

December 22, 2019

“Like Precious Faith”

“Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of God and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1).

The preceding scripture was taken from the second epistle of Peter, an inspired letter penned by the apostle Peter. It was written to Christians; specifically, to those whom Peter described as having “obtained like precious faith...” “Like precious” is from *isotimos* which is defined as “of equal value, held in equal honor,” (Vine). In the marginal reference it is defined as “faith of the same value.” In the E.S.V. it is translated “a faith of equal standing with ours.” The “us” (KJV) or “ours” (E.S.V.) would include Peter and the other apostles. Hence, the recipients of this epistle had “obtained” a faith which was of equal value as that possessed by the apostles of Jesus Christ. As already stated, “like precious” is from *isotimos*, a combination of the prefix *iso* (meaning “like” or “equal”), and *timos*, which denotes that which is costly or of great value. Indeed, properly understood, the faith that pleases God is of **great** value!

Interestingly, “precious” is a word which the apostle Peter repeatedly used. Thus we read of “the precious **blood** of Christ” (I Pet. 1:19), of Christ the “**living stone**” which is described as “precious” (I Pet. 2:4,7), the “**exceedingly great and precious promises**” (2 Pet.1:4), and the “like precious **faith**” as cited in our beginning text (2 Peter 1:1).

“Faith” itself is biblically defined as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Hence, it involves **hope**, and it is based upon “**evidence**.” Genuine faith is not derived from the thoughts, intents, desires, and testimonies of mere people. To the contrary, “*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom. 10:17). Sadly, too many people fail to distinguish between genuine, Bible faith and the opinions which are set forth in the doctrines and commandments of men! “The faith” is the word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ (Jude 3). Hence, your faith and my faith must be based upon that which is set forth in “the faith.” That being the case, “the righteousness of God (God’s plan for redeeming sinners, BW) is “revealed **from faith to faith**” (Rom. 1:16-17). Properly understood, “from faith to faith” denotes “the gospel” (Rom. 1:16), which is the first “faith” of Rom. 1:17, which leads “to faith” (the second “faith” of Rom. 1:17. In other words, “the gospel” (Rom. 1:16) is “the faith” of Jude 3, and when it is preached it produces faith in the hearers thereof. For this reason, Paul could say that “*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” And this kind of faith is “precious;” it is costly; it is valuable! But **why**, we ask, is faith “precious,” or valuable?

1. Faith is “precious” because it prompts obedience to God! This is what Paul alluded to in Rom. 1:5 wherein he mentioned “obedience to the faith.” cf. Rom. 16:26.

2. Faith is “precious” because it purifies. With this in mind, alluding the conversion of Cornelius and his Gentile household, Peter said that God “*made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith*” (Acts 15:9).

3. Faith is precious because it gives confidence! (2 Cor. 4:13). This is necessarily inferred in 2 Cor. 4:13 wherein Paul said “**I believed and therefore I speak.**”

4. Faith is precious because it gives hope (Heb. 11:1), the “*hope of eternal life*” (Tit. 1:1), and hope serves as “*an anchor of the soul*” (Heb. 6:19-20)

5. Faith is “*precious*” because it provides a “*shield*” whereby one is “*able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one*” (Eph. 6:16).

6. Faith is “*precious*” because it leads to salvation. With this in mind, please note I Peter 2:8-9, wherein Peter, writing to Christians regarding Jesus Christ, said: “*whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.*”

Conclusion: Faith is “*precious*” in its **Source (God)!** Faith is “*precious*” because of its ultimate **outcome** (the salvation of our souls!). But true faith is derived from the word of God (Rom.10:17), it is an obedient faith (Rom. 1:5). It takes God at His word, does what He commands; properly applied, it causes one to put off the “*works of the flesh*” (Gal. 5:19-21), and motivates one to develop in his character those qualities referred to in Gal. 5:22-23 as “*the fruit of the Spirit.*” Indeed, it is “*precious*” because of its effect upon us in this life, and because of its ultimate goal, salvation in heaven! May God have mercy on all **unbelievers!**

—B. Witherington