

Believing On His Name

Sunday, August 14th, 1988

John 3:35-36

“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

I am reading today, from the Third Chapter of John, verses 35 and 36. If you would like to follow in your Bible, open it please to John 3:35 and 36. My subject is “BELIEVING ON HIS NAME.” I’m going to have some things to say about faith. I’m interested in the subject of faith. *“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”* I believe that you will find this message to be informative and instructive. So, take your Bible and turn to John 3:35.

The Apostle writes, *“The Father loveth the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

According to this Scripture and so many other scriptures, which are like it, the most important and principle matter of my soul, is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. To believe God is the most important and principle matter in the salvation of my soul.

This is what our Lord told the Centurion. Do you remember when the Centurion came to Him and told Him that his son was sick? The Lord said to the Centurion, *“If you can believe, all things are possible to them that believe.”*

This is what Phillip told the Ethiopian Eunuch who requested baptism. Phillip replied, *“If you believe on the name of the Son of God, thou mayest (be baptized), if you believe.”*

Is this not what Paul told the jailor when the Philippian jailor asked him, *“What must I do to be saved?”* Paul replied, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”*

This is what separated Abraham from all of the idolaters around him. The Scripture says again and again, *“Abraham believed God; he believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.”*

Here, our text says; *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall never see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

Faith and believing God is the simplest, most uncomplicated act in the world. Did you know that? Believing is most uncomplicated and believing is a simple act. It does not involve working; it does not involve deeds of any sort; it does not involve movement and there is no preparation. There is just belief. It is to believe. Faith is to trust and to rest.

Someone said, "Faith is nothing but an empty cup held underneath a flowing stream." Someone else said, "Faith is an empty hand, the hand of a beggar held out for alms or for food." Someone else said, "Faith is only the weary soul collapsing into the arms of the Son of God and finding rest.

Faith is a simple thing. Faith is uncomplicated. There are no works involved, deeds involved or preparation. Either you believe, or you don't believe. You trust, or you don't trust. You rest, or you don't rest. You look, or you don't look.

I have something for you that I believe you will find very interesting on this subject of faith. I am going to establish this from the Scriptures that to come to God is to believe. To find rest in Christ is to believe. *"He that believeth on the Son of God hath life. He that believeth not the Son of God shall never see life."*

So, what is this thing of faith and what is it to believe? Some of the old writers have endeavored to define faith and to illustrate it. Here are three definitions of faith that I have discovered in all the years that I have been in the ministry. I've read a great deal on the subject of faith because I am desperately interested in faith. I have found three definitions that I believe are the best of all that I have read in all of these 30 some odd years of preaching the Gospel.

Here is the first one. Faith is three things: Faith is repentance, reliance, and receiving. What do we mean by that? Faith first of all is repentance. There are the three R's: repentance, reliance, and receiving. What do we mean by that?

Well, there can be no faith without repentance. The Scripture says, *"Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."* There can be no faith apart from repentance. The two are inseparable. A man will acknowledge his sinner-hood and his sinfulness if he comes to Christ. He will be like the Publican in the temple who smote upon his breast out of need and grief over his sins. He cried, *"O God, be merciful to me the sinner."*

I am a sinner and all who come to Christ are sinners. He came to save sinners. *"He came to seek and to save the lost."* The Lord Jesus Christ came to earth; *"Not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."* So, the first thing involved in this matter of

believing on Christ as your Saviour is to acknowledge that you are a sinner and that you need Christ. So, it is repentance. There is no faith without repentance.

Second: There is no faith without total reliance. There is a dependence on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. In other words, if I cannot produce what God requires, then I must rely on someone who is able.

God requires perfection and I cannot produce it. God requires obedience, perfect obedience and I cannot produce it. So, in order to meet God's requirements I have to rely on One who is able to meet them and that is total reliance on Christ. That is depending on Him.

I don't mean partly depending on Him and partly depending on myself. It is not partly on His mercy and partly on my merit. I have to totally rely on Christ. Do you see that? There is repentance of acknowledging that I am a sinner. It is a total reliance on Christ as a sinner's Substitute and Saviour.

Then, there is receiving. There is no faith without repentance, as there is no faith without reliance and depending on Christ, there can be no faith without receiving Christ.

How do we receive Christ? The Scripture says, *"To many as received Him."* We are to receive Him as He is. We receive Him in His person. We receive Him as He is revealed in the Word of God. *"This is the record that God has given us eternal life; this life is in His Son and he that hath the Son, He that hath revealed the Son, rather received the Son, God has revealed the Son."*

I receive Him as my prophet to reveal God. *"God has spoken to us by His Son."* He said, *"In the later days, He spake to the fathers by the prophets. He has in these last days spoken to us by His Son."* So, I receive Him as my Prophet.

He that hath heard Christ hath heard God. He that hath seen Christ hath seen God. I receive Him as my Prophet, I receive Him as my Priest to intercede to offer an acceptable sacrifice, and I receive Him as my King to reign over me. That is faith in Christ!

Repentance is acknowledging my need and my sinfulness. It is also reliance on Christ; it is depending totally, wholly and completely on Him, on Christ. Repentance is not grace plus works; it is grace alone. It is looking to Christ alone.

It is receiving Him as He is revealed in the Word of God. It is receiving Him as the Prophet to reveal God, receiving Him as the Priest to intercede and to receive Him as

King to reign over us. This is receiving Christ. Do you see that? That is a good definition of faith!

All right, here is the second one: The second definition of faith comes from Mr. Spurgeon who pastored in London from 1855 to 1892. Mr. Spurgeon has a very similar definition, but different to some extent. He says, "Saving faith is defined by the Apostle Paul in the Book of Second Timothy Chapter One, verse 12." This is the best definition of saving faith to be found in the Word of God as far as he was concerned. I think it is quite good too.

Well, you say; "What does Second Timothy 1:12 say?" It says this, "*I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.*"

Faith is defined in three ways: First of all faith is knowledge. Paul says, "*I know whom.*" He did not say, "When I believed, or I know what I believed; he said, "*I know whom I believed.*" He is a Person; it is to know Him.

Eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ and whom He has sent. The Apostle John put it this way, "*We know that the Son of God has come into the world and has given us an understanding. The Son of God has come into the world and has given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true and that we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. And this is the true God and this is eternal life.*" We know whom we have believed.

Eternal life is not a decision that I am resting in or an experience in which I am resting or a church in which I am resting. Eternal life is in a Person. This is a Person that I know. This is a Person who has come from heaven and has given me an understanding. It is God Incarnate in human flesh. "*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.*" Do you see what I am saying?

Faith is knowledge. There is no such thing as blind faith. Faith always has an object. We believe Him. "*I know whom I have believed.*" I know Him. I know He is God and I know He is God's Son. I know He is God's Christ and Messiah.

I know whence He came and why He came. I know what He did, and why He did it and where He is gone. I know He will return. So, faith is knowledge, which is revealed by the Holy Spirit to the heart.

Second: Faith is confidence. The Apostle Paul said, *“I know whom I have believed.”* He wasn’t resting in a preacher; he was resting in Christ. He wasn’t resting in an experience, profession or a law. I’m resting in a Person. *“I know whom I have believed.”*

Also, faith is confidence. *“I am persuaded and I am confident that He is able.”* He is able to do what? If anyone saves me, he has to first be willing, but he also has to be able. To save a soul is a difficult thing to perform.

Putting away sin is not very easy. Whoever is my Saviour from sin and my righteousness has to be able to perform all that God Almighty requires. Secondly, it says here, He is able to do all that He promised. *“He is able to save to the uttermost, them that come to God by Him.”*

“He is able to keep us from falling and He is able to present us holy and unblameable before His Majesty, and throne and glory with great joy.”

“He is able to raise our vile bodies from the dust and make them like His body.” He is able! This is what the Apostle Paul is saying about faith, *“I know whom I have believed.”*

Most religious debaters know what they believe and most religious emotionalists know when they believe. The believer knows whom he believes. I know Him. I know He is able. I am confident and I am persuaded that Jesus Christ is fully equipped, and able to save my soul.

Watch the third point now: The reason that Spurgeon thought that this was such a good definition of faith is one I’m sure that you surely think is good. It is to know Him, to be confident of His power and ability. Third, faith always involves a committal like the other definition said, *“A receiving of Christ.”*

He said, *“I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.”* I have turned it all over to Him. What have I committed to Christ? I have committed my soul, my life, my hope, and my all. I have committed it to Him.

My soul is too important and too valuable to commit into the hands of some organization, some creed, or some emotional experience. I am going to commit it to Christ.

Where have I committed the soul to Him? I have committed it to Him, to Christ totally. Why? It is against that day, that Day of Judgment, that day of reckoning. It will be that day when God will deal with sinners in Judgment. *“It is appointed unto men once to die and after that the Judgment.”*

Paul said, *“I know whom I have believed and I am confident and persuaded that He is fully able to keep that (my soul, to keep my life, to keep my hope, to keep my all), which I have committed unto Him (His hands), against that day.”*

Here is the third definition: This is the best that I have found; it has helped me considerably. I hope it will help you. The third definition of faith is one given by John Flavel, many, many, years ago. He also has three parts to this definition. He says first of all, *“Saving faith arises, (which is similar to Spurgeon’s definition), from a right knowledge of three things:”*

You are not going to have faith without knowledge and you are not going to have faith without understanding. *“The Son of God has come and given us an understanding that we may believe, that we may know God; faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

The Scripture says, *“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, but how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have never heard and how shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach except they be sent? Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

So; faith arises and faith is born of knowledge. The Word of God is the foundation of faith. Christ is the object of faith. The Word of God is the foundation of faith. There has to be knowledge. So, faith arises out of knowledge of three things. Are you with me? Stick around.

Faith arises out of a right knowledge of the Holiness of God, the absolute, immaculate, infinite, indescribable holiness and righteousness of God Almighty. God is not who we think He is. I get so weary of hearing people say, *“I think God does this and I think God is like this.”* God is not who we think He is.

Almighty God is who He says He is. It is not who we think He is. God is who He says He is. When Isaiah saw the Lord. He said, *“I saw the Lord high and lifted up and His train, His glory, filled the temple and the seraphims cried, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of*

Hosts.” Oh, the Holiness of God! This is the chief attribute of God and the one word that describes the very character of God. *“Holy and Reverend is His name.”*

So, if you are going to believe God, that saving faith arises out of certain knowledge or understanding of who God is. *“God is Holy.”* This is His Holy Bible. These are His Holy Angels. God is in His Holy Temple. His love is a Holy love. The place of worship is the Holy of Holies and across the priest’s miter is *“Holiness to the Lord.”*

Second: Saving faith arises not only out of knowledge of God’s Holiness, but saving faith arises from a right knowledge of my sinfulness. What did Isaiah say when he saw the Holiness of God? What was his response?

Right in the middle of the Bible there is a man whose name is Isaiah. In the year that King Uzziah died, God gave him a glimpse of His Holiness; he saw the Lord. He said, *“In the year that King Uzziah died; I saw the Lord.”* Not a lot of men could say that, *“I saw the Lord.”* Isaiah could.

What was his response, what was his reaction when he saw the Lord? Do you know what he said? He said, *“I saw the Lord and I said; Woe is me; I am cut off; I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips; I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”*

So, I am telling you; saving faith arises not only out of an understanding of the Holiness of God but it arises out of an understanding of my great sinfulness and the fact that my sins have separated me from my God. By nature, I’m everything that God is not by nature.

So, that brings us to the third thing involving this business of faith. There has to be a right knowledge of God’s Holiness, a right knowledge of my sinfulness and a right knowledge of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Because of the Holiness of God and my sinfulness, Jesus Christ came to be my Mediator. *“There is one Mediator between God and men and that is the man Christ Jesus.”*

Christ came because God is Holy and Christ came to redeem me because I am totally sinful and incapable of redeeming myself. So, in Christ I have righteousness. *“By the disobedience of Adam I was made a sinner; by the obedience of Christ I was made righteous.”*

I have atonement in Christ Jesus. He has made me one with God. He has put away my sins and made me holy. *“We have atonement.”* In Christ, we have a High Priest so that

“We can come boldly before the throne of God’s grace and find mercy and grace to help in our time of need.” We can come before the throne even in our need.

In Christ, we can find grace and mercy. In Christ, we have not only a Mediator but we have a Redeemer. Saving faith arises out of knowledge of the absolute Holiness of God and the depravity and wickedness of human nature. Jesus Christ is the one who was sent from God to lift the beggar from the dunghill and wash him, cleanse him and make him holy, and seat him at God’s right hand in Himself.

Now, the question arises if that is faith, then is my faith saving faith? This is a matter that must be settled in my own heart. Faith that saves is not born of emotionalism and excitement, not saving faith.

The Scripture plainly declares that saving faith in Christ is a matter between the sinner and God. It is a serious and sober matter. It is a soul-searching time. It is a time in which the Holy Spirit begets life and draws a sinner to believe God. It is a personal matter and a private matter.

It is not an emotional, exciting time surrounded by hundreds and thousands of people when I follow the mass down to the front of the church and make some kind of decision or some kind of profession. This thing of faith is a savoring, soul-searching, solemn time in which God deals with my heart on the matter of sin and His Holiness and His Holy Law, justice and eternity in the person of Jesus Christ.

This faith is the gift of God, not the product of the human heart. It is not the product of human persuasion. This is what disturbs me in this day. *“Salvation is of the Lord.”* Salvation is not something that a preacher does for you, or a soul-winner does for you.

You know; the average revival meeting today is like a political convention. They are recruiting supporters. I will tell you this, if a man can talk you into a profession of faith, another man can talk you out of it. If God calls you, and God convicts you, and God deals with you, and God saves you, and God fills you, there will be perseverance; there will be continuance in the faith.

What we need to do is preach the Word of God to sinners; preach the Word of God. We need to wait upon the Lord to make the seed, the Word to live. There should be no pressure, no emotional coercion, no salesmanship and no begging; just preach the Gospel. *“Salvation is of the Lord.”*

God will work in the sinner's heart and God will bring him to faith. Faith is not coming to the front of the church; it is coming to Christ in the heart. Faith does not believe what a preacher says; it believes what God says. Faith is not repeating a prayer from the mouth of another; it is calling on God from my heart.

Nobody told the thief on the cross to say, "*Now Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.*" That came out of his soul; that came out of his heart. That was him crying to the Lord.

Faith is not repeating a prayer that someone else wrote down or made up. Faith is not the reformation of my flesh. It is to receive a new heart, a new nature, and a new Spirit. Faith is not to try God; it is to trust God.

The hymn-writer said:

Jesus Christ, I will trust Thee
Trust Thee with my soul.
Guilty, lost and helpless
But you can make me whole.

Jesus Christ I trust thee
I trust Your written Word.
Fully faithful is Thy promise
And precious is Thy blood.

Is my faith saving faith? Do I believe the Word of God, the Word of Creation, the Word of Revelation, and the Word of Incarnation? That is the Word of God, the Word of Creation that is heard in every language. It is the Word of Revelation, the Written Word, and the Word of Incarnation in Jesus Christ.

Do I believe the Word of God? Do I believe that "*God is and that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him?*" Do I believe that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour and has the Words of Eternal Life?

Yes, yes I do.