

Faith Is A Disturbing Thing

To Martin Luther goes the credit under God for rediscovering the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith.

Luther's emphasis upon faith as the only way to deliverance from sin gave a new impulse of life to the decadent Church and brought about the Reformation, that much is history.

But something has happened to the doctrine of justification by faith that Paul and Luther taught.

This change is elusive, but what has happened is very serious.

The whole spiritual revolution was so gradual and so innocent appearing that it has hardly been noticed.

The faith of Paul and Luther was a revolutionising thing.

It upset the whole life of an individual and made them into another person altogether. It lay hold of life and brought it under obedience to Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:3-4 [King James] *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*

We are baptised into death, by total immersion in the waters of baptism, symbolic of the grave.

Romans 6:5-6 [King James] *“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”*

The death of our old way of living, subject to sin, was also crucified, a painful and long process that ends in death.

Matthew 16:24-25 [King James] *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”*

Faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour is a total loss of our own life to one that is dedicated to serving Him.

Taking up our cross indicates that there is **no** turning back.

Luke 9:59-62 [King James] *“And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*

All these people, who were **not** fit to enter into the Kingdom [created family] of God, either put their lives first before trusting in Jesus Christ or sought to delay the decision.

Faith now means no more than a massive moral acquiescence to the Word of God, the Christian Bible, and the cross of Jesus Christ.

The general effect is similar to what we feel after a visit to a doctor and being told that the fears we had entertained about our physical health were unfounded, we just needed a good rest.

Such a faith as this does **not** disturb people, it comforts them. Their ego is washed, their self-confidence is rescued from discouragement.

This is very different to the encounter that Jacob had with the Creator God.

Genesis 32:24-28 [NIV] *“So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, ‘Let me go, for it is daybreak.’ But Jacob replied, ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me.’ The man asked him, ‘What is your name?’ ‘Jacob,’ he answered. Then the man said, ‘Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.’”*

Certain things happened to Jacob that happens when we come “*face to face*” with the Creator God and have our true character exposed as a sinner. Jacob, an ambitious deceiver, became Israel meaning one who had striven with God and prevailed, but he spent the rest of his life with a constant reminder. [Genesis 32:30-31]

True faith is not a “one off” but a total change of lifestyle.

Faith in Jesus Christ, gives us a new name, Christian, which means “*a little Christ.*”

Each generation of Christians must hear again the doctrine of the disturbing quality of true faith.

People must be told that the Christian religion is **not** something they can trifle with.

The faith in Jesus Christ will command or it will have nothing to do with a person.

The power of such true faith will **not** reach any person who is secretly keeping an “*escape route open*” in case things get too rough for them.

The only person who can be sure that they have true Biblical faith is one who has put themselves in a position where they cannot go back to their old way of life.

John 6:66-68 [King James] *“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.”*

True faith is the result of an everlasting and irrevocable commitment to Jesus Christ, however strongly they are tempted by adverse conditions and persecution they will always respond as Peter did.

To many Christians, Jesus Christ is little more than an idea, or at least an ideal.

Millions of professed believers talk as if Jesus Christ was real yet live as if He was **not**.

We can **only** prove our faith by our commitment to Jesus Christ and in **no** other way.

Many professed Christians have become extremely skilled in arranging their lives so as to admit the truth of Christianity without being embarrassed by its implications. We can easily arrange things so that we can get on well enough without divine aid, while at the same time ostensibly seeking it. We boast of our faith in Jesus Christ and are careful that we never get caught **depending** on Him.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 [King James] *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”*

We all need to know this fact, for the Creator God is well aware of this proclivity to be seduced by our own nature. [**Psalms 139:1-4**]

True faith in Jesus Christ knows only one way and gladly allows itself to be stripped of any second way or any makeshift substitutes. True faith is either Jesus Christ or total failure.

John 15:1-5 [King James] *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”*

A continuing faith in Jesus Christ is the only way we can produce the “fruits” of the Holy Spirit in our lives [Galatians 5:22-23], which are the characteristics of our Creator God, Jesus Christ.

John 14:15-18 [King James] *“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”*

Jesus Christ will never leave us as long as we have an active presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

[Please download and study the articles on the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives under ‘Holy Spirit’]

Every Christian must be prepared to trust, have faith in, Jesus Christ now, a complete trust.

The time is coming to every human being when we will have nothing but God.

Health and wealth, friends and any hiding places will be swept away and we will stand before God on that judgement day with **only** our faith in Jesus Christ as our defence.

To the person with only pseudo faith that will be a terrifying situation.

But to the person with real committed faith it will be a time of great joy.

It would be a tragedy indeed to come to a place when we nothing other than our faith in Jesus Christ and find that we had **not** really been trusting Jesus Christ during the days of our earthly sojourn.

Romans 8:28-39 [NIV] *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died, more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any*

powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

When we trust, have complete active faith in our Saviour and Lord, we can claim this wonderful promise.

For every Christian time is running out, so we need to ensure we have true faith, total trust in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Psalms 90:5-17 [NIV] *“You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning, though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered. We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan. The length of our days is seventy years, or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due to you. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Relent, O LORD! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants. Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble. May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendour to their children. May the favour of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us, yes, establish the work of our hands.”*

Keep this always in mind.