

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK...
about
THE FAITH THAT SAVES

By Pete Hoge

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good (I Thessalonians 5:21)

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2.8-10)

Grace is favor not deserved. *Romans 5.8* describes it like this: “*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” At *Hebrews 11.1* the Bible defines faith: “*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see*”

The Bible speaks clearly about grace and faith. It shows a definite relationship between grace and faith; it pictures for us faith that cannot save and the faith that saves!

Little or weak faith (*Matthew 8.26; 14.21; 16.8*) avails not. Faith in the wrong things (*Jeremiah 17.5; I Timothy 6.17*) will not avail.

Without the grace of God there could be no justification, no redemption from the bondage of sin and no salvation for eternity. *Titus 2.11-12* states: For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. *It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age...*” God’s grace, revealed in His Word to all mankind, produces faith that will save. How does God’s grace produce faith toward salvation? By teaching! *The Word of His grace (Acts 20.32)*, which is also *The Word of the Kingdom (Matthew 4.18-23; Luke 8.15)* teaches us about God the Father, Christ the Son, Lord and Judge, and the Holy Spirit. It also teaches us about Satan. We learn therein about our human nature, temptation and our tendency toward sin. In the Bible we also learn of heaven, hell and the judgment. We also learn how to overcome temptation, live as we should and gain - without merit - the salvation of our souls for the eternal home in heaven; and we learn the brevity of life, which includes, of course, the brevity of opportunity.

Romans 3.22 points out “*even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.*”

Smith's Bible Dictionary pictures the righteous person as one who pursues the right course in life, and refers to *Exodus 9.27*, where Pharaoh is reported to have said to Moses and Aaron that he (Pharaoh) had sinned, whereas *the Lord is righteous*. The word **pursues** is a word indicating action. The words, **right course** refer to the course God has, in His Word, ordained for man to follow, for He is the righteous God!

The grace of God, through the Word of God, teaches us so we may believe wholeheartedly in God and in Jesus Christ, yet that is not enough. *James 2.19-20* speaks clearly: You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! *20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Verse 26* of the same chapter says, For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

These works are not the works of mankind, but the works of God in which God predetermined that man should walk; and even these works would not have anything to do with saving a person unless and until that person has faith enough in God and Jesus Christ to cause him to want to prove that faith by his obedience. This is not salvation by works! It is salvation by the proving of one's faith, faith derived by being taught in the *Word of grace* or the Bible.

If you have learned enough from a sincere study of the *Word of grace*, which is God's Word, that you believe in God and Christ, knowing that they are supreme and that all their commands are right and sure (*Psalms 111.7*), you know enough to study the Scriptures to learn God's will for you and then obey that will in your life.

At *2 Timothy 4.7-8* the apostle Paul tells how he made sure his own salvation: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day...*” We can see in this life two strong traits: faith and proof of that faith by actively pursuing the right course as given by God.

At *2 Timothy 2.5-16* we learn (Do we believe?) that not just any old works will do to prove one's faith. Jesus said (*Matthew 7.21*), *Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father*

who is in heaven." See also the words of Jesus at *John 14.15, If you love me keep my commands.* And at *John 15.14: You are my friends if you do what I command you.*

If you have been taught the Word, what have you done with what you know? Have you confessed your faith in Christ before men (*Matthew 10.32-33; Luke 12.8-9*)? You should - if confirms your faith! Have you repented of your sins (*Luke 13.3,5*)? It's the right course! Have you been buried with your Lord by baptism into death (*Romans 6.3-5*) and raised to walk as a new creature in Christ Jesus (*Galatians 2.20*)? If not, you should. Grace is God's part in man's salvation; active, living, obedient faith is man's part.

If you have done, in answer to your faith, the things listed above, you are a new creature in Christ Jesus and He abides in you! Now, as a new member of the Body of Christ, search out His desires for your life; find opportunities to serve Him and others, be regular in attendance at all services, Bible studies, fellowship assemblies of the Lord's church: These will help you grow spiritually. As you involve yourself in those things that are of God you will continue proving your faith and securing your own salvation. God will bless you as you serve Him faithfully.

"...be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life," are the words of Jesus as recorded in *Revelation 2.10.*