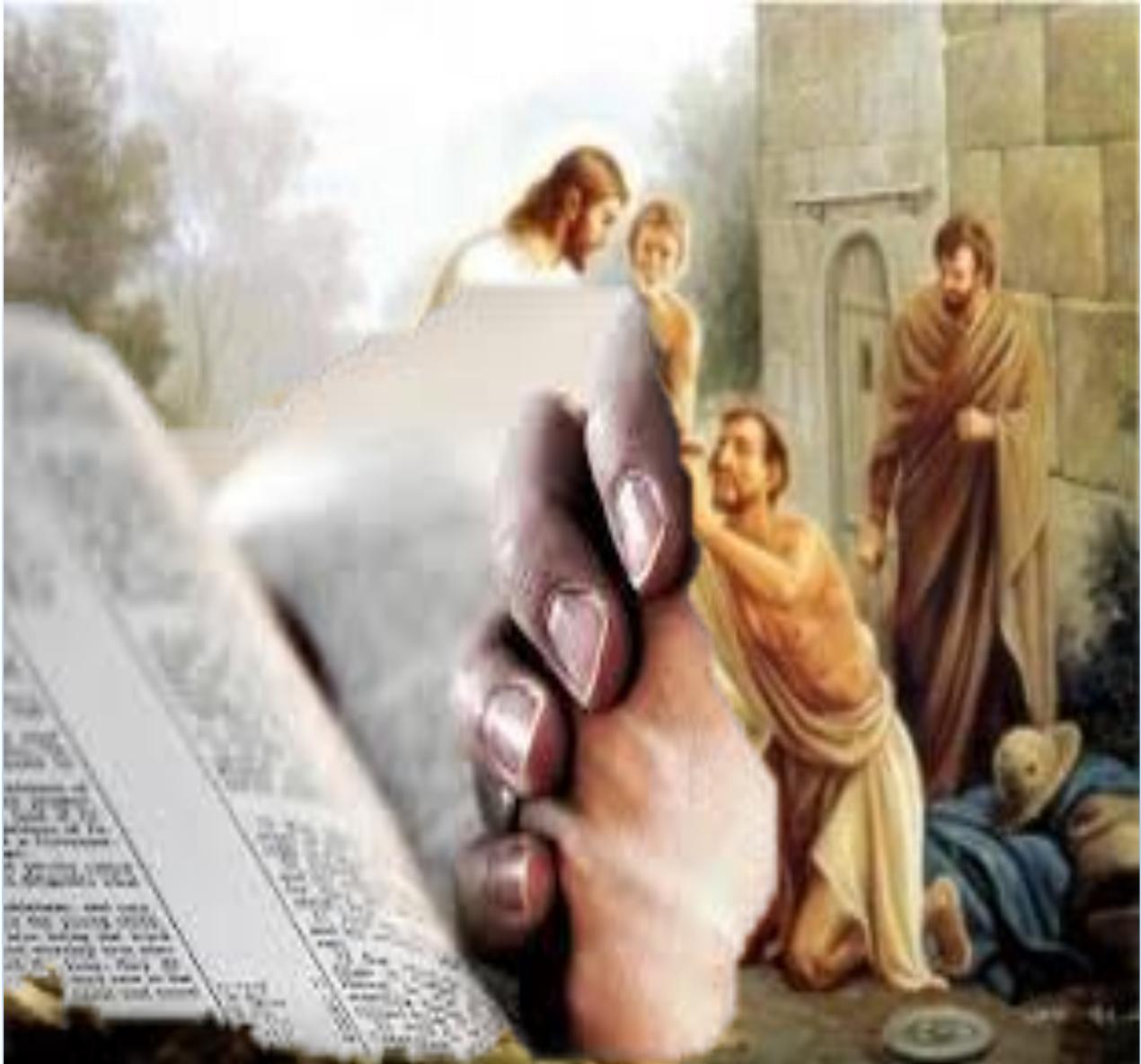


The Importance of Having a Correct Understanding of Faith



By Cynthia Lisa Audain

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Introduction:

The true meaning of faith and its connective doctrines have been perverted by many. Thus the doctrinal value of Faith has been duly underestimated.

Many have taken the word faith and have often used it to mean trusting, believing, assurance etc. They have often times, taken this secular meaning and applied it to scripture, instead of taking the meaning given in the Holy Scriptures and use it in the way that God intended for us to use it.

The Bible mentioned that we must 'live by Faith' so it is therefore important for us to have a correct understanding of this Faith in order for us to live by it.

We must therefore search the Scriptures and hold on to what the Bible teaches and not rely on traditional utterances to dictate its true meaning.

The Apostle John tells us that we gain the victory by faith. He puts it this way. ".....and this is the victory that overcometh the world even our FAITH" 1Jn 5:4

May this bible study be a blessing to all you have taken the time to study this important doctrine. Learning to live by, 'thus saith the Lord'.

Blessings to all.

The Importance of Having a Correct Understanding of Faith

1. Having an understanding of what Faith is, is crucial for our salvation and experience, for the just shall live by Faith. If we do not have a correct understanding of Faith, then how could we truly live by it. (Heb 10:38; Rom 1:16, 17; Hab 2:4).
2. So then what is Faith? The bible tells us that it is the revealed Truths of God's word given to you as our personal possession to live by (Heb 11:1-6; 1Tim 4:6; Rom 10:8).
3. Faith is not believing, as many teach, for the devil and his demons believe and yet do not have faith. They are not just before God and thus do not have faith to live by. The bible further tells us that what is not of faith is sin (Jam 2:19; Rom 14:23; Heb 10:6).
4. If faith is believing, and everyone could believe, then it would mean that all men have faith. But the Bible tells us in 1Thes 3:1, 2 **that all men DO NOT have faith**. The scripture says, "Finally brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith." Then it would mean that Faith has to be something that is outside of man. It must be given to man by God. God must give the man, that Faith.
5. God comes to dwell in us by the Spirit of Faith (or revealed truths) (Rom 8:9; 11Cor 4:13).
6. Faith communicates to us the Righteousness of God, or God Himself (Jer 23:5, 6; Rom 3:22; Phil 3:9).

7. Thus the Righteousness of God is communicated to us through faith and not by our works, be it mental or physical works. Therefore God alone gets the glory; there is no boasting (Rom 4:20; Rom 3:27; Eph 2:9).

8. We are told below about faith:

(a) Faith saves us (1Jn 5:4; Rom 3:22; Gal 2:16; Ph 3:9).

(b) It is impossible to please God without it (Heb 11:6).

(c) Our lack of believing does not make the faith void, thus showing that there is a distinction between faith and believing (Rom 3:3).



9. However, we must **therefore believe the faith**; believe in the Lord Jesus; trust in God. But the work of believing is not Faith (Jn 6:29; Jn 6:40; Jn 11:25, 26; Prov 3:5; Heb 2:13).

10. Since we are told that the 'just shall live by faith', faith to us must be a philosophy for us to live by it.

Therefore there are ten ways in which the Bible has shown faith to us and how we should value it.

a. **The Conquest View:** This view shows us how to use FAITH to conquer sins within and without. Before faith could work the victory in us it must be believed or accepted as Truth. 1Jn 5:1 tells us that '...whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ he is born of God and whosoever is born of God overcomes the world even by his faith (1Jn 5:1.4).

Therefore in order to overcome the world one must believe that Jesus is the Son of God. This faith is what will cause us to conquer.

- b. **Experiential View:** Faith must be our experience as an ideology. Our thoughts must be constantly upon the love of God, viewing and appreciating how God through His love, is delivering us from personal faults. This is why it is called **your faith** (Hab 2:4; Matt 9:22; Matt 8:6-10).
- c. **Practical View:** In order for faith to work, it must be accompanied by love. Faith must work in and for us, for it to truly be faith. Works without love are motivated or done due to selfishness in the heart and not for the Love of God and others. It is the love of an object, produced by faith that causes the very same faith to work. (1Cor 13:1, 2, 13; Gal 5:6; Jam 2:14-17; Matt 23:23; 1Jn 3:16-18).
- d. **Idealistic View:** Faith must be viewed as the standard of living. The just shall live by faith and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Therefore, faith being the revealed truths to your heart must determine everything; your thoughts, words and actions (Rom 1:17; Rom 14:23; Gal 2:20; Gal 3:2, 5).
- e. **Ideological View:** Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6). Therefore to please God we must have faith as an ideological in our hearts. The summaristic thought of God being God alone is what we must live by. This is the way we ought to think, having our thoughts centered upon God. Living for someone or something higher than ourselves (Acts 11:22, 23; Phil 2:5; Gal 2:20).
- f. **Dynamic View:** Faith is active in its nature. When placed within the heart of man, it acts as a revealer of sin and thus brings repentance to the heart of all those who believe the faith. The heart is then purified, justified, sanctified and given the promises by faith (Acts 15:9; Acts 26:18; Rom 3:28; Rom 5:1).

- g. **Revelatory View:** Faith is revealed in the scriptures as doctrines or the word of God. It is also expressed or explained as Christ Himself being the Word of Faith (Rom 1:5; Jn 1:1,2,14; Ep 4:5,13; Ph 1:27,28; 1Tim 3:9; Rom 16:26).
- h. **Communicant View:** It is faith – the word of God that transports righteousness to the heart of man for conviction, justification and sanctification (Rom 1:17; Rom 3:22; Ph 3:9). It is the container that holds within in Righteousness.
- i. **Identification View:** Faith points out those who are of Christ. (Acts 6:5; Gal 3:7). God has identified his people always as they who have the faith of Jesus Christ (Rev 14:12; Jam 2:5).
- j. **Demonstrative View:** Faith shows itself to be faith in the person's heart by the person's attitude or response to truths given. (Jam 2:18).
 - i. It produces humility (Matt 8:5-10; Lk 7:9; Lk 18:9-14).
 - ii. Success in all things (Matt 17:18-20; Lk 17:6; Mk 11:20-24).
 - iii. Victories (1Jn 5:5; Eph 6:16).
 - iv. Dependence upon God (Matt 9:20-22; Gen 22:8).

11. The Bible speaks of the Righteousness of God by Faith (Rom 3:22; Rom 4:11; Rom 9:30; Rom 10:6; Phil 3:9). So we get Righteousness by faith.

12. The bible also speaks of justified or justification by faith (Rom 3:28-30; Gal 2:16).

13. Now if justified or Righteousness by faith means justified by believing, justified by trusting, then we will be justified by our own mental acts. Therefore there will be no need of a Savior since we can save ourselves by our own works. In addition, that righteousness which is given to us, will be our own and considered as filthy rags (Isa 64:6).

14. So let us go into this a little deeper. Does the bible explain faith to be mere human ability, divine ability or both divine and human ability together? We therefore need to understand the proposition that goes with faith, justification and righteousness, in order to get a better understanding. Let us look at some texts:

(a) Rom 3:30 **by out (Eck)** of faith; **through (dia)** the faith.

(b) Rom 3:22, "the righteousness of God which is **through (dia)** the faith of Jesus Christ.

(c) Rom 3:28, speaks about justification **by** faith and Romans 4:11 says righteousness **of the** faith. So the Greek work 'eck' is used to mean out of faith, with regards to righteousness. It shows that faith cannot be believing because righteousness does not come out of believing or trusting.

15. As was explained above, faith is really the instrument that carries, contains God's Righteousness. This is not a human instrument, this is a divine instrument (Rom 9:30; Rom 10:6, 8; Phil 3:9).

16. There is a psychological impact of holding on to the concept that faith is believing. If after someone believes and there is no experience of overcoming sins or attaining to something that you think that you should have gotten by believing, the person then begins to:

(a) Doubt the effectiveness of the gospel.

(b) Backsliding takes place because victory or attainment is not achieved.

(c) One can also apostatize from religion all together and become atheistic or go to another religion that is akin to their faults.

(d) Some settle down to a lukewarm condition in an undevoted state doing nothing for the Lord.

(e) While some develop a theology that justifies sin, thinking that they are still saved.

17. Let us now examine in some details the term 'Righteousness by faith' and 'Justification by faith'.

(a) Righteousness is viewed as being two things in the Bible.

- i. God Himself (Jer 23:6, 7; Rom 2:21).
- ii. The Law of God (Ps 119:172; Rom 8:4; Rom 9:31, 32).

(b) Justification is process of God making someone righteous by the removal of the carnal mind and replacing it with the divine mind. This is an internal work of the heart (Rom 8:6, 7; Rom 5:1; Eke 36:26; Jer 7:19).

18. So Righteousness by Faith is faith (revealed truths) that carries Righteousness, God Himself. Thus giving us the Divine nature and causes us to keep the works of the law. So we are made righteous. (2Pet 1:4; Rom 3:22; Ps 40:10; Rom 7:14; Heb 10:16).

19. Justification by faith is the means whereby we are made subjectively righteous by the revealed truths of the plan of salvation by repentance and believing. It is a gift of Righteousness that is placed within the heart (1Cor 6:4-11; Tit 3:5-7).

20. It is also the gift of the Holy Spirit within (Gal 3:7-9, 14; Gal 4:6).

21. Martin Luther, through the working of the Holy Spirit, is who rediscovered the gospel of Justification by faith in 1517. He taught that justification is a subjective change. He refers to it as the making of someone righteous.

"Therefore as well as Abraham and the other fathers, as also we are made righteous by faith in Christ". Martin Luther – **A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians** pg. 233.

He also called it a new 'spiritual birth'

22. It is this truth that began the Protestant Reformation that caused a revival of true Christianity. Now the purest of this doctrine was then perverted by Phillip Melanchthon after Martin Luther's death.

"It was Melanchthon who made the great mistake of narrowing justification down to the declaration that sinners are righteous on account of the external merits of Christ, whereas Luther allegedly understood justification as a real transformation of person from the state of sinfulness to that of righteousness". Cal E Braaten, **Justification** pg 13.

23. As a result of this change, it gave the concept of Justification as an objective forensic concept, which did not exist before. And a further departing from the original concept was perpetuated by John Calvin.

24. After the true concept that justification is an inner work had been lost, it came back to Seventh Day Adventism by Jones and Waggoner in 1888.

"The great doctrine of justification by faith, so clearly taught by Luther, had been almost wholly lost sight of and the Romish principle of trusting in good works for salvation had taken its place. Whitefield and the Wesleys who were members of the established church, were sincere seekers for the favor of God and this they had been taught was to be secured by a virtuous life and an observance of the ordinance of religions." E. White, **The Great Controversy**, pg. 253.

25. The Seventh Day Adventist church got the correct understanding but it was rejected.

"The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Savior, the sacrifice for the sins of

the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the surety; it invited the people to receive the Righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts into me, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice and attended with the out pouring of His Spirit in a large measure." E. White, **Testimonies to Ministers**, pg. 91.92.

26. The year 1888 is of significant value to nominal SDA. For this was when God sort to revive the church out of a lukewarm state. But they rejected the message and thus the true meaning of Faith and its connective doctrines, such as justification by faith and righteousness by faith are also wrong.

Conclusion

May we hold on to the true meaning of faith and study the Holy Scriptures. In so doing, we will have a clear understanding of the plan of salvation, which is the Divine Character of Christ, which explains to us how God is saving us.

AMEN