

# Faith

## *The Scripture:*

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, {2} through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God

(Romans 5:1-2).

We live by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith" (Galatians 3:11).

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

## *The thought:*

When we start talking about faith, we encounter a great mystery. Jesus' references to moving mountains and trees into the sea seem to border on magic. Even the classic Biblical definition -- "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1) -- seems mysterious.

Faith is not a power that we possess in smaller or greater degrees. It is not a magical ability that we can conjure up to do great things even for God. Ephesians 2:8 makes it clear that faith is a gift. Yet it may involve God's power working through us as we make choices to walk in God's way. Faith includes dimensions of reason, emotion, will, and also action. Each of these aspects of human experience has a part to play in the proper exercise of faith.

- Reason provides us with the content of our prior experience. What has happened to us in the past? What has happened to others in their past? What does the Bible tell about the experience of the people of God?
- Emotion provides us with the feelings that we have toward those past faith experiences. Emotion may describe the pain that we knew as we waited for God's answer. We are also reminded of the positive emotion that we felt when we came to understand and appreciate God's action on our behalf.

- Will is the strength of purpose based on reason and emotion that we can bring to bear upon a new situation as we get ready to act in faith.
- Action is the reaching out in faith to grasp God's purpose in a particular circumstance.

Having faith is indeed knowing God and leaning upon his broad promises and also believing in Jesus' work on the cross on our behalf.

***The song:***

*My faith has found a resting place,  
Not in device or creed;  
I trust the ever living One,  
His wounds for me shall plead.*

*I need no other argument,  
I need no other plea,  
It is enough that Jesus died,  
And that He died for me.*

*Enough for me that Jesus saves,  
This ends my fear and doubt;  
A sinful soul I come to Him,  
He'll never cast me out.*

*--Eliza E. Hewitt (1891)*

***The question:***

How is faith appropriated and demonstrated in my daily life? How is faith grasped and shown in my life?

***The experience:***

It seems to me that faith in practice has to do with recognizing that I do not control very much. Sometimes I wonder whether I control anything. In a Heidi-style story I watched some years ago, some girls are lost on the mountain side in the snow. One of the concerned Swiss women says to Heidi's grandfather, "we are losing control." He responds with the insightful: "We were never in control."

Faith is about having confidence in God whatever happens to us and wherever we find ourselves. Confidence really means "faith with." So we could say that we need to "confide" in God—"have faith with" God.

As the chorus says "God is still on the throne and he will remember his own." So having faith is the belief that everything about our future is in the hands of God. This idea is certainly not too distant from the concept of hope.

I have faith in God. I have faith in Jesus. This is a personal relationship. While it includes ideas and concepts, it is at base a relationship. I have faith in Jesus and that he has redeemed me from sin and from separation from him. He loves me and has been doing so before I ever knew or thought about him. As John writes: "We love because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19 NIV) My faith is confiding in the fact of his love for me and in the fact that he is reaching out to help and to guide me every day.