” How does a man have Christ? He has Christ by faith. We don’t have Christ physically, we don’t have Christ in a human body; we have Christ by faith.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

In **Hebrews 3:19** Paul wrote; Israel could not enter the promise land, why; because they built a golden calf, no, because they rebelled at the waters, no, because they did this or did that, no, it says, *“they could not enter in because of unbelief.”*

And then in **verse 13** of that same chapter Paul wrote to the church and he said: *“Take heed brethren lest there be found in you an evil heart of unbelief.”* It is unbelief that bars men from the presence of God and from the Kingdom of God.

Our Lord said to the Centurion in **Mark chapter 9:23**: *“If you can believe all things are possible to him that believeth.”* Can you believe? *“All things are possible to him that believeth.”*

And then, in **Hebrews 11** we have that Old Testament spiritual Hall of Fame and Paul introduces us to these giants going all the way from Genesis to Malachi talking about these men who knew God and who walked with God and who loved God and who were used of God. And men of whom it is written; they were redeemed, they knew God and now they are in glory.

But, I want you to watch one characteristic of every one of them, one statement about every one of them, one thing that they all had in common. Do you know what that one thing was, the one thing for which they were all commended, it was faith.

IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

“By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” It was by faith that he brought the lamb. It was by faith that God accepted his sacrifice. *“By faith, Enoch walked with God and was not for God took him.”*

“By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen built an ark and saved his house. By faith, Abraham offered Isaac. By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.”

Moses refused the riches of Egypt and he chose rather to suffer the afflictions of God’s people. It was by faith. Read all of that chapter; by faith Isaac, by faith Joseph, by faith Jacob, by faith Hagar, by faith Rahab!

All of them have this one thing in common and that is they believe God. And it is said in that same chapter: *“These all died in faith.”*

I’m concerned about my faith and I need to be and you need to be concerned about your faith and I need to be concerned about your faith. *“Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith.”* It’s not in the church but in the faith. There’s just one faith, one Lord, and one gospel.

Now, it’s wise for a man to look to his doctrines. I think we should look to our doctrine. Paul told Timothy to look to his doctrine; *“Take heed to your doctrine, (study and meditate) for in so doing thou will save himself and those who hear you.”*

One cannot separate the Master from His commandments. One cannot separate the Teacher from His teachings. But the important commandment is; *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”* That’s where we start. That’s where we begin. That’s the start of everything, believing on Christ.

A man should take heed to his works, no question about that. Paul said in **Titus chapter 1:16**: *“Some profess that they know God but in works they deny him.”* A man can deny God by his works. James wrote; *“Faith without works is dead.”*

But when the people asked Christ: *“What should we do that we might work the works of God?”* What did he answer? He said, *“These are the works of God that you believe on him whom God has sent.”*

IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Yes, a man should take heed to his works but it will be better if he takes heed first of all to his faith. *“These are the works of God that you believe on him whom God has sent.”* Without faith in Christ our works are to no avail, whatever they might be, whatever our efforts might be.

And then a man should take heed to endure trial and affliction with a positive attitude and with a thankful heart. But though I fail in conflict and though I fail under a severe trial I must not fail in faith.

Now Peter was faced with a severe trial. You remember he boasted though that others departed from Christ or denied Christ that he would never do that. And our Lord said to him: *“Peter; before the cock crows you are going to deny me three times.”*

And Peter did deny the Lord; he failed in conflict. He failed in a severe trial. But Christ said this, *“I prayed for you that your faith fail not.”* That’s mighty important there, *“that your faith fail not.”* That’s the important thing. Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?

Now, in helping you to examine your faith, in helping myself to examine this thing called “faith;” I want to call your attention to several characteristics of faith or evidences of faith or marks of saving faith.

And I’m going to use Abraham as our example. What is this thing called “faith?” Is my faith saving faith? Do I really believe God?

All right; here are some of the characteristics of faith. I’m going to give you five, or six, or seven. If you care to; jot them down. Write down the Scriptures and look them up later.

First of all: Saving faith has one object and that’s the Lord Jesus Christ!

The Scripture says: *“Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Abraham believed God.”* He did not believe his feelings. You can’t believe your feelings. He did not believe his neighbors.

You can’t believe every voice you hear. Men get in trouble listening to the wrong voice. Eve listened to the wrong voice. She listened to the voice of the serpent. Adam listened to the wrong voice; he listened to the voice of his wife.

Balaam listened to the wrong voice. Israel listened to the wrong voice. Aaron, when he prepared the golden calf; he wasn’t listening to God, he was listening to the people.

IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

And Abraham believed God. He didn't believe his feelings and he didn't believe his neighbors. He didn't even believe his parents. His parents were idol-worshippers; did you know that? That's right! Abraham's parents were idol-worshippers.

He believed God. He believed God when he didn't know where God was sending him. The Lord God came to him and said: "*Abraham; get thee out of thy father's house and from among thy kindred and go to a land that I will show thee.*"

And the Scripture says: "*And Abraham arose and departed.*" He did not know where he was going but he believed God, he believed God. He didn't know where but he believed God.

Then, he believed God when he didn't know how. When Abraham was past 90 years of age; he was almost 100 and his wife was past 90, past the age of bearing children. And God came to this old man and old woman who had never had any children of their own and promised them a son.

He said: "This son and from this son, will come a great nation and you will be the father of many nations. And through this son I will bless you and your name shall be blessed." And Abraham believed God. He didn't know how but he believed God. That's faith; that's believing God, not his feelings, but he believed God.

And then he believed God when he didn't know why. One day God came to him and said, (When Isaac his son was about 14 years old) "*Abraham; take now thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest, unto a place that I will show thee, unto a mountain and there sacrifice him as a sin-offering to my name.*"

And Abraham started out and went to that mountain not knowing why but he believed God. What am I saying? I am saying this, that saving faith has one object and that object is the Lord of glory, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Abraham believed God. He didn't know where, he didn't know how, and he didn't know why but he just believed God. "*He believed that God was able to perform all that he promised and it was counted to him for righteousness.*"

And I don't know where heaven is. God has promised us a land, a city. "*And we look for a city whose foundations are laid by God, not made with human hands.*" I don't know where it is but God knows and Christ knows.

IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

And our Lord left this promise; He said: *“I go to prepare a place for you. And 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.”* And I believe it; I believe God too!

I don't know how the sinner is born again. I know it's by the Spirit and I know it's by the Word of God. But I don't how this tremendous transaction can take place, this work of regeneration and awakening, how the dead can live, the spiritually dead can live.

I don't know how God who never forgets anything *“can remember our sins no more.”* I don't know how the blood of Christ can put away all my transgressions. I don't know how the dead are raised at the end of this world. I don't how a holy God can love sinful creatures like you and me but He says he does.

And He says: *“You must be born again”* and I believe that. And He said; *“The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.”* I believe that. He says, *“Christ is our rock and our refuge and our hope and our Mediator. And because he lives we shall live.”*

He said: *“Because Christ was raised we shall be raised.”* I believe God. That's saving faith. It has one object, God almighty. *“And faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”* Believing the Word of God.

And this is Satan's great weapon against faith, his efforts to destroy your confidence in God's Word. This is the foundation of faith. Now Christ is the object of faith but the foundation of faith is the Word of God.

Abraham didn't know where he was going. He didn't know how he was going to have a son. He didn't know why God wanted him to sacrifice Isaac but he believed God's Word. And this is the foundation of faith; he believed God. God said it and Abraham believed it.

And then I don't know why God should choose to redeem folks like you and me. Do you know why? I don't know why. You know David exclaimed about that; he said: *“When I consider the heavens, the stars, the moon, the sun, and the things that thou hast made; what is man that thou art mindful of him?”*

**“I don't know why God should love me
Why should he love me so?
Love sent my Saviour to die on the cross
Why should he love me so?
Meekly to Calvary's cross He was led**

Why should he love me so?

I don't know why but He says He does and I believe Him. I believe that God almighty is pleased to reveal His grace and His mercy to sinners like you and me and I thank God for it.

So, saving faith believes God. The object of saving faith is Christ Jesus the Lord. He is God; He is the revelation of God. *"No man knows God save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him."* Christ said, *"He that hath seen me, has seen my Father."* And saving faith receives Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Secondly: Saving faith will be tried!

Now, I can be sure of this; I can be certain that if my faith is saving faith it's going to be tried, it's going to be tested, and it's going to be proved!

Now let me read you two verses of Scripture: First of all from **James 1:2 and 3:** *"My brethren; count it all joy when you fall into different trials, knowing this; that the trying of your faith worketh patience."*

And then in **1 Peter 4:12:** *"Beloved; think it not strange concerning the fiery trials which are to try you as though some strange thing happened to you."* God is going to try our faith.

Faith has to be tried to prove its existence, to prove its strength. It has to be tried. It has to be tried to prove it to you. It has to be tried to reveal it to you. How do I know that I believe God if I'm never tried, if my faith is never proved to me?

I may say that I believe God but I may not believe Him at all. And so, God uses means, measures, trials, tribulations, suffering, and all of these things to prove our faith.

Now Abraham in **Genesis 22:1** you will see three words that are very interesting. In **Genesis 22:1** it says: *"After these things."* God said to Abraham: *"Take thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest and sacrifice him."*

Do you know the Word of God in just three words can say more than most men can write in volumes: *"After these things,"* after Abraham had been tried in leaving his father's house, after he had been tried wondering in the wilderness, after he had been tried dividing the land with Lot, after he had been tried and tempted to become quite wealthy at the hands of the kings of Sodom, after he had been tried sending Ishmael away, (the son he had by Hagar, you remember the handmaid), he had to send him away when he was about 15 years of age.

IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

God told him that the son of the bondwoman could not live with the son of the free. And so, he had to send him away. After all these trials, “*after these things,*” when Abraham was old, 114 years old, after Abraham was full of years; it was after Abraham, I guess, was ready to settle down and just enjoy life, after he thought the warfare was over, no more trial; he had to endure his greatest trial, “*after all these things.*”

Somebody said there were nine great trials of Abraham and this sacrificing Isaac was the greatest and it came last and it came in the twilight years of his life. Perhaps your greatest trial is yet to come.

I’m almost certain that it is. Perhaps my greatest trial is yet to come. I’m almost certain that it is. God tries His men. He tries his people. He tries those who believe on Him. True faith will be tried “*after these things.*”

God said, “*Abraham;* (there he was old and full of years and comfortable and sitting at home enjoying his people and his family and his son) *I’m going to try your faith now and prove it.*” And the Lord did!

Our Lord said: “*In this world ye shall have tribulation. They that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*” I’m sure that faith will be tried.

Thirdly: Saving faith is obedient!

It said in **Genesis 22:3** that when God spoke to Abraham about sacrificing Isaac that “*Abraham rose up and went to the place that God directed him to go.*”

No argument. I just imagine Abraham could have come up with many human arguments against this sacrificing of his son. You and I would have wouldn’t we? Wouldn’t we have argued with God about this? Not Abraham.

When God said, “*Take your son and sacrifice him;*” it says, “*He rose up and left.*” I imagine he could have said something like this, “We’ve got all these things figured out you know.” He might have said, “But Lord, you said in Isaac shalt thy seed be called. Now, this is not consistent with that promise that you made.”

He might have said: “But Lord; now how will I explain this to Sarah? If I take this boy out here and sacrifice him on an altar, how do I explain that to my wife? And Lord; how do I explain that to the heathen, to my neighbors, to my friends, or to my relatives? How do I explain to them that my son died at my own hands? How do I explain that?”

IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

“And Lord; this doesn’t seem like the thing to do. Now, this is not the way that human wisdom would have this thing to take place.” No, he didn’t offer any arguments. You see; saving faith is obedient; it’s obedient.

One time the disciples went out fishing. They hadn’t caught a thing. All night they fished. And they rowed to the shore and there was the Master. He said, “*Children; have you caught any meat?*” And they said, “No.”

And He said: “*Push the boat out there a little ways into the water and cast your net off on the certain side of the ship.*” And Peter looked at Him and he said, “*Lord; we’ve toiled all night and caught nothing, nevertheless, at your word we let down the net.*”

Now, that’s saving faith. I don’t understand it and I might have several human arguments against it and it might be contrary to human wisdom but if God said it, that’s the way it is. Now, that’s the place that you better come if you want saving faith.

Fourthly: Saving faith is patient; it waits on the Lord!

Do you know how far that mountain was from where Abraham lived? God came and said, “*Take your son and sacrifice him?*” It was three days’ journey. That’s three days and two nights on the road.

You just imagine what this man Abraham went through as he took this boy toward that mountain where he was going to sacrifice him on an altar as a sin-offering. I’m sure these three days seemed like three years. But God gives a man not only a space to repent but space to depart.

You know; our Lord turned to the disciples one day and after the five thousand had left he turned to them and said: “*Will you also go away?*” And they said, “*To whom shall we go?*”

The Lord slowly prepares His vessels. He slowly prepares those vessels that He will use. He proves them with trial and time. One time a lady asked a preacher friend of mine, “Do you think I’m saved?” He said, “See me in about 30 years and I will tell you.”

God proves His vessels with time and trial. You know; when they use to sift the wheat they would take it in this round thing with a screened bottom and they would throw it up in the air and the wind would blow the chaff away.

The wheat would always come down into the vessel but the wind would blow the chaff. That chaff may hang in there for several flips but after a while it gets it all out; the wind blows it all

IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

away. And that's what happens; time and trial prove faith but faith is patient and waits on the Lord.

Do you know how long Moses was in Egypt, 40 years? Do you know how long he was in the desert, 40 years? He was 80 years old before God ever used him to take the truth to Israel, to lead Israel out of Egypt.

He only served as the leader of Israel 40 years, only 1/3 of his life. Now, like today, if he'd lived to be 60; he wouldn't have gone into the ministry until he was 40 years old. But now, we've got to get it to starting gate before we are ready to run, before we ever have a message, before we ever have anything to say. We've just got to get out there and run.

But God prepares His vessels. He keeps them in preparation, trial, suffering, and in the furnace of affliction. After a while He gets all the rough edges off and gets them ready to use them.

Fifthly: Faith is certain!

Abraham started up that mountain with Isaac and the servants were down here with the animals and Abraham said: *"You men stay here; I and the lad will go yonder and worship and then we will come back to you."*

Abraham didn't say, "The lad and I are going up and I'm leaving him and I'm coming back." He said, *"The lad and I are going up and we will come back."* Faith is certain. Abraham knew this; *"What God had promised, God would perform."*

And God promised him that this son would be his heir and that in Isaac shall his seed be called. And he knew that if he killed Isaac God would raise him from the dead. He was as certain of that as he was certain that God is God and that his name was Abraham. He said, *"We'll be back, we'll be back."*

He had already committed Isaac to death but he believed God would raise him from the dead. He was as certain of that as his name was Abraham. He said, *"You wait here and the lad and I will go yonder and worship and we'll be back."*

Sixthly: Saving faith's not ignorant; it's not blind faith!

I hear people talking about blind faith; faith isn't blind, faith sees and faith is informed. They started up that mountain and the lad, Isaac turned to his father and he said: *"Father; here is wood and here is the fire. Where's the lamb?"*

IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Now that boy knew something that a lot of folks today don't know. He knew that there's no approach to God without a sin-offering, without a sacrifice. He knew that there was no way for a sinner to worship God, to approach God, to commune with God without the shedding of blood, without a lamb being slain. Do you know that? Well, that's what he knew.

And then Abraham made a tremendous statement; he said, "*My son; God will provide himself a lamb.*" There are three things there and I will close. God provided the lamb and God provided it for Himself that His righteousness might be honored and His justice satisfied. And He provided Himself; He was the Lamb, that's right!

Christ came down here to earth and He is not only the Priest and God to whom the sacrifice is offered and the tabernacle in which it is offered and the mercy seat on which the blood is put. But Christ is the Lamb. "*Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.*"

Is my faith saving faith? I hope it is and I hope yours is. I trust it is!