

19th of April 2015

Be aware of the faith of your brethren (Pt 6 Faith).

Introduction.

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

Previous points covered in Pt 5.

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.

Three points are established from the Scriptures for this study.

1. Faith comes by hearing the word of God that is preached.
2. When your brother is going through tribulation check on his faith.
3. Ask God what we can do to perfect that which is lacking in our brother's faith.

1. Faith comes by hearing the word of God that is preached.

Supporting Verse

Rom.10: 14 & 17 "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Paul begins the chapter noting that it is his heart's "desire and prayer to God" for Israel to be saved (verse 1). Then he points out that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness" (verse 4). The righteousness of the law was obedience, whereas the righteousness of faith is seen in the words that we preach (verse 8): "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shall be saved" (verse 9), and verse 13 completes what is required for a man to have righteousness by faith: "for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." How shall men call on the name of him "in whom they have not believed?...and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Verse 14). Then after Paul expounds the virtue of preaching, and that not all will obey the gospel that is preached (verses 15 & 16), he says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Verse 17). And so **faith** comes by hearing the word of **God** that is **preached**.

Other scriptural support.

Gal.3: 2, 5.

Application of our verse today.

* Paul is writing an epistle to the Gentile church in Rome, and hence this point is applicable to us today. Faith comes to a man by hearing the word of God, specifically the gospel that Paul preached. He hears the gospel and believes it in his heart, unto righteousness, and he calls on the name of the Lord.

Illustration.

* If a man preaches the gospel of the kingdom of heaven (as Jesus preached – Matt.4: 23), or the gospel that Abraham preached (Gal.3: 8 – "In thee shall all nations be blessed"), can he be saved today by hearing those words?

* Roman Catholics, Jehovah Witness and Mormons who I meet on the street all say that they believe the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus preached.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Are these three religious groups preaching the gospel for today? Let us turn to Paul's writing to the church again, but this time in his letter to the Galatians chapter 1: 8 & 9, if a man "preach any other gospel...than that which we have preached...let him be accursed." Paul is clear on his gospel, it is the gospel of the grace of God, otherwise known as the gospel of Christ crucified (1Cor.1: 23), which Abraham did **not** preach, which the Lord Jesus Christ did **not** preach, and neither did Peter.

The traditional churches today have little faith because they have abandoned God's words and the majority preach **another** gospel (and are therefore accursed) to that which Paul preached.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* First, get a copy of God's word, then if you feel called to preach the gospel, then preach the gospel for **today**, so that when a lost man hears the words of the gospel (how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was raised from the dead after three days – 1Cor. 15: 3 & 4), they have an opportunity to hear, have faith and be saved. For faith cometh by hearing the word of God that is preached. Let us preach Christ crucified to the lost, that faith may come by the hearing of the word of God, and never deviate from that.

2. When your brother is going through tribulation check on his faith.

Supporting Verse.

1Thes.3: 5 "For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Paul begins chapter three by letting the church at Thessalonica know that he sent Timothy to establish and to comfort them in their faith (verse 2), "That no man should be moved by these afflictions" (verse 3 & 4). Hence, the believers were suffering tribulations, and when we consider the wider context of the book we see that in 1Thes.2: 14 Paul remembered their suffering at the hand of their "own countrymen". They were suffering at the hands of the churches of God in Judea, the Jews who were "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved" (1Thes.2: 16). So back to 1Thes.3: 5, "when I could no longer forbear" (endure patiently) he sent to know their faith (how were they holding up).

* Paul went through much tribulation at the hands of other brethren, the Jews, and much more (2Cor.11: 24 – 27). He warned the brethren that they too would suffer tribulation (verse 4) because of the tempter (Satan). Therefore, when another brother suffered at the hand of the Jews he felt empathy with them, and wrote to encourage them, and to check on their faith.

Application of our verse today.

* Paul is writing to the Gentile church at Thessalonica and therefore we can apply this verse to us today.

Illustration.

* Take a moment to write down the names two brothers or sisters in the Lord that you pray for each day, and beside their names identify (i) what tribulations or sufferings they have gone through that you have been aware of over the past 12 months, and (ii) those you have personally checked up on. Has there come a time when you could no longer "forbear" and so you went to visit them to know their "faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you" (verse 5)?

Learning from our Illustration.

* Know what your brethren are going through, what they are suffering (because if they are in the battle, then they will suffer, the tempter will tempt them), how their faith is holding up, and "comfort" them in their tribulation. And in today's technological age there is no excuse for not making a quick phone call, email, text, or letter, with the aim to check on their faith.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* One thing that is as certain as death and taxes for a believer in the battle is, he will suffer tribulation, his faith will be tested, tried and he will suffer at the hands of our adversary (1Thes.3: 4). So, just as we should all make provision to pay our taxes, prepare to meet our God, let us also prayerfully prepare to check our brethren's faith. And for those we know who are going through tribulation, ask the Lord for a reminder in the busyness of your day to send them a text, drop them a phone call, write an email or letter, and comfort them concerning their faith in Christ. In that way we will be active in checking on our brethren's faith when God knows they need it the most.

3. Ask God what we can do to perfect that which is lacking in our brother's faith.

Supporting Verse.

1Thes.3: 10 "Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?"

Context and meaning of our verse.

* The context is the same as our previous point, because we are in the same chapter. So let us pick up from the verse in our previous point – "I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain." Then verse 6 where Paul reports that Timothy had brought good tidings of their faith. Verse 7 therefore they were comforted over them at Thessalonica for all their afflictions and distress by their faith. In our verse Paul wrote that they pray night and day, that they might see them in person, and "might perfect that which is lacking in their faith." Paul concludes the chapter with a note of the purpose for that which he has spoken of before – "To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness, before God, even the Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 13).

* So Paul's encouragement to the church was to perfect that which was lacking in their faith, to establish the hearts of his brethren, unblameable in holiness at the coming of the Lord.

Scriptural examples.

* Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos aside and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts18: 24–26). In doing so they sought to perfect that which was lacking in his faith.

Application of our verse today.

* This verse is applicable to us today, as was our previous point from verse 5 in the same chapter. And clearly there are those in the body who are sincere in their faith, those with sound faith, but there are others who depart from the faith (1Tim.4: 1), and we also see that when a man errs from the truth, he tries to overthrow the faith of others (2Tim.2: 18). Hence, there are those in the body of Christ whose faith is lacking.

Illustration.

* Let us take our application from our previous point a little further, where from the list of names you have established add any names of believers that are lacking in their faith, that have a deficit, that you can pray exceedingly for. Perhaps a Christian you know who is ignorant of the Authorised Bible being Holy Scripture. You could pray for them, that they would trust God, believe every promise of God in His word to preserve His words, and for them to desire only His perfect words.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Many in the traditional church say they believe God, they believe He sent His Son to die on the cross, yet they do not believe all of God's promises.

* They will have little faith (Matt.6: 30) because they have been fed by a preacher who does not believe God's promises and so does not believe the Authorised Bible is the perfect, pure, preserved word of God. Hence, they are ignorant of this truth. Therefore, they lack faith, because they do not believe all of God's promises.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Seeking to perfect that which is lacking in our brethren's faith is not a platform for us to boast of our faith, but rather that we may help our brethren to know and trust more perfectly their God and His promises, just as others have contributed to our faith. Let us pray exceedingly for those who do not believe **all** of God's promises, that God would give us wisdom and charity to show them from the Scriptures that the Lord has given us **His** words, they **are** perfect, and **He** has preserved them, and today those promises are fulfilled in the English text of the 1611 Authorised Bible. In doing so we have asked God what we can do to perfect that which is lacking in our brother's faith.

Summary of our three points.

1. Faith comes by hearing the word of God that is preached.
2. When your brother is going through tribulation check on his faith.
3. Ask God what we can do to perfect that which is lacking in our brother's faith.