

“Faith” as it is used in the Bible

Introduction:

1. In the sermon last Sunday a.m. we discussed a topic entitled “The Faith that Saves.” In that lesson:
 - a. We stressed the importance of faith, Heb. 11:6.
 - b. We defined faith, Hebrews 11:1.
 - c. We identified the source of faith.
 - (1) Negatively, it does not come from human feelings, the thought process of man, or the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.
 - (2) Positively, it comes from the word of God, Romans 10:17; Acts 15:7; 18:8.
 - d. We identified the kind of faith that saves. It is the faith that
 - (1) That works by love, Gal. 5:6.
 - (2) That obeys, James 2:17,20,24,26; Rom. 1:5; 16:26.
 - (3) That finishes the course, Hebrews 10:38-39; 2 Tim. 4:6-8.
2. However, “*faith*” is used in different ways in the Bible, and when the various uses of “*faith*” are mixed, it leaves many confused. It is appropriate therefore that we consider the different uses of “*Faith*,” as the word occurs in the Bible.

Discussion:

I. Faith is used Subjectively.

- A. Subjective defined: “existing in the mind; belonging to the person thinking rather than the object thought of,” **World Book Dictionary**.
- B. “*Faith*” is used subjectively in:
 1. Romans 14:22,23.
 2. Contextually, “*faith*” as used in these verses has to do with the faith of the individual Christian; in this context it related to the faith or belief of the individual Christian regarding the propriety of eating meats and observing certain days.
 - a. In Romans 14:1-15:7, the writer drew a contrast between the person who is “*weak in the faith*,” Rom. 14:1, and those who are “*strong*,” Rom. 15:1
 - b. Contextually, the “*weak in the faith*” were weak in their understanding of certain basic facts, whereas the “*strong*” were better informed with regards to the issues being discussed.
- C. The “*weak in the faith*” were not to go against their conscience, Rom. 14:23.
- D. The “*Strong*” were to “*bear the infirmities of the weak*,” Rom. 15:1, lest they put a “*stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way*,” Rom. 14:13; cf. I Cor. 8:8-9,12-13.

II. “Faith” is used Objectively.

- A. “Objective” defined: “existing outside the mind as an actual object and not merely in the mind as an idea; real..” (*ibid*).
 1. “*Faith*” used in this sense refers not to the person who believes; rather it refers to the body of truth which is believed.
- B. “*Faith*” is used objectively in such scriptures as:
 1. Gal. 1:23, “*...he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed*.” Cf. Gal. 1:11-12.
 2. Eph. 4:5, “*One Lord, one faith, one baptism*.”
 3. Phil. 1:27, “*...with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel*.”
 4. Jude 3, “*...contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*.”
- C. Note Romans 1:16-17 – “*...the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith...*”
 1. In the Gospel of Christ (v. 16), “*the righteousness of God*” (v. 17), meaning God’s plan to save sinners.
 2. “*The righteousness of God*” is revealed:
 - a. “*From faith*,” the system of faith, elsewhere called “*the faith*,” Phil. 1:27.
 - b. “*To faith*,” to faith in the individual. Cf. Romans 10:17.
- D. We must “*walk by faith, not by sight*,” 2 Cor. 5:7.
 1. “*Faith*,” as used in this verse, is used in the objective sense; it is “*faith*” as opposed to sight, “*faith*” as defined in Heb. 11:1.
 - a. “*Faith*” which comes from the word of God, and thus based upon “*the faith*,” Rom. 10:17.
 2. Contextually, to “*walk by faith*” is to act in harmony with the word of God!

- a. What many call “*walking by faith*” is nothing more than walking by human opinion.
- E. It is impossible to overstate the importance of adhering to “*the faith*” as used objectively!
 1. Acts 14:22, “...*exhorting them to continue in the faith...*”
 2. Acts 16:5, “*And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.*”
 3. I Cor. 16:13, “*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*”
 4. 2 Cor. 13:5, “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith...*”
 5. I Tim. 4:1, “...*that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith...*”
 6. I Tim. 6:10, “...*they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*”
 7. I Tim. 6:21, “*Which some professing have erred concerning the faith..*”
 8. 2 Tim. 4:7, “...*I have kept the faith.*”
 9. Titus 1:13, “...*wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.*”

Note: Every one of the above scriptures were directed to members of the Lord’s church. We cannot afford to become too casual with regards to what the Bible calls “*sound doctrine*,” Titus 2:1. However, in today’s world those who stress the importance of “*sound doctrine*,” who contrast “*sound doctrine*” with “*false doctrine*,” and dare to identify by name those who preach false doctrine, are often vilified by their own brethren. They would have a hard time tolerating the likes of the apostle Paul! I Tim. 1:18-20.

III. “Faith” is used Adjectively.

- A. “Adjective” defined: “a word that defines more fully the name of a person, animal, or thing,” *ibid*.
 1. Cf. “The book is small,” “the day is warm,” “the temperature is cold,” “the lady is beautiful,” etc.
- B. Examples:
 1. Matt. 8:10, “...*verily I say to you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*”
 2. 2 Tim. 1:5, “*When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee...*”
 3. Matt. 6:30, “...*shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith.*”
 4. Rom. 4:20, “*He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.*”

IV. The Bible also Describes Saving Faith, Heb. 10:39; I Peter 1:9.

- A. This is faith with all its parts, including:
 1. Intellectual Assent, Acts 26:27; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:20
 2. Implicit trust, Prov. 29:25; Psalm 112:7; 84:12.
 - a. This is trust in a person, a person who is judged worthy of trust as to character and motive.
 - b. It means to place confidence in the Lord’s ability to do what He says He will do, Rom. 4:20-21.
 - c. It means to entrust one’s self or something into the custody and safe keeping of another. Cf. 2 Timothy 1:12.
 - (1) Illus. The story of a man pushing a wheelbarrow on a tightrope strong across Niagra Falls.
 3. Motive, Gal. 5:6; Matt. 6:1-18.
 4. Action, Gal. 5:6.
 - a. Everything the Lord requires of mankind is inherent in the word “*faith*.” When we repent we show our faith; when we confess we confess our faith; when we are scripturally baptized, we are exercising faith in “*the operation of God*,” Col. 2:12.
 - b. Illus. the Scotchman who operated a rowboat for transporting passengers; he had two oars, one marked “*faith*,” and the other marked “*works*.”

Conclusion.

1. Obedient faith is the kind of faith upon which salvation is predicated. Rom. 5:1; 1:5; 16:26; Acts 16:25-31; Mark 16:16.

--Bobby Witherington, May 24, 2015