

FAITH

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God expects us to live by faith.

As we get to know the character of Jesus and our Creator through prayer, Bible study, and church teachings, we can immediately filter out the noise of society trying to deny Him.

"What is faith? It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead. Men of God in days of old were famous for their faith. By faith - by believing God - we know that the world and the stars - in fact, all things - were made at God's command; and that they were all made from things that can't be seen" (Hebrews 11:1-3, TLB).

The word 'faith' is used in the New Testament about 245 times, and the word 'believe' is mentioned 124 times.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'" (Romans 1:16-17, NKJV).

The Great Conspiracy

From the beginning of Jesus' ministry, he was beset with difficulty and danger. Jesus handpicked his disciples, including Judas Iscariot who would later betray Him.

The religious leaders labelled Him a false prophet. His message of the Kingdom was a threat to the status quo.

Matthew 27:62-66 (paraphrased): After Jesus was crucified and his body put to rest in a tomb, the chief priests and Pharisees, came to Pilate and asked that the grave be guarded so the disciples could not steal the body and claim that He was resurrected. So, they sealed the stone and placed a watch at the grave.

Matthew 28:11-15 (paraphrased): After the resurrection, the guards told the story of what happened to the chief priests. The priests bribed them to tell a story that the disciples came at night while they slept and stole the body of Jesus. And that story is still used by many today.

There are some axioms in life on earth:

- Two things are certain in life, death and taxes.
- Concrete gets hard and cracks.
- There is a God and there is a Savior named Jesus, and there will always be some who deny Him!

There are educational organizations conducting what is eerily similar to the mock trials of Jesus two thousand years ago. They put together a group of handpicked scholars to vote on whether the Scriptures are true or not, just as the chief priests planted false accusers to testify against Jesus and the Apostles.

A while back there was a presentation on a major news network that worked to disprove or at the least diminish the idea of Jesus being the Son of God! Hollywood makes a mockery of the Holy God and His Christ. They ridicule Christianity and always use Christians in movies as inferior and ignorant subjects. Hollywood would never consider ridiculing any other world religion such as Islam, Mormonism, or Buddhism, but they pride themselves in being inclusive and tolerant. Hollywood is inclusive, all right, they embrace, celebrate and defend every perverse lifestyle and false religion you can imagine. There is a reason for this. Hollywood has become a sanctuary for Satan, the enemy of all humanity. We must limit our exposure to things from Hollywood and choose carefully what we watch. Why is the idea of a Savior such a problem for many?

Accountability

Carnal man does not want to believe he is accountable to a holy God. To be accountable brings the burdensome concept of morality, conscience, and guilt. The carnal man has a natural longing from birth to do what he wants; to push the limits of barriers.

Opportunity

The enemy of our souls has full reign to wander the earth and destroy, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8, NKJV). This adversary does NOT want you to have the opportunity to be set free from the bondage of sin and death.

Just as there are axioms in this life on earth, there are truths concerning our lives with Jesus and His kingdom:

- There will be no more death and taxes.
- Concrete won't crack anymore.
- Philippians 2:10-11 (NKJV): *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

The Importance of Believing

One of the brethren commented in one of his messages concerning the truths and promises of God, "This is not opinion, this is fact!" Our media and lives are so full of opinions. A prominent person will deliver a speech on national TV and afterward some person, believing he/she is smarter than you, will begin to explain what you just heard, veiled in his/her opinion!

In This World of Opinion, There Are Still Facts

Definition of fact: is a thing that is known or proven to be true.

The fact that governs Christians' lives is this, GOD is the creator of the universe and He loved us so much that he sent his only begotten Son to sacrifice His life on the cross so that all men could be reconciled to God.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which"

I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20, KJV).

We must believe these promises of God. They are facts! The world keeps chipping away at the confidence of the believer, but we must not fall prey. That is why God shared this wisdom through Malachi 3:16 (KJV), *“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.”*

We must be continually rebuilding the walls of the temple as Nehemiah did the walls of Jerusalem. Our enemy is chipping at the walls day and night. We must hold tight to the promises.

I heard once that a bumblebee technically shouldn't be able to fly with such little wings, but nobody ever told him that. So, he flies. The bumblebee is ignorant of the opinions of those who say that he should not be able to physically fly.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord” (James 1:5-7, KJV).

God wants us to be All IN! We need to believe with all our hearts.

There once was a woman who had an issue with blood that would not stop. She went to the doctors, but they could not help her. Over the span of twelve years, she went from doctor to doctor, spending all of her money with nothing to show for it, and her condition only grew worse.

Then one day she heard of this man named Jesus who had healed many people of disease and sickness and even raised some from the dead. She found Him walking down the streets of Capernaum surrounded by a crowd of followers. She told herself, “If I touch even

His clothes, I will be well.”

She touched the hem of Jesus' garment, and she was immediately healed.

I am sure she had touched the garments of many people over the years. During those years touching garments, or even touching people had made no change in her condition. She was even beyond the help of doctors. But on this particular day, along the streets of Capernaum, she touched the hem of Jesus' garment, believing that she would be healed, and she was (ref. Matthew 9:20).

- By faith, the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment was healed.
- By faith, the sick who were laid on the streets were healed by the shadow of Peter falling on them.
- By faith, the centurion's servant was healed.
- By faith, we know that we are saved through the salvation offered through Christ.
- By faith, a friend of mine who had been caught up in drugs and a failed marriage, when he was at the point of taking his life, sought out a pastor he remembered from his boyhood and was led to salvation.

We are still flesh and blood, and we still fight against the tendencies of the flesh. There are times when ALL of us have been healed from something, delivered from tragedy, received help from a friend or stranger unexpectedly, etc. When these things happen, it is the divine providence of God, and we must see it as such and give thanks to God. We should also share these experiences with others, as it helps build our faith and theirs.

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 1:20, NKJV).

The following song was sung to Bro. Reed in Henry, Illinois which is full of truth about faith. I believe Bro. Reed was 90 that year. I hope you will be blessed in reading it.

1. Life is like a mountain railway,
With an engineer that's brave;
We must make the run successful,
From the cradle to the grave;
Watch the curves, the fills, the tunnels;
Never falter, never fail;
Keep your hands upon the throttle,
And your eyes upon the rail.

Refrain:

Blessed Savior, Thou wilt guide us,
Till we reach that blissful shore,
Where the angels wait to join us
In Thy praise forevermore.

2. You will roll up grades of trial;
You will cross the bridge of strife;
See that Christ is your conductor
On this lightning train of life;
Always mindful of obstruction,
Do your duty, never fail;
Keep your hands upon the throttle,
And your eyes upon the rail.
3. You will often find obstructions,
Look for storms and wind and rain;
On a fill, or curve, or trestle
They will almost ditch your train;
Put your trust alone in Jesus,
Never falter, never fail;
Keep your hands upon the throttle,
And your eyes upon the rail.
4. As you roll across the trestle,
Spanning Jordan's swelling tide,
You behold the Union Depot
Into which your train will glide;
There you'll meet the Superintendent,
God the Father, God the Son,
With the hearty, joyous plaudit,
"Weary Pilgrim, welcome home." ✚

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SHARON STAR

The Sharon Star is a monthly publication and mailed as a free-will offering plan. The articles within are intended for inspiration and information to those who are interested in the unfolding revelation of the Word of God.

Published by:
Global Missions Inc. in North Battleford,
Saskatchewan, Canada.

The Sharon Star is found online at:
www.globalmissionsinc.org/sharon-star

Publications Mail Agreement 40012206

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