

A CAREFUL LOOK AT SAVING FAITH

1 JOHN 5:13 • TV056B

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501
PH: 606-631-9053

1 John 5:13

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

I’ve been bringing some messages lately at our church on the subject: “A CAREFUL LOOK AT CERTAIN DOCTRINES.” I spoke recently on a careful look at predestination, a careful look at election, and a careful look at the Gospel.

Well, today I want to speak to you on this subject: **“A CAREFUL LOOK AT SAVING FAITH.”**

Now, in **1 John 5:13**; this is the Scripture that I have selected for my text, *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God.”*

Now my friend; the soul is the life of the body, you know that don’t you? You know that if the soul is not here that my body is lifeless and dead. If I have a heart attack right now and drop dead in front of this camera my soul will leave my body but my body will still be here, but it’ll be lifeless, it will be dead.

The soul is gone. The soul is the life of the body. Now the body may be present and the body may be visible but without the soul the body is dead. Now you know that.

All right; faith is the life of the soul. Now this is important; just as the soul is the life of the body, faith is the life of the soul. Now according to the Scriptures if I don’t have faith I’m

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spiritually dead. I may have a living soul; it lives physically but it's dead spiritually if I don't have faith.

If I don't have faith I'm without God, I'm without hope and I'm without Christ, and I'm without life for "*the just live by faith*". You see; the just live by faith. Christ dwells in us by faith. And without faith we are spiritually dead.

All right; now watch this, not only is faith the life of the soul but Christ is the life of faith. Now there are several kinds of faith. The Bible talks about mental faith. James says, "*You believe there's one God you do well. The devil believes and trembles.*" That kind of faith can't save.

And then there's what we call miracle faith. There were some people following Christ and they saw the miracles which He performed and said many believed on Him. He didn't commit himself to them because He knew what was in their hearts. He knew they were just attracted by those miracles, by those powerful signs.

And then some more folks followed Him because He fed them. And He turned and said to them: "*I know why you are following me; you are following me because you ate of the loaves and the fishes.*"

So, there are several kinds of faith. But saving faith has Christ as its life. Christ is the life of saving faith. "*To as many as received Him.*" Not to as many as received His miracles, but "*received Him.*" Not to as many as received His law, but "*Him.*"

"To as many as received (not His doctrine or His church) Him. To as many as received Him, to them gave He the power, (the right) to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

So, the soul is the life of the body. If I have a body without a soul I've got a worthless, dead, object.

Faith is the life of the soul and without faith my soul is dead. But Christ is the life of faith. And if I have not Christ I have not saving faith. I don't have the faith with which God is pleased if I don't have Christ.

Now Christ the Lord and all of His blessings and benefits are available to those who seek Him, to those who want Him. And you say, "Well preacher I'd like to have Christ."

All right; listen to the Scripture. All who want Him may have Him. All who seek Him shall find Him. The Scripture says, "*Seek the Lord; He'll be found. Seek Him with all your heart and He'll be found.*"

Psalm 145 says; "*The Lord is nigh unto them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He'll fulfill the desire of their hearts. He will also hear their cry and save them.*" Yes, Christ is preached in the Gospel. He is offered in the Gospel. He is presented in the Gospel.

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Now there are five things that I want you to see and I wish you would listen carefully to these, very carefully, don't leave me, and stay with me for the next few moments:

First of all: Christ is available to all who come to Him, to all who seek Him, to all who desire Him because Christ is presented in the Gospel sincerely.

The Scripture says, *"This is a faithful saying and is worthy of all acceptance."* This is a true saying; this is the Word of God. This is the promise of God. *"He hath spoken; shall He not fulfill it? He hath said and shall He not bring it to pass?"* This is God's Word. *"It's a faithful saying."* It's a sincere saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.

"Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come to the water. Come unto me. Buy wine and milk without money and without price. Come let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet; I'll make them as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool."

Christ said, *"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden; I'll give you rest."*

So, Christ is presented sincerely, faithfully in the Gospel. God almighty will keep His Word. He will keep His promise.

Secondly: In the Gospel Christ is not only presented sincerely but Christ is presented (and this is important) undivided, He's clothed with all of His offices; He's Prophet, Priest, and King.

Have you noticed through the Scriptures that He's referred to as the Lord Jesus Christ? When Paul said to the Philippian jailer, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;"* in that phrase are all of His offices. As *"Lord"* He is the King. As *"Jesus"* He is the Priest, and as *"Christ"* He is the Prophet. He is the Prophet, Priest, and King.

In all of His offices He's undivided. God will not suffer His Son's offices to be divided. He says, *"This is my beloved Son; you hear Him."*

He's our Prophet who reveals God. He is that Prophet of whom Moses wrote. Paul said, *"There's one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* He is our High Priest, *"Seeing we have a high priest over the House of God; let us come boldly."*

And then He said: *"God hath given Him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that He's Lord to the glory of God the Father."*

Now listen to me, our Lord is presented sincerely in the Gospel. It is a faithful Word, a faithful saying. But He's presented in an undivided fashion. And God will not suffer the offices of His Son to be divided and He will not suffer you to divide them either.

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Now I know there are some people who want His pardon but who reject His government. And there are some people who want His teachings and who refuse His atonement. And there are some people who want His crown but not His cross.

And there are some people who want His sacrifice but not His sovereignty. But you cannot have a divided Christ. He is preached in the Gospel in all of His offices. He is the Lord Jesus Christ. And you cannot have the Teacher without His teachings.

Somebody said; “Well Jesus Christ was a good man. Jesus Christ was a good preacher. Jesus Christ’s principles and rules and laws are good but I don’t believe in the cross. I don’t believe in substitution. I don’t believe in the blood atonement. I can’t have it.”

He’s the Lord Jesus Christ. He’s not just Jesus. He’s not Jesus only. He’s not just the Christ; He’s the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Prophet who came in the flesh to reveal God. He is the Priest who went to the cross and not only presented the atonement but was the atonement.

And He is the Lord who rose triumphantly, victoriously, over all His enemies and now reigns and rules, who said, *“All authority is given unto me in heaven and earth. I have all power over all flesh that I should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given me.”*

You cannot divide Him and you cannot have a Saviour without His sovereignty. And you cannot have His pardon without His government. And you cannot have His teachings without His atonement. He will not be divided.

He said, *“You call me Lord with your lips but your hearts are far from me. And God looketh not on the outward countenance; God looks on the heart.”*

All right; now listen, in the Gospel Christ, the saving Redeemer, the sinner’s Friend, the only hope that we have is presented sincerely and faithfully. God does not offer Christ with His hand behind his back.

It’s a generous, gracious, merciful, presentation, an invitation. But He presents the whole Christ, the complete Christ, and the undivided Christ, the Prophet, Priest, and King.

Thirdly: And He presents Him exclusively!

What do you mean by that preacher? I mean this; Christ is the only Saviour. He’s not one of many Saviours. We’re not all going to the same place traveling different roads; I’m sorry. The Scripture says; Christ Himself declared, *“I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.”*

The road to heaven are not the roads of the cross, works, the church, and something else. Christ said, *“I am the door. By me if any man enters in he shall be saved and go in and out in in find pasture. I am the water of life. I am the bread of life.”*

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It is the Gospel of Christ that we preach, not a Gospel of Christ. He's the only Saviour. To depend on Christ only, not partly on Christ; if this preacher today is resting for salvation partly on Christ and partly on my own works I've got one foot on a rock and one foot in quicksand.

And you know what that means. That means I'll be destroyed. I've got one foot on Christ. I've got another foot in the quicksand. My only righteousness is Christ, who is wisdom, redemption, and eternal life.

Listen to **Acts 4:12**: *“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”*

Listen to **1 Peter 1:18-20**: *“Brethren 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 as a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

Christ is presented in the Gospel exclusively. He's the only Saviour. He's the only foundation. He's the only refuge. He's the only hope.

Fourthly: This is good news. It's good news for the guilty. In the Gospel of Christ, He is presented freely.

Listen to **Romans 6:23**: *“The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life.”* Do you know what a gift is? Now, if you pay for something you buy it, don't you? If you work for something you earn it. But if someone out of his own good pleasure, out of his own grace, out of his own love for you comes to you and hands you a gift and says, “This is yours;” that's not a wage, that's a gift.

And that's what salvation in Christ is; it's free. The Scripture says, *“When they had nothing to pay, He freely forgave them.”* Listen to **Romans 4:5**: *“To him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness.”*

The believer, the true believer receives Christ with an empty hand. When someone brings you a gift, say for Christmas or a birthday, and hands you the gift, you don't insult that person by reaching in your pocket and pulling out money and handing it to him in return.

“Here, let me help you a little bit on that.” Well, you would insult that person. That's a gift and salvation is a gift.

**“In my hands no price I bring
Simply to the cross of Christ I cling
Could my tears forever flow?
These for sin could never atone
Christ must save and Christ alone.”**

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The believer receives Christ as a gift. He receives Christ with an empty hand. And He receives Christ as a bankrupt sinner.

Do you know how that old prodigal came home? That boy had been down there and wasted his substance and he was without any funds, he was without any possessions, he was without any food, he was without any friends, and he said: "I'm going home. Even the servants in my father's house fare better than I do."

And he came home. Do you know how he came? He came broke, hungry, bankrupt, and homesick. And everything his father gave him was a gift. And that's the way the sinner comes to Christ; it's freely given.

Fifthly: Christ is presented in the Gospel personally!

Now this is an important point and I want you to listen carefully. I'm trying to communicate with you. I'm not trying to entertain you; I'm trying to teach you. I want you to know Christ. I want you to know the Word of God. I want you to know the promises which God has for you.

We're not counting noses or numbers or heads. We're not counting decisions. We are not seeing how many decisions we can get; we're trying to bring men to a knowledge of Christ in their hearts.

Now listen to me, Christ is presented in the Gospel personally. Now this is where most folks miss the Gospel. This is where most people today miss the Gospel. They want to get a feeling. They want to get an experience but they miss the Gospel.

They want to get a blessing but they miss the Gospel because they miss this point right here. First, it's the person and then it's the provision. First, it's the person and then it's the privilege. First, it's the person and then it's the blessing.

God gave His Son for us and to us. And then with His Son, or as a consequence of the gift of His Son, He gives us all things in Christ. *"He that spared not His own Son how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?"*

The blessing comes with the person. The blessing doesn't precede the person it comes with the person. You receive Christ and when you receive Him you receive the blessing. Let's see if I can illustrate that:

Somebody says, "Well, show me Lord and I'll believe." You've got it backwards; you believe, God says, and I'll show you. You've got to have Christ before you can have the blessing. The blessing doesn't come before Christ, it comes with Christ.

For example; listen to this; a woman does not marry an inheritance, she marries a man. And when she marries him and takes his name and has him as her husband she gets the inheritance. Do you see?

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She marries the man and she receives him. She becomes one with him. She takes his name. And whatever he is, rich or poor, whatever he is, she has. Whatever he owns she's a part of it. She's an heir of his.

And that's the way it is with Christ. You don't get the blessing and then get the Son. You get the Son and with Him comes the blessing. I am in Christ, "*A joint heir with Christ.*"

But I've got to have Him first. I've got to believe on Him first. First, it's the Redeemer and then it's the redemption. First, it's the Son and then the inheritance. First, it's the cross and then the crown. First, it's the grace and then the glory. Let's don't be mistaken on this.

Don't miss the Gospel hanging on to religious tradition and religious custom. Saving faith is always a person. And when you have that person you have all that He brings with it. You have acceptance, you have forgiveness, and you have pardon. That's what the Scripture says.

In **Romans chapter 10**, these people were going about to establish their own righteousness and would not submit to the righteousness of Christ, they would not submit to Him.

Now I want to present to you in closing today five characteristics of saving faith. Now we've been talking about faith in Christ. Christ is presented in the Gospel. He's presented to us in the Word freely, personally, exclusively, and He's presented sincerely.

All right; what is this saving faith that lays hold upon this Christ of the Gospel? All right preacher, I've heard you and I believe it's all in Christ. But how do I lay hold on Christ? What is saving faith?

Well let me give you five characteristics:

First of all: Saving faith knows who Christ is!

That's right! Listen to Paul as he gives his testimony, "*I know whom I have believed.*" He didn't say, "I know what I believe." Too many of us are wrapped up in that today. "Well I'll tell you preacher what I believe."

Well now does it really matter? It does matter "*whom*" you believe. Salvation is a person; it's not a "what;" it's a He. It's in a person, Christ. "Well I tell you I know when I believed." No! I'm not interested a great deal in when you believed. I'm interested in whom you believe.

Do you see what I am saying? That's what Paul is saying. "*I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded He is able to keep me.*" Oh, I may have had a religious experience years ago and I know when I did this and I know when I did that and I know when I did the other, and not have salvation.

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Or “I know what I believe.” I’ve met some of the meanest people in the world and they are religious people. They’ve got all the orthodoxy, all the fundamentalism, and all the prejudice along with it, and all the tradition.

But I’ll tell you the sweetest people in the world are those who know a person, Jesus Christ. *“Eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.”*

Do you know who He is? He’s the Son of God. He’s very God of very God. He’s God who came down here in human flesh to represent you and me in the flesh and to obey the law and go to the cross and die for our sins.

Have you seen Him? Oh, I’m not talking about with these eyes. A blind person couldn’t be saved if he had to see Christ with these eyes. I’m talking about seeing Him with a heart of faith.

A lot of folks saw Him when He was here on this earth who didn’t believe on Him. But we see Him with eyes of faith, *“He that seeth the Son and believeth on Him hath eternal life.”*

And seeing is inseparably connected with believing; did you know that? It’s inseparably connected. You cannot trust an unrevealed Saviour. You cannot depend upon an unknown Christ. You cannot find refuge in an unknown hiding place. You’ve got to know Him.

And that’s the first thing about faith; it’s to know Christ. And our Lord said, *“Everyone that is taught of God and learned of the Father cometh to me.”* What does God teach us? Who Christ is and what He came to do and why He did it, *“That God might be just and justifier.”*

And where is He now, at the right hand of God? He’s coming back again. He’s the triumphant Saviour who reigns in the hearts of His people.

Secondly: The evidence of faith; faith knows Christ and faith rests completely on the Word of God.

Now you’ve got to hear me now; this is important; it’s impossible for the soul and the heart to receive and embrace what the mind does not know and understand to be sure and certain. That’s right! True faith rests upon a confidence in the Word of God.

Abraham believed God that he was able to do all that he said. That’s what the Scripture says. *“Abraham believed God.”* What did He believe, the Word of God? He had confidence in the Word of God.

And when the Word of God is questioned, when you put a question mark on the Word of God there goes your faith. Your faith shipwrecks. Faith is destroyed.

This is the way Satan came to Adam and Eve in the Garden. He put a question mark on God’s Word and when you put a question mark on God’s Word, goodbye faith because the foundation of faith’s the Word of God.

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When our Lord was on the Mount of Temptation and He was hungry 40 days without food and Satan came to Him and Satan tried Him and tempted Him and Satan said, “Make these stones into bread.” How did Christ deal with Satan’s trial and temptation?

He quoted the Scriptures. Our Lord Himself depended on the Word of God. He said to Satan, “*It is written man shall not live by bread alone.*”

And then Satan said to Him: “See the kingdoms of this world out there? I’ll give them to you if you’ll worship me.” How did Christ reply to that? He said: “*It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.*”

And then Satan said; “Well cast yourself off this pinnacle and people will believe on you. Cast yourself down. He’ll give His angels charge over you.” And Christ answered, “*It is written; thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*”

And my friend I’ll tell you this; if the Son of God Himself found as the foundation the Word of God to deal with trial and temptation with the prince of the darkness himself, if he found the Word of God to be a sufficient weapon; it would be a good thing for you to get a hold of it too, God’s Word, not your tradition, God’s Word, not your religious custom, God’s Word.

Thirdly: Saving faith embraces Christ with a sincere love!

In **1 Peter 2:7** the Scripture says, “*To you that believe He is precious.*” Christ is precious. Now, to some of you the walls of your church building are precious. Well they’re going to come down someday.

To some of you your denominations are precious. Well they’re going to go the route of all other denominations into heresy and apostasy someday if they haven’t already. To some of you, all your little ritualism’s and works are precious. To the believer He is precious.

And I’ll tell you when Christ becomes precious His Word becomes precious, His people become precious, His will becomes precious, and His purpose becomes precious. When Christ becomes precious we’re willing to forsake all and follow Him, a person.

When Christ becomes precious He is embraced with a sincere love and He becomes the altogether lovely one, the fairest among ten thousand, the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the valley, and we’ll never leave Him and we give up everything for Him.

And we say, “Blessed Lord all that I am and have and ever shall be is thine; take what you will. Use me for thy glory.”

Fourthly: And then saving faith is a choice of the will; that’s right! “*God makes His people willing.*” When Noah built that Ark, one day God said to him, “*Noah, come into the Ark.*” And Noah willingly went in.

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I know our Lord said to the unbelieving world; *“You will not come to me that you might have life.”* And He said; *“Jerusalem; how oft would I gather you to myself and you would not. He came unto His own and they would not have Him.”*

But believers have Him because He’s made them willing, He’s made them willing. He’s wooed them and drawn them:

**“Tis done, the great transaction’s done
I am my Lord’s and He is mine
He drew me and I followed on
Charmed to confess His voice divine.”**

We want Christ but we give Him the praise for making us want Christ and giving us the will and the desire, but we want Him if you’ll confess Him with your mouth and believe on Him with your heart and follow Him with your will and then praise Him for making you willing.

He gave us faith and then rewarded us for having it.

And last of all: Faith sees in the Gospel the wisdom of God!

Knowing my sin I see wisdom in God’s Covenant. Knowing His holiness I see wisdom in Christ’s life. Knowing the justice of God I see wisdom in the cross. And knowing my bent toward sin I see wisdom in effectual grace.

“The preaching of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness.” Oh I know that, *“But to you who are being saved it’s the wisdom and power of God.”* You see in it wisdom!