

2. Faith (2Q 2009—Walking the Walk: The Christian Life)

Biblical material: Eph. 6:10–18; Hebrews 11; James 2:18, 19; 1 Pet. 1:3–8.

Quotes

- Faith, n. Belief without evidence in what is told by one who speaks, without knowledge, of things without parallel. *Ambrose Bierce*
- Faith is believing what you know ain't so. *Mark Twain*
- Faith means not wanting to know what is true. *Friedrich Nietzsche*
- Faith—an illogical belief in the occurrence of the improbable. *H. L. Mencken*
- Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope or confidence. *Helen Keller*
- He who loses money, loses much; He who loses a friend, loses much more, He who loses faith, loses all. *Eleanor Roosevelt*
- Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step. *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*
- Faith is not belief. Belief is passive. Faith is active. *Edith Hamilton*
- Faith begins as an experiment and ends as an experience. *W. R. Inge*
- Fear knocked at the door and faith answered. No one was there. *English Proverb*
- It is at night that faith in light is admirable. *Edmond Rostand*
- There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds. *Alfred, Lord Tennyson*
- Unthinking faith is a curious offering to be made to the creator of the human mind. *John A Hutchinson*
- “You say you believe,” said Count de X., an extreme Catholic, to the good Protestant minister. “You people believe, but we know.” *André Gide*

Questions

How would you define faith? Why is faith so often viewed as not having a basis in evidence? What is the difference between belief and trust? How is God's trustworthiness on trial? What charge has the Accuser made against God? How do we develop trust? How does God resolve the crisis of distrust in his universe?

Bible discussion

Ephesians 6 details the “Christian armor” to withstand spiritual attacks. While all these aspects are factors of faith, the fundamental basis is trust in God. Hebrews 11 gives examples of faithful people from past history, showing that even the most elementary forms of trust are rewarded by God. In fact, without such trust God cannot respond. James 2:18, 19 emphasizes the practical results of trusting God. Peter concludes that “The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.” (1 Peter 1:9 NLT).

Comment 1

So what of the God of the Bible? Doesn't really matter whether the Bible can be trusted if we can't trust the God it speaks of. From Eden to Exodus, from Mount Sinai to the Mount of Olives, from Galilee to Gethsemane—the theme of the Bible is *God can be trusted!* Take another look at God. He doesn't say “Believe blindly in me.” He says

“Come and find out. See the kind of person I am. Examine my record. Understand my nature. Then accept me for what I am. Look at what I can do for you.”

Either the Bible is the word of God or not. That’s the question. Either it is a pack of lies, or the deepest truth. No two ways about it. How do you decide, then? How do you decide personally whether you can trust the Bible and its God? Only one way—read it, and find out! Start with one of the gospels. And ask questions, thinking questions, for “faith is the strength by which a shattered world shall emerge into the light.” *Helen Keller*

Comment 2

...for many of us the revelation of the truth about our God, the picture of God presented through all of Scripture, leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4) and to faith (Romans 10:17). In trust and confidence we look forward to seeing God.

Though our heavenly Father knows everything about us, we have no need to be afraid. God is forgiveness personified. He will cast all our sins behind His back (Isaiah 38:17). He will “send them to the bottom of the sea!” (Micah 7:19, GNB).

And He will not only forgive us but even treat us as if we had always been His loyal children. Remember how God spoke of sinful but repentant David as having always walked before Him “with integrity of heart and uprightness!” (1 Kings 9:4, RSV) No wonder Paul could say that those who have been set right with God enjoy peace with their heavenly Father (see Romans 5:1).

How can we be sure that we have been set right with God? Or, if you prefer, how can we be sure that we have been justified?

Well ... have we been won back to trust Him? Are we willing to listen and accept His forgiveness? Do we trust Him enough to allow Him to correct and heal us?

Have we, like David, welcomed the Holy Spirit to create new hearts and right spirits within us? Could we be trusted with the privileges of freedom and eternal life?

Has all rebelliousness gone, and has love taken its place? As more light has come, do we always say yes to the truth? For we have much yet to learn about our infinite God.

We may know as little theology as the thief on the cross. But if we love, admire, and trust in God’s Son as he did that crucifixion day, we are safe to admit to the kingdom (see Luke 23:39-43). Like Mary, it will be our greatest delight to sit at Jesus’ feet and hear Him tell us more about the Father.

You see, to be set right with God, all He asks of us is unreserved, whole-hearted trust. A. *Graham Maxwell*, “*All God Asks is Trust.*”

Ellen White Comments

Say to your heart, “God has invited me to come. He has heard my prayer. He has pledged His word that he will receive me, and He will fulfill His promise. I can trust God; for He so loved me that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for me. The Son of God is my Redeemer.” {FE 299}

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” As you would believe in a friend, so you are to trust God. {RH, May 19, 1891}

God will not test our faith beyond endurance. He will give us sufficient evidence, that we may, in our weakness, lean upon the arm of his strength, and trust wholly in his power. {ST, June 30, 1881}