

Our Faith May Be The Death Of Us!

Ephesians 2:8 [New King James] *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,”*

In other words, without faith we will **not** be saved from eternal death.

Human reasoning is **not** true Godly saving faith.

So what is true faith?

Where does it come from?

How do we get faith, or can we indeed “get” faith?

Many of us lack the faith to receive answers to our prayers.

We lack the faith to free our minds from the fears and worries of day-to-day life.

Many of us lack the faith to be healed, [**James 5:14-15**].

Faith is an indispensable element in the Christian life, it is like glue, holding everything else together.

If our faith does not move us to keep the Creator God’s laws in all their ramifications, then our faith will be the death of us.

James 2:26 [New King James] *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”*

Faith must be coupled with actions or deeds.

Inactive, static faith is **not** pleasing to the Creator God, it leads ultimately to death, eternal death.

What is faith?

Hebrews 11:1 [New King James] *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*

We receive physical information through the five senses but faith does **not** come to us this way.

Faith has nothing to do with the physical world [“not seen”], it is a spiritual thing.

Faith in the Creator God is the belief that He will do what He said He will do, He will keep His word.

Faith is believing that God’s Word, as revealed in the Christian Bible, is true.

Where does faith come from?

Can we generate faith ourselves?

Ephesians 2:8 [New King James] *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,”*

Not only does faith in the grace of God, that is the mercy He has extended to us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, bring to us salvation from deserved eternal death, [**Romans 3:23**] faith is a gift from the Creator God.

We receive it through the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit as we allow Him to direct our lives and create in us the “fruits” of the Holy Spirit which list the very characteristics of the Creator God, [**Galatians 5:22-25**].

One of those fruits is “faithfulness” that is being full of faith, the Greek word “pistis” meaning conviction.

Romans 10:17 [New King James] *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

We receive faith partly by reading and studying God’s Word, the Christian Bible, as the Holy Spirit opens it up to us, [**John 16:13; John 14:26**].

To receive the gift of faith, we need to repent of past sins, pray to the Creator God and so have a close, obedient relationship with Him.

This is a growing situation, [**2 Peter 3:18**] with the ultimate goal of a complete sacrifice of our whole body, mind and spirit to the Creator.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

The Greek word translated “bodies” is “soma” which means the whole life force, body, mind and human spirit, [**Job 32:8**].

When we sacrifice our will in this way, seeking only to fulfil the Creator God’s will, He will accept it as an act of worship.

Romans 12:2 [NIV] *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

The Holy Spirit will then begin to re-educate our minds.

Jesus Christ had tremendous faith in God the Father and relied on Him completely, [**John 5:30**] believing in Him implicitly.

We need the kind of faith that Jesus Christ as a physical being had.

Galatians 2:16 [King James] *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”*

This statement shows that the faith that the Creator God will give us through the Holy Spirit will be the faith “of” Jesus Christ.

We have to ask the question about our faith –

Is it a faith from God through the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

Is it then the very same faith that Jesus Christ had when He was the Son of Man?

To help us understand real Christ-like faith more fully, let us study one of the greatest examples of faith as recorded in God’s Word the Christian Bible.

It is an example of faith that even Jesus Christ marvelled at.

Luke 7:2-5 [New King James] *“And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, ‘for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue.’”*

This shows how the centurion’s faith was translated into love. He loved his neighbours and they loved him.

The fact that the centurion’s servant [Greek word “*dōulōs*” meaning a bond slave with **no** personal “rights” only responsibilities to his master] was dear to him [Greek word “*ēntimōs*” meaning precious to him] was very unusual, for in those days slaves were looked on as just property to be used and sold at will.

The fact that the centurion had given the Jews money to build a synagogue, a place where they could worship the Creator God, was also very unusual.

The normal relationship between the Romans and the Jews, a people subject to Rome, were never very good.

Unfortunately too few of us show this amount of concern for our neighbours as was shown by this centurion.

James 2:8 [New King James] *“If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself,’ you do well;”*

The centurion’s concern was based on this royal law.

The centurion represented something hateful to the Jews of his day, the government of Rome and a harsh occupation of its army.

The centurion was able to overcome this by his love for his neighbours, the Jews.

Jesus Christ knew all these things and measured the love the centurion showed by the high regard the Jews had for him in return.

The centurion’s love was just one element of his faith because as we see, [**James 2:20**] faith is dead without works.

The centurion’s “work” in this case was loving his neighbour, as Jesus Christ admonished us to do, [**Luke 10:25-27**].

The next event in this story shows that the centurion’s faith manifested itself in another important way, humility.

Luke 7:6-8 [New King James] *“Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, ‘Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, “Go,” and he goes; and to another, “Come,” and he comes; and to my servant, “Do this,” and he does it.’”*

Jesus Christ had already decided to go with the elders to see the centurion and his slave, but before He could reach the centurion’s house, friends of the centurion came to Jesus Christ with another message that showed the humility and very strong faith of the centurion.

This is a tremendous example of the centurion's perspective of himself, even though the elders said he was worthy.

Though he was a centurion, a man of high rank and office, accustomed to being shown honour, he did **not** have an inflated opinion of himself.

The centurion knew that he didn't deserve anything, not even considering himself worthy to speak to Jesus Christ personally, but instead cast himself before Jesus Christ through the messengers, in meekness and humility.

The centurion's faith reaches a crescendo with the words "*but say the word and my servant will be healed,*" this gives us a rare and valuable example of what saving faith is.

The centurion obviously knew that the very forces of the universe were under Jesus Christ's control, [verse 8].

What better man to show us what obedience and government means than a military man?

Those of us who have been in the armed forces know that instant obedience to those in authority over us can be the difference between life and death.

The centurion understood that Jesus Christ was under the authority of God the Father, [Luke 14:28] under God's government, but also that Jesus Christ had at his command all the power of the universe that He had created, [John 1:1-3, 14] that included life, [John 10:28].

Luke 7:9 [New King James] "*When Jesus heard these things, He marvelled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, 'I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!'*"

In these few words we get a glimpse into the very mind of God.

Jesus Christ, called Immanuel or God with us, [Matthew 1:23] reveals what He thought about this man's faith.

Jesus Christ marvelled at this centurion's faith.

This is a lesson for us today.

Our concept of faith may be based on hope or trust, but Jesus Christ saw the centurion's faith was also expressed in love, humility and the understanding of government through obedience to the authority of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2 [NIV] "*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*"

The "*cloud of witnesses*" are those men and women of faith who are listed, in **chapter 11**, their faithful lives are great examples for us to follow, as they all looked to faith in God to empower their lives.

We all need to allow Jesus Christ, through the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to be the author and perfecter of our faith, which is the very faith "*of*" Jesus Christ in us, [Galatians 2:16].