

Sunday 5th of March 2015.

What is not of faith is sin (Pt 5 Faith).

Introduction.

This is our fifth study on the topic of faith in the Scriptures.

Previous points covered in Pt 4.

1. Believers today receive the Holy Spirit of God by faith.
2. The laws of faith exclude boasting.
3. A man's faith is considered dead by his brethren if it is without works.

Three points are established from the Scriptures for this study.

1. God gives each man in the body of Christ a different measure of faith.
2. The faith that a believer has, he is to have it to himself before God.
3. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Our three points in more detail.

1. God gives to each man in the body of Christ a different measure of faith.

Supporting Verse.

Rom.12: 3 "For I say...to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to...but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Context and meaning of our verse.

\* The book of Romans is written to the Gentile church and in chapter 12 Paul begins with beseeching the brethren to present their "bodies a living sacrifice". And in verse 2 "be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Then we have our verse, where Paul encourages believers to not think too highly of themselves, "but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Why?

\* Verse four answers the question: Because "we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office;" (verse 5) "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given us, according to the proportion of faith;" Verse 7 "Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching." So every man is dealt a measure of faith to complement the gifts He gives.

Other Scriptural support.

Rom.12: 6.

Scriptural examples.

\* Acts 19: 11 & 12 "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul".

Application of our verse today.

\* Given that Paul is writing to the Gentile church his words of encouragement are applicable to us today. We (believers in the body of Christ) have each been dealt a measure of faith to complement our gifts, whether ministering, teaching, exhortation, giving, and those that show mercy (Rom.12: 6-9). Each are given a measure of faith to exercise their gifts in the body of Christ today.

Illustration.

\* One man goes to a Bible-believing church each Sunday and has done so for fifteen years, he loves the Lord, and feels called to help in the church in the area of giving and administration. He proclaims Christ to his family, friends and those to whom the Lord sends him. A second man feels called to go to Iran (where 98% of the ethnic population is Muslim), learn the language, and preach, with the aim of setting up a church.

Learning from our Illustration.

\* Which man will need more faith, which man will need to trust God more each day, each second of each day? Clearly the man going to Iran. And **IF** the Lord is sending him, then the Scriptures say

that the Lord will give him the faith (and grace – Rom.12: 6 & Eph.4: 7) he needs for the role he is given in the body, because different roles in the body require varying capacities of trusting God.

Challenge & or encouragement.

\* Know that if whatever part you play in the body, whatever role God gives you, then IF He gives it to you, then He will also give you the measure of faith you need. Let us all, regardless of our task always remember that, when you see your brother dealing with more or less complex issues than you, remember that if he is called of God, then the Lord will give him the faith he needs to do the task.

## 2. The faith that a believer has, he is to have it to himself before God.

Supporting Verse

Rom.14: 22 “Hast thou faith? have [it] to thyself before God. Happy [is] he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.”

Context and meaning of our verse.

\* Verse 1 begins “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations” (disputes about those things which are doubtful, like smoking), and verse 2 provides an example of him that is weak in the faith – he eats herbs, whereas other believers eat anything. Verse 14, “there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.” Verse 15 “Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.” Verse 16 “Let not then thy good be evil spoken of.” Verse 19 “follow after things...wherewith one may edify another.” Verse 21 “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (linking us back to verse 2). Next is our verse: “Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” By inference; where we allow something that may cause another brother to sin.

\* What does it mean, “Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God”?

As we discovered in our first point: God has given every man a different measure of faith (Rom.12: 3), so that measure of faith each believer is given, he is to have it between himself and God.

Application of our verse today.

\* Our verse is from Paul’s letter to the Gentile church in Rome and is therefore applicable to the church today. For example: if you have faith to drink a little wine for your stomach’s sake (1Tim.5: 23), then have that faith to yourself, in case you condemn yourself by allowing something that may cause your brother to sin.

Illustration.

\* Imagine the faith that Martin Luther would have needed to stand up against the mighty Roman Catholic religion of his day, and post his 95 Theses at Wittenberg. Imagine if realising that that is what he was called to do, and that **God** had given him the faith he needed to do the task, he then went about telling others prior to posting his Thesis.

Learning from our Illustration.

\* One sure way of letting the enemy chip away at what God has given us is for us to brag or boast about what we have the faith to do in Christ. And isn’t it interesting that in our previous study on this topic we wrote that “the laws of faith exclude boasting”.

Challenge & or encouragement.

\* If **God** gives you the task to preach on the street, or work with the homeless, or do the administration functions, or give, then if you go around telling everyone what you do, and how God has given you faith to give half of your income to the work, then be sure that tribulation will follow your boasting. Because when God gives us the faith to do what He wants, then He expects you not to share it, or boast of it to others, but to have it between ourselves and Him. For those who are young in the faith and are still finding out what their role is in the body, let us pray for them that once they know, they would discuss it with someone that can mentor, teach and encourage them to work away quietly at the task, and if God is calling them to trust him in a way that others are not, then may they do so between themselves and God. The Lord then gets all the

glory, and not man, for it is **God** that gives the gifts, and **God** that gives us the faith to work in those gifts, so we have nothing in ourselves to glory in. So let us have our faith between ourselves and God.

### 3. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

#### Supporting Verse

Rom.14: 23 "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because [he eateth] not of faith: for whatsoever [is] not of faith is sin."

#### Context and meaning of our verse.

\* The context is the same as our previous point because our verse follows verse 22 covered in point 2. And verse 22 says "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." Which according to the preceding verse is eating that which a weaker brother considers to be sinful (like a weaker brother believes it to be sinful to eat pork), hence if another brother says he **can** eat pork, then he should have his faith to himself. Now our verse: "He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Who is he that doubteth? He that does not think it is good to eat, who does not have the faith to see that it is good today to eat pork, he is damned if he eats because he eateth not of faith. Confirmation of this is: what is not of faith is sin. Hence, whatsoever we do that is not of faith is sin.

#### Scriptural examples.

\* When David desired to number Israel, he sinned because he did it not in faith (2Sam24: 3).

#### Application of verse today.

\* We have already established that the book of Romans is written to the Gentile church and so our point is applicable to the church today: whatsoever we do that is not of faith is sin. And it is no surprise therefore that a non-believer can only sin every day against Lord because he has **no** faith.

#### Illustration.

\* In our first point we indicated that God gives a man faith according to the measure he needs for the task that he is given. Now, when Karen and I were in our final year at BCNZ when everyone was deciding what they were going to do next, there were many of our peers who went on to do specific ministry training under one of the various denominations. There was this brother that I had studied with over several years and his name was Peter, and he told me that he wanted to go into the Methodist ministry training programme because his wife wanted to be the wife of a minister.

#### Learning from our Illustration.

\* When we do a work for the Lord because **we** want to do it, then God is not giving us the faith to do it, and we will struggle. And more importantly: we are not doing the work in faith, and so it is sin. Hence, if any man thinks himself to be something, and puts himself in a place of authority because that is where he wants to be, then that is sin.

#### Challenge & or encouragement.

\* The head of the body of Christ chooses which members will be arms and which will be legs, and toes etc (metaphorically speaking). Whatever your task, whatever you do every day, do it trusting God, that it is what He wants you to do. Get into the habit of asking Him each day, listening to Him each day, trusting Him each day, and obeying Him each day. And remember that when what we do is what our heart desires, we do not trust the Lord in doing the task, and what we are doing is sin. For what is not of faith is sin.

#### Summary of our three points.

1. God gives each man in the body of Christ a different measure of faith
2. The faith that a believer has, he is to have it to himself before God.
3. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.