

The background of the cover features a piece of weathered, light-brown wood in the upper left corner. A dark, thorny branch, possibly a rose branch, extends diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. The rest of the background is a mottled, textured surface in shades of beige and light brown.

# SAVING FAITH:

*Its Meaning and  
Its Object*

L.R. SHELTON, JR. (1923-2003)

# SAVING FAITH: ITS MEANING AND ITS OBJECT

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## Part One

# Saving Faith: What Is Its Meaning?

## 1. Essential Elements of Saving Faith

I have been impressed by the Holy Spirit to bring a series of messages at this time on the subject, "Saving Faith: What Is Its Meaning?" Since faith is the *vital link* between our soul and the living God in salvation, it would behoove each and every one of us to know what true saving faith is and how this faith is produced in the soul by the Holy Spirit. Since also in so many of our messages on the past series, we showed you that Scripture teaches that many possess a faith which is not saving but one that has been worked up by their own wills, then I would like to lay before you the truth of God's Word, praying that God will search out our hearts to let us know if true saving faith, which is His gift, has been given unto us by the Holy Spirit.

It has pleased God by the medium of faith to reveal His salvation to every seeking, repenting soul; for faith is the means by which we lay hold of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the means by which we receive from Him all the benefits He has purchased for us as poor sinners in His death, burial, and resurrection. The whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation shows that we are saved and justified only by faith in the living God in His Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is by faith that it might be by grace (Rom 4:16).

Let us look at a few Scriptures out of the many, many that are given in the Book to show that God has ordained faith as the medium to save those who believe. Listen to them!

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb 11:6).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph 2:8-9).

Speaking about the faith of Abraham, who is the father of the faithful, He said, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace" (Rom 4:5, 16).

Then, Romans 5:1 reads, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We could multiply these over and over again, showing that true saving faith is needed if any soul is ever to be saved, that this faith is the means by which we lay hold on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that it is the means by which we draw from Him all that He has done for us in His great work of redemption. It is the appropriation of this faith by which God saves us. So in this series of messages I would endeavor by the help of the Holy Spirit to lay before our hearts what true saving faith is and how it is given to us and used by us to close in savingly with Christ.

There are four essential elements, or ingredients, in saving faith:

1. Saving faith is a *yielding to the authority of God*, a submitting of myself to His rule.
2. Saving faith is a *genuine coming to Christ*. We come to Him and cast ourselves upon Him, leaving all other hopes and helps behind.
3. Saving faith consists of the *complete surrender of my whole being and life to the lordship of Jesus Christ*.
4. Saving faith is a believing on Christ with the understanding, the affections and with the will, that is, with the whole man. All of this is included in true saving faith.

Will you listen as we go into these elements of saving faith? My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will take His Word home to each and every heart. I want you to understand that *true saving faith is vital*. For if our faith is defective, then we are deceived, and this *deception is fatal!* I repeat it again: if a man's faith is defective, then it is deceptive and it is fatal. So if you value your never dying soul, listen as for eternity!

You who are lost, awakened by the Holy Spirit, listen so you may know what saving faith is, that you may ask the Lord to work this in you by His Holy Spirit. You have a promise to this effect in Colossians 2:12: "Ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God." So, if faith is the operation of God, it is the operation of the Spirit of God in the heart; and if true saving faith is produced by this operation in the heart, then beloved, this is what we want and what we need, so this promise in Colossians 2:12 is ours. But, unto you who have never tested your faith by the Word of God, will you listen to see if you have the faith of God's elect spoken of in Titus 1:1-2? "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Ti 1:1-2).

#### A. *Yielding to the Authority of God*

The first essential element, or ingredient, of saving faith is a *yielding to the authority of God*, a submitting of myself to His rule and to His Word. You ask, "Why is this necessary?" I answer: because of what we are by nature. I hear someone saying, "Pastor, will you explain that statement?" Romans 8:7 tells us that every one of us by nature are at "enmity against God." We are not subject to the law of God and neither indeed can we be except God work in our hearts. Therefore, to come to Christ savingly I must hoist the white flag of surrender and bow to His authority.

I, a rebel who has spent my whole lifetime in self-will, self-pleasing, self-indulgence, and who has lived in rebellion against the authority of God, must of necessity forsake my

self-will and my rebellion against Him if ever I am saved by His grace. You see, it stands to reason that no earthly king forgives and pardons a criminal or rebel as long as he stands out in rebellion against him. So the heavenly King never forgives and pardons a spiritual criminal who deserves hell until that rebel forsakes his self-will and rebellion against Him. My friend, this is clearly brought out in Isaiah 55:7: “Let the wicked *forsake his way*, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him *return unto the Lord*, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Also Proverbs 28:13 reads, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

In both of these Scriptures we find that God will pardon, and that abundantly. He will have mercy, and that willingly; but *only to those who come confessing and forsaking their sins and their way*. Listen to the gracious invitation of Isaiah 1:18: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Yes, our gracious, sovereign God invites us to come and reason with Him about our sins and our eternal destiny. Yes, He will surely forgive in Christ, forgive everyone of our sins that we confess, yea, all of our sins; but to come to Him in such a way is to submit to His authority and His rule. I praise the Lord that He will save rebels, but only if they hoist the white flag of surrender and bow at His feet in repentance.

So you can see, my friend, this is a far cry from giving a mental assent to a process of logic by some preacher, personal worker or even yourself as you reason yourself into so-called salvation. Your will must be broken for you to be willing to submit to the authority of God and to the authority of His Word that you are the sinner God’s Word says you are. No man will do this apart from God breaking his heart by the Holy Spirit. You see, your will must be broken for you to submit to the authority of God; your heart must be broken for you to confess unto the living God that you are truly a self-righteous, rebellious criminal. Nothing short of divine power will cause you to bow to the authority of God and to His Word. But, praise the Lord, the Holy Spirit makes us willing in the day of His power, and that is the reason I preach with assurance that God is going to call all of those for whom Christ died.

#### *B. A Genuine Coming to Christ*

Second, I said that an essential element of saving faith is *a genuine coming to Christ*. O what a beautiful and precious invitation we have in Matthew 11:28! We hear our Lord saying, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” This gracious invitation of a gracious Lord and Savior is most blessed to those who are in labor and are heavy laden because of sin. It is given to those who know themselves to be sinners, hell-deserving sinners, who are willing to take His yoke upon them and follow Christ.

To come to Christ means something has to be left behind, for Matthew 1:21 reads: “Thou shalt call his name *Jesus*: for he shall save his people from their sins”—not *in* their sins, but *from* their sins. So we see here that a true coming to Christ for salvation means that I am willing to leave my sins and follow Christ. All of this enters into true

saving faith; for if I am not willing to leave my sins, how can I trust Christ to cleanse me from my sins? Let me illustrate this: If I say I came to Pensacola, Florida four years ago (and I did), then I necessarily indicate that I left someplace else to come here (which I did: Litchfield, Minnesota). Thus it is in coming to Christ: something has to be left behind—your sins, your idols. Coming to Christ not only involves the abandoning of every false object of confidence, but it also includes and entails the forsaking of all other competitors for my heart. Listen to Luke 14:17 where we read the gracious invitation: “Come; for all things are now ready.” But listen further to verses 18-20! “And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.” We see here that there were competitors for the hearts and affections of those invited, therefore they would not come. And so it was with you my sinner friend; if you are not willing to close in with Christ in true saving faith, there is a competitor.

What is the competitor of your heart and affection that has kept you from closing in savingly with Christ? Is it your evil heart of unbelief? Is it your allegiance to your church, your religion? Is it your wife, or husband or children? Is it your love of sin, your self-righteousness, your pride? Is it some sweet secret sin that you are not willing to let go? Is it your false profession that you cannot give up, “I cannot go back on that?” Are you going to hang on to some decision you made and go to hell with it? Will you not let it go? Is it your riches? Is it your love of pleasure? Remember, whatever it is, it must be forsaken and left to follow Christ. Only then can true saving faith lay hold of Christ; for you cannot lay hold of Christ and hold on to sin at the same time, you cannot lay hold of Christ as long as there is some other competitor.

Yes, the course of self-will must be abandoned. Remember the prodigal son of Luke 15 who could not come to his father while he remained in the far country. He had to forsake his way, his hog pen, his slop bucket, and his hogs; he had to come empty-handed back to his father. And so will you come empty-handed when you come to Christ.

I hear some precious soul crying out, “Pastor, it is hard to leave those things that have been dearer than life to me. It would be like cutting off a right hand or plucking out a right eye to give up my way, my friends, my family, my loved ones, my pleasure, my ambitions, my stocks and bonds, and my secret sins.” Yes, I know it is hard, but they must be forsaken or you will never have Christ; and my friend, to miss Christ is to go to hell! That is the reason I have been telling you for a long time that it takes the power of God’s Holy Spirit to break our hearts, leave all to follow Christ. Beloved, this is not my word, our Lord Himself said in Luke 14:33, “Whosoever he be of you *that forsaketh not all that he hath*, he can not be my disciple.”

It is just because the gate is strait and the way is narrow that few are willing to enter into it. It is because of the fact that you must die to self that the majority of people today seek the easy way and walk the broad way that leads to hell. And what is the easy way?—a “free-believism,” a gospel of “only believe and all is well,” a way that makes no demands of repentance or the breaking of the heart before God. It does not make you mourn over

your evil heart of unbelief or the way you have treated a holy God. No, it makes no demands upon you. But you have to leave all other lovers! I wonder if, after I had been married about six weeks (we've been married almost 40 years now), my wife had said to me, "Honey, I forgot to tell you, but I made a promise to Jim, with whom I used to go out, that every sixth week I would spend a weekend with him, is that alright with you?" What do you think my reaction would be? How long do you think I would put up with that?—not the first time! Why?—because she shouldn't be in love with me if she had not left all other lovers; and my friend, this is the way God deals with our souls. There has to be the letting go of sin, the denying of myself all competitors. I rest on no work, I rest on no other hope, no righteousness, nothing but the Lord Jesus Christ, coming to Him empty-handed, and yielding myself wholly and completely to Him; for He is the Savior of sinners, and this is what faith is all about. It is coming to rest wholly and completely upon Christ and Him alone, having no other lovers, no other competitors for my affection for time and for eternity. I'm closing in with Christ for Him to be my all-in-all, not only my sin-bearer, but the lover of my never-dying soul.

### C. *Complete Surrender of My Whole Life to God*

Let us look now at the third essential element or ingredient of saving faith, which consists of *the complete surrender of my whole being and life to the claims of God upon me*. It is the unreserved acceptance of Christ as my absolute Lord, bowing to His will, and receiving His yoke; for the gracious invitation of Matthew 11:28-30 reads: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Dear friend, let me be true to you here! This yoke of Christ is part of His salvation. His Lordship is just as much a part of His salvation as His Saviorhood. How could we partake of His Saviorhood without bowing to His Lordship? We can't! Listen to Philippians 2:10-11: "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Listen again to Colossians 2:6! "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus *the Lord*, so walk ye in him." Yes, mark it well: Christ is *received as Lord*! Oh how far, far below the New Testament standard is this modern way of begging sinners to receive Christ as their own personal Savior! If every one of you will consult your concordances, you will find that in every passage where the two titles are found together, it is always as "Lord and Savior," *never* "Savior and Lord."

O my dear friend, get this truth! Cry unto God to take it home to your heart! O let me deliver it in love to your never-dying soul! Until you, the ungodly sinner, are sensible to the exceeding sinfulness of your vile course of self-will and self-pleasing; until you are genuinely broken down and penitent over it before God; until you are willing to forsake the world for Christ; until you have resolved to come under His government, please do not say you are saved; for you to do so is not faith, but blatant presumption. It is to add insult to injury.

Please don't turn away; listen to God's message! The reason I stress this is that it is the truth of God's Word, and because the other side is so much stressed today. Has God

no right in His own salvation to dictate the terms on which His gracious and glorious salvation in Christ is to be received? Yes, He has, and He does. Jesus Christ is Lord, and will be received as Lord on your knees as a broken-hearted sinner or you will be cast out of the presence of God for all eternity.

*D. Believing on Christ with Heart, Affections, and Will*

The fourth essential ingredient in saving faith is *a believing on Christ with the heart, with the affections, and with the will*, as I see a suitableness, a sufficiency, in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ for me, a poor, hell-deserving sinner. As Romans 10:9-10 tells us, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” There is no such thing as a saving faith in Christ where there is no real love for Him, and by *real love* I mean a love which is evidenced by *obedience*. As John 15:14 says, Christ acknowledges none to be His friends except those who do whatsoever He commands them. As unbelief is a species of rebellion, so saving faith is a complete subjection to God. We read in Romans 16:26 of “the obedience of faith.”

You see, my friend, saving faith is to the soul what health is to the body: it is a mighty principle of operation, full of life, ever working, bringing forth fruit after its own kind. As Titus 1:1 tells us, “According to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after *godliness*.”

Godliness?—yes, for we are told in Titus 2:11-13, “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Do you and I have this saving faith in Christ which has been described in this message?

## **2. Believing on Christ**

My dear friend, as we set before you what the eternal Word of God teaches on true and false professions, how has the Holy Spirit dealt with your heart? Has there been the shining of the light of God’s Word into your heart to reveal the truth of your condition before God? Has God commanded the light to shine out of darkness into your heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? (2Co 4:6). Has there been a cry after Him, to know Him in Spirit and in truth? Has there been a desire to know your true state before God, whether or not you are in Christ, or if you have been deceived by the god of this world into believing all is well when you have nothing more than a false profession?

How searching is that word in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4! Listen: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” O that the Holy Spirit may open the eyes of each one of you today to understand what it means to know Christ and to walk with Him in that living union by His Spirit!

We laid before you in our last message four essential elements, or ingredients, of saving faith whereby we could test whether or not we possess this grace of God:

1. Saving faith is a *yielding to the authority of God*, a submitting of myself to His rule.
2. Saving faith is a *genuine coming to Christ*.
3. True saving faith consists in *the complete surrender of my whole being and life to the lordship of Jesus Christ*.
4. True saving faith consists in *a believing on Christ with the heart* [with the *understanding, the affections and the will*].

It is this fourth essential ingredient of saving faith at which we propose to look. Please listen, for I desire that you understand what we are going to say! Romans 10:9-10 says, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe *in thine heart* (the understanding, affection and will) that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Let us explain then what this believing of the heart involves. There are three principle faculties by which we come to Christ and lay hold of Him to the saving of our never-dying souls: We come to Christ with the *heart*—the *understanding*, the *affections* and the *will*. You see, God has so made us that these three faculties are subordinate one to the other and follow in that order: *understanding*, *affection* and *will*. One faculty is influenced by the other. I believe we can illustrate this by looking at Genesis 3:6 to see how our first parents sinned and how these three faculties were used: “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

Watch as this portion unfolds to us the use of the *understanding*, the *affections*, and the *will*. “The woman saw [that is, she perceived] that the tree was good for food,” there we have a conclusion drawn by her understanding. “And that it was pleasant to the eyes,” there we have the response of her affections. “And a tree to be desired,” there we have the moving of the will. “She took,” there we have the complete action.

Now, just as Eve sinned with all her being, so true saving faith, a coming to Christ savingly, is something more than a mere lip confession, or profession—it is a *genuine coming to Christ with the whole being*. For true saving faith to operate, the *understanding* must be enlightened (Eph 1:18), then by this knowledge the *affections* are stirred, and they in turn influence and move the *will*. In this way every faculty of the soul is put forth in coming to Christ savingly.

We have noticed that the *will* acts last, that is, the *will* is not active toward Christ until the *understanding* has been enlightened and the *affections* quickened. The Holy Spirit must first cause you to understand your deep need of Christ by showing you your fearful rebellion against God and that none but Christ can atone for your sins. Second, the Holy Spirit creates in you your heart a desire after Christ by making you sick of sin and in love with holiness. Third, as you are awakened and enlightened, having been given by the Holy Spirit to see the glory and excellency of Christ and His suitability to your need as a lost sinner, then the Holy Spirit draws out your *will* to set the highest value upon Christ, to desire Him above all earthly objects, and to come to Him savingly.

So you see my dear friend, there is more to saving faith than just giving assent to some proposition made to your emotions when there has never been an understanding of your lost condition, of your rebellion against the Holy God, nor the opening of your eyes to see the glory and beauty of Christ and His substitution for sinners that would make you leave sin to follow Him.

### *The Will*

This leads us now to answer this question: “Why must the Holy Spirit enlighten and quicken us and draw out our *will* so we may be enabled to close in with Christ savingly?” Let the Scriptures instruct us: In Ephesians 2:1 reads, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” That is the answer! In our fall in Adam we became spiritually dead: our *understanding* became darkened (Eph 4:18), and our *affections* became prostituted so that we see no beauty in Christ that we will affectionately go after Him (Isa 53:2). Therefore, we read in John 5:40, “Ye *will* not come to me, that ye might have life.”

You will not come to Christ because your *understanding* is darkened and you see no beauty in Him that you might desire Him. Therefore, the *will*, which is subordinate to the darkened *understanding* and the prostituted *affections*, cannot act upon its own to come to Christ savingly. The *will* can only act upon that to which the *understanding* gives light and the *affections* give desire; and because we love sin and darkness more than Christ and light, the *will* must go after sin. This is the reason for the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit by the Word of God in our hearts. As we saw in Ephesians 2:1, He must quicken us or we will forever lie dead in trespasses and sins. He must give us light or we will forever lie in darkness. He must convict us or we will forever stay in ignorance. He must draw us with the cords of love or we will forever stay in the prison of sin and Satan. Did not our Lord tell us in John 6:44, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him?” And this He does by His Spirit in the hearts and lives of His elect.

What a blessed thing it is to be drawn by the Holy Spirit with cords of love to Christ! What a mercy it is for the Holy Spirit to cause the Word of God to lay bare our hearts and show us our need of Christ! You see, this drawing is accomplished by the Spirit as He effectually enlightens the *understanding*, quickens the *affections* and frees the *will* from the bondage of sin, inclining it toward God and His Christ. By the workings of grace, the Spirit turns the bent of our *wills*, which before moved only toward sin and the

world, unto Christ. We read in Psalms 110:3, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,” and this the Holy Spirit does by letting His glorious light shine into our hearts, giving the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Yes, He overcomes our prejudiced hearts and wins and draws us unto Christ.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom 10:13). But verse 14 asks, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?” Therefore, we are brought back to our first statement: A true coming to Christ savingly is with the *understanding*, the *affections*, and the *will*.

There can be no coming to Christ savingly without the *understanding’s* first being enlightened. A knowledge of Christ is *essential*, for there can be no movement toward an unknown object. We must have some acquaintance with a person before we will either trust or love him. Therefore, the knowledge of Christ must of necessity precede our believing in Him or our coming to Him savingly: “... he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb 11:6). None can come to Christ while they are ignorant about Him.

The question is then asked, “How do I get this knowledge so I may come to Him with the *understanding*?” This knowledge of Christ comes to the mind from the Holy Scriptures. Nothing can be known of Christ except that which God has been pleased to reveal concerning Him in the Word of truth. It is in the Scriptures alone that the true doctrine of Christ is to be found. Therefore, our Lord gave us this commandment: “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (Joh 5:39). Therefore, I say to every awakened soul, every concerned soul: make much of God’s Word. Search it; meditate upon it; pray over it; cry unto the Holy Spirit to throw his light upon it. Pray that He may show you out of its pages first yourself, then Christ. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom 10:17). It was said of Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15, “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” The Holy Spirit is able to do the same thing for you as you read and meditate upon God’s holy Word.

My friend, you have no one to blame but yourself if you go to hell with an open Bible before you, if you will not search its pages to have understanding of your true condition before God and His precious gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. My final word is this warning from Hebrews 2:1-3: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation,” as revealed to us out of the Holy Scriptures?

### 3. The Heart: The Affections

We have laid before you God's Word in our last two messages four essential elements, or ingredients, of true saving faith whereby we could test whether or not we possess this grace of God in truth. Let me give them to you again:

1. True saving faith consists of *a yielding to the authority of God*, which means a submitting of myself to His rule.
2. True saving faith consists of *a genuine coming to Christ*, which means I leave sin behind.
3. True saving faith consists in *the complete surrender of my whole being and life to the lordship of Jesus Christ*, which means I embrace Christ in all of His offences, as Prophet, Priest and King.
4. True saving faith consists in *a believing on Christ with the heart* (the *understanding*, the *affections* and the *will*.)

It was to this fourth essential ingredient of saving faith that we looked in our last message and at which we desire to look again today. We will cover this ground slowly so we may truly understand that saving faith is much more than just giving a mental assent to a few verses of Scripture logically explained to our intellect.

The three principle faculties by which we come to Christ by faith and lay hold of Him to the saving of our never-dying souls are the *understanding*, the *affections*, and the *will*. One faculty is influenced by the other. Let me expound a little more on Genesis 3:6 to see how our first parents used these three faculties and sinned. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Again, watch as this portion unfolds to us the use of the *understanding*, the *affections* and the *will*. The Scripture says, "the woman saw (that is, she perceived) that the tree was good for food..." It was with her *understanding* that she came to the conclusion that the tree was good for food; this knowledge registered with her. Next, the Scripture says that this food "was pleasant to the eyes..." Here we have the response of her *affections*; she loved what she saw. Then the Scripture says it was "a tree to be desired..." Now we have the *will* in operation; her desire influenced her *will* to take and eat. Why?—because her *understanding* told her the tree was good for food; her *affections* went out after the fruit because she saw that the food was pleasant to the eyes, and her *will* was stirred to action because it now desired this fruit for food. Then the Scripture says, "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat"—here we have the completed act.

For true saving faith to operate to the saving of our never-dying souls, it must come into the *understanding*; by this knowledge of Christ from the Scriptures, the *affections* are stirred to go out in love toward the Christ of the Word; then the *affections* in turn influence and move the *will*. In this way every faculty of the soul is put forth in savingly coming to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am not making much-to-do over nothing. I am giving you the basic principle of saving faith; and if saving faith did not come to you in this way, then all you have is a false faith based only on a mental assent to some proposition made from the Word of God. This brings in the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation because the *understanding* being darkened, we cannot see in the Lord Jesus Christ a suitable Savior for our never-dying souls; thus the *affections* cannot go out to Him in love, and the *will* will not come to Christ that we might have life (Joh 5:40).

But when the Holy Spirit does come to our dead spirit and soul, He quickens it, makes it alive, and gives to our *understanding* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as revealed in the Christ of the gospel. Then our *affections* are drawn out after Christ as the lovely and precious Deliverer, and the *will* is drawn out to close in savingly with Him.

Before this happens, we lie dead in trespasses and sins; therefore, our *will* can only choose sin because our *understanding* tells us that sin and its pleasures are the best for us, and the *affections* which have been prostituted by our darkened *understanding* love the pleasures of time and sense more than the pleasures of Christ and heaven. Therefore, the *will* always acts upon this knowledge and these *affections*. The *will* is stimulated to choose sin every time: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be re-proved" (Joh 3:19-20).

O that the Holy Spirit would open your eyes today to see the awful state that you are in outside of Christ, and that He must give you a new heart and a new nature for you to savingly close in with the Lord Jesus Christ!

### *The Affections*

Now as we go into the second of these faculties today, that is, that we come to Christ savingly with our *affections*, let us notice first that the Scriptures teach this, and second we will show how the Holy Spirit inclines our *affections* unto Christ, for Galatians 5:6 tells us that "faith [true saving faith]...worketh by love."

In Romans 5:5 we read, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." It is in this way that we come to Christ savingly with our *affections*, because the Holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts and this sets the *affections* on fire after Christ as we behold in Him a suitable Savior for our never-dying souls.

In Romans 8:28 we read, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." We see here that there is more than just a mental assent to some truth; it is the *affections* going out to God in Christ; it is loving Him, setting a high value and esteem upon Him, so much so, that we are willing to leave all for Him.

We read again in 1 Corinthians 2:9 these words: "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." It reads, "that love Him," not only believe on Him, but

love Him. This is the *affections* going out after Him, as we see in Him the Giver of all things.

The apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:8, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” This is the *affections* going out after Him as we see how He will come for us in power and great glory. You see, the Second Coming of Christ to the believer is not just an event, but it is the glorious appearing of the One my soul has learned to love. As Colossians 3:2-3 puts it, our *affections* is set on things above, not on things on the earth, because we are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God.

In James 1:12 it is put this way: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him”—not only believe on Him, but whose *affections* is set upon Him.

Did you know that the Word of God pronounces a curse upon everyone who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ? 1 Corinthians 16:22 reads: “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.” Woe be to everyone who makes a profession of faith in Christ and yet does not love Him in truth, in sincerity! God demands more than just lip service, for hear His words in Matthew 15:8: “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.” Yes, Christ will have nothing less than the whole man. Our *affection* (Col 3:2)—singular, the whole man—must be set on Him.

You see, dear friend, it is a love that will make a poor sinner cry out like Job, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” Or like the bride in the Song of Solomon when speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem as she was seeking the Bridegroom, “Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?” Unto Job and the bride the Lord Jesus is precious, and they have to get to Him. And when we see a beauty and a glory in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, our hearts will be drawn out after Him, for we find in Him a safe hiding and resting place.

In the second place, we will try to show you how the Holy Spirit inclines our *affection* unto Christ. When the Holy Spirit begins to open our *hearts* to the preciousness of Christ in His condescension from heaven’s heights to earth’s depths to die in our place (1Pe 2:7), then there is a moving of the *heart* and the *affection* after Him. When the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to behold in the blood of Christ a cleansing (1Pe 1:18-19), then there is a moving of the *heart* and the *affection* after Him. When the Holy Spirit opens our *hearts* to behold the work that Christ performed in keeping the law perfect in our behalf and dying beneath the wrath of that broken law (Gal 3:13), then the *heart* and *affection* are moved toward Him. It is in this way—from the Scriptures—that the Holy Spirit produces true saving faith in our Hearts, and our *affections* are drawn out after the Lord Jesus.

Again, it is when the Holy Spirit opens our *hearts* to see that the perfect righteousness of Christ has been imputed to our account in heaven and that the justice of God has been satisfied for our sins that the *heart* and the *affection* are drawn out after Christ.

Yes, it is when the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to let us see that Christ has been made unto us wisdom for our ignorance, righteousness for our guiltiness, sanctification for our vileness, and redemption for our enslavement that our *hearts* and *affection* are moved out to Him (1Co 1:30).

This is how the Holy Spirit causes us to hate our sins as we see what they did to the One Whom we now love. It is in this way that the Holy Spirit enables us to leave the world with all its pleasure and sin, for we see in the world and our sins that which put the Lord Jesus Christ, our Beloved, to death.

It is in this way that the Holy Spirit frees the *will* so it will say “yes” to the Lord Jesus Christ, “yes” to His cross, “yes” to bearing His reproach, “yes” to the strait and narrow way, “yes” to a life of self-denial instead of self-pleasing. Why?—because the *understanding* has been enlightened to behold a beauty, a glory, and a majesty in the Person of the Son of God Who gave Himself for me, and now the *affection* goes out in love to Him and the WILL decides for Christ, appropriates Him, believes Him, and comes to rest by faith in sweet, blessed assurance upon Him.

Let me ask you: has the Holy Spirit thus dealt with your soul? Have you been enlightened by His quickening power? Have you seen any beauty in Christ that you might desire Him? Has your heart longed for Him as One you must have or die? Has your will closed with Christ? Have you come this way? If not, you are yet in your sins!

## 4. The Heart: The Will

We have laid before you from God’s Word in our last three messages four essential elements, or ingredients, of true saving faith whereby we may test whether or not we possess this grace of God in truth. Let me give them to you again today:

1. True saving faith consists of *a yielding to the authority of God*, which means a submitting of myself to His rule.
2. True saving faith consists of *a genuine coming to Christ*, which means that I leave sin behind.
3. True saving faith consists of *the complete surrender of my whole being and life to the lordship of Jesus Christ*, which means I embrace Christ in all of His offices: Prophet, Priest and King.
4. True saving faith consists of *a believing on Christ with the whole heart*, which means that I trust Him with the *understanding*, the *affections*, and the *will*.

It is this fourth essential ingredient of saving faith that we have considered in the last two messages and at which we desire to look again. We have seen that the Scriptures describe our believing with our *understanding* and our *affections*; now we must look at what the Scriptures teach concerning our *wills*.

Do you remember what we showed you in our past studies? that the three principle faculties of our being by which we come to Christ by faith and lay hold of Him to the sav-

ing of our never-dying souls are: the *understanding*, the *affections*, and the *will*; and that these three faculties are subordinate one to the other and follow in that order: *understanding*, *affections*, and *will*, one faculty being influenced by the other?

Then how do we come to Christ savingly with the *will*? To answer this question and be true to our living God, His unbroken Word, and to your never-dying soul, we must of necessity go slowly and tear down all prejudices that have been built up against the truth of God's Word concerning the *will* of man. Listen now as we go into this most important aspect of true saving faith!

The popular idea now prevailing, and which is taught from the majority of pulpits, is that man has a "free will," that salvation comes to the sinner through his making a decision for Christ and believing with his "free will" that Christ died for him, and that all a man has to do to be saved is to will it and it is done. But this is *not* what God's Word teaches by word or example; it teaches quite the opposite. Listen to Romans 9:16: "*it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*" We read in John 1:12-13, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Look at Romans 3:11, "there is none that seeketh after God." Why? because the *will* of man, being controlled by his darkened *understanding* and his prostituted *affections*, will never seek God apart from the quickening and saving power of the Holy Spirit working in him.

I know that to deny the "free will" of man (that he has the power to choose that which is good, an innate ability to accept Christ savingly) is to bring the fires of man's anger down upon my head. But how am I going to give you the truth of saving faith unless we expose that which is false? And this idea of fallen man's having a "free will" is false, and I must cry out against it. So before you throw us off as just another babbler as the Athenians did the apostle Paul, listen to what we have to say and test it by God's Word, peradventure God will open your heart to see the truth of His Word as He did mine.

The question is asked, "What is the *will*? We answer: The will is the faculty of choice, the immediate cause of all action. Choice necessarily implies the refusal of one thing and the acceptance of another. The positive and the negative must both be present to the mind before there can be any choice. In every act of the *will* there is a preference, the desiring of one thing rather than another. Where there is no preference, but complete indifference, there is no action by the *will*. To will is to choose, and to choose is to decide between two or more alternatives.

But there is something which influences the choice, something which determines the decision. Therefore, the *will* cannot be sovereign, because it is the servant of that something. The *will* cannot be both sovereign and servant; it cannot be both cause and effect; it can only make its choice when that something influences it. Therefore, the *will* cannot be called "free."

Now, that something which influences the *will* to make the choice that it does is, as we have showed you in past messages, the depraved, darkened *understanding* (Eph 4:18) and the depraved, prostituted *affections* (Isa 53:2).

This brings us to the question, “Is a man totally depraved? that is, has his moral being, faculties, and character been so corrupted by his fall in Adam that he does not now possess the moral willingness to choose that which is good, righteous and holy?” To this question the Bible gives a most emphatic, *yes!* It teaches that man is depraved, his moral ability to choose that which is good, righteous and holy is gone (Rom 3:10-12). It teaches that he lies dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-3). It teaches that he loves darkness rather than light because his deeds are evil; that he will not come to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd, because they are sinful (Joh 3:19-20). It teaches that there is none righteous, no, not one (Rom 3:10-13). It teaches that there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God (Psa 14:1-3). It teaches that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). It teaches that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). It teaches that out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murder, and pride (Mar 7:21). It teaches that man left to himself will only choose evil, because his whole moral being is prostituted because of sin. Therefore, the question is asked in Jeremiah 13:23, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” And the only answer to this is, *no!* Therefore, neither can any choose good that are accustomed to doing evil. That’s God’s Word, not mine. But can I tell you by experience that it is true.

To try and bring this out more clearly for our understanding, let us look at the human *will* in three different men: *unfallen Adam*, *the sinner* (which is you and I), and *the Lord Jesus Christ*.

In *unfallen Adam*, the *will* was free, free in both directions: free toward good and free toward evil. Adam was created in a state of innocence. His *will* was therefore in a condition of moral balance; that is, in Adam there was no constraining bias toward good or evil. Therefore, Adam in his unfallen state differed from all his descendants, as well as from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Man.

But with the *sinner* (which is you and I, the descendants of fallen Adam), it is different. The sinner is born with a *will* that is not in a condition of moral balance, because there is in us a heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and this gives us a bias toward evil.

So, too, with the *Lord Jesus Christ* it was far different. He also differed from unfallen Adam. The Lord Jesus Christ could *not sin* because He was the Holy One of God. Before He was born into this world it was said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that *Holy Thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luk 1:35). Specking reverently, the *will* of the Son of Man was not in a condition of moral balance, that is, capable of turning toward either good or evil. The *will* of the Lord Jesus was biased toward that which is good, because it was side by side with His eternal deity.

In the light of this, we have these facts before us: the *will* of Adam in his unfallen state was not biased; he and he alone of all the inhabitants of the earth has truly had a free *will*. He was capable of turning toward either good or evil. And we know that he did use that free *will*, plunging all of the human race into sinful chaos. In the Person of our Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, we have One whose *will* was biased toward good, so He could choose only that which was good, righteous, and holy. But in the case of fallen man, whose heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, we have a *will* which is biased toward evil, and therefore is “free” in one direction only, namely, in the direction of evil. The sinner’s *will* is enslaved because it is in bondage to, and is the servant of, a depraved heart.

It is because of this condition of man’s *will*, which is controlled by a depraved, darkened *understanding* and a depraved, prostituted *affection*, that we continue to set before you week after week the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in preparing the sinner’s heart for salvation: the work of the Holy Spirit is *necessary* to lay bare your heart and enable you to see your utter ruin before God; the work of the Holy Spirit is *necessary* to draw you with His cords of love; and the work of the Holy Spirit is *necessary* to free your *will* so you will say “yes” to Christ and His salvation (Joh 16:7-12).

To set before you more clearly this whole subject of the impotency of the human *will* of itself to choose Christ, His salvation, His righteousness and heavenly glory apart from the drawing power of the Holy Spirit, let us read together the account given of an awakened sinner who understood experientially exactly what we are talking about. In Romans 7 we have the Biblical experience of a man under Holy Spirit conviction. In verses 7-14 we have the account of the holy law of God doing its work as a schoolmaster to bring the poor sinner to Christ. The law, by the power of the Holy Spirit, forces its way into the heart and shows the poor sinner that he is under the curse of God because he has not kept the whole law perfectly. When the law said, “Thou shalt not covet,” the whole man was set on fire after lust, greed and pleasure. When the law said, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” then every fiber of this man’s being went out after the sin of forbidden things. When the law said, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,” then the most blasphemous thoughts and rebellion came into the heart. The law then condemns and brings death. It stirs up sin, but cannot take away sin.

The awakened man says, “The law is not to blame; it is holy, good, and righteous. It is only exposing what has been there in my heart all the time.” The poor sinner finds himself sold under sin, held captive by sin with no way out. Listen to him as he cries (v. 15), seeing himself, his sins and sin nature, and finds himself held captive by them. Listen to him as he *wills* and *desires* and *cries* to do that which is good, but finds no power to perform it. He *wills*, but to no avail: “For I do not understand my own actions. I am baffled, bewildered. I do not practice or accomplish what I desire, but I do the very thing I loathe. If then I do that which is contrary to my desire, I acknowledge and agree that the law is good and I take sides with it. Now it is no more I who does the deed, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to *will* is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not” (Rom

7:17-18). He is saying, “I can *will* what is right, but I cannot perform it. I have the intention and the urge to do what is right, but I have no power to carry it out.”

Follow on (v. 19): “For I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds that I do not desire to do are what I am doing!” He delights in the law of God after the inward man (v. 22), he desires the Word and prayer and holy things, but he now finds another law working in him (v. 23), bringing him into captivity and holding him there. He finds himself to be in a sad state; sin holds him captive, and the law of God, which showed him his condition, can only condemn him. He *wills* and desires to do that which is good, but has not the power to perform or to bring the desire into action.

Now hear him (v. 24): “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I am in a sad, sad state. I want to do good, but have no power to perform it. I do not want to do evil, but have no power against it. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Then he hears the good news of the gospel coming into his soul by true saving faith worked in him by the Holy Spirit. He then cries (v. 25): “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord; I am delivered, set free! The power and dominion of sin is broken by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ Who was slain beneath my sins, Who paid for them in full upon the cross, and is risen from the dead so I can stand justified before God in Him.” By this we can see that the Holy Spirit has freed his *will* to close in savingly with Christ. He now believes to the saving of his soul. He can now say, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Why?—because “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom 8:1-2).

Yes, because the Holy Spirit has done His work in the heart of this sinner, his *will* is set free to believe Christ with true saving faith and to know with assurance that what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for poor sinners, He has done for him: that he is now a child of God, a saved soul, kept by the power of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

We praise the Lord for such a salvation: for the work of the Holy Spirit to give us *understanding* of the truth, a new heart to love Christ with the *affection*, and to believingly close in with Christ with a *will* freed by His power.

Has God the Holy Spirit so worked in your heart? O that He will if He has not done so, that you, too, will know Christ in all of His saving power and see in Him a beauty and a glory!

## 5. Genuine Coming to Christ

We come today to our last message in this series on “*saving faith: what is it?*” We have shown you from God’s Word the four essential elements, or ingredients, of true saving faith, having dealt at length on the last one in our last three messages. Let me give them to you again:

1. Saving faith is *a yielding to the authority of god, submitting myself to his rule.*
2. Saving faith is *a genuine coming to and looking to Christ* for all things that are needed in salvation.
3. Saving faith consists of *the complete surrender of my whole being and life to the lordship of Jesus Christ.*
4. Saving faith is *a believing on Christ with the whole heart*, trusting Him with the *understanding*, the *affections* and the *will*.

Now in this last message I am impressed by the Holy Spirit to look in more detail at the second element of saving faith, which is *a genuine coming to and looking to Christ* for all things that are needed in salvation.

Dear friend, if we are to be saved by and through Christ; if we are to stand before God in Christ justified, sanctified, righteous and cleansed from all sin, then the Scriptures plainly declare in a multitude of places that it shall be through faith; and Christ Himself is to be the only object of this faith. Yes, the Scriptures declare that it is by the grace of God in Christ that we are saved; and His so great salvation *is through faith worked in our understanding, our affections and our wills by the Holy Spirit.*

You see, it has pleased our Sovereign God that the just shall live by faith (Rom 1:17), the object of that faith being the Lord Jesus Christ; also that all the blessings that come to us through His eternal Son are to be received through the channel of faith. Therefore, we hear it stated in Hebrews 11:6 that “without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

I desire that you listen to a few of the Scriptures that set forth this gracious truth: “The just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:17); “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom 10:10); God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation—how? “Through faith in his blood” (Rom 3:25); “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom 4:3); and “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom 4:5). Again, Romans 3:25 says the blessing of sins forgiven comes to us through faith in the blood of Christ Jesus. Also, Romans 3:27 says we are justified before God, counted righteous before Him, as we look to Christ and His perfect righteousness by faith. Galatians 2:20 declares that all spiritual life is received into the soul “by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Galatians 3:26 says we are “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”; and according to Ephesians 3:12 and Romans 5:2, our access to God, our coming into His very presence, is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is set before us as the object of our faith and hope.

#### *What Is Saving Faith?*

I believe we have given Scriptural proof that the just shall live by faith, and that without faith it is impossible to please God. Now I am sure you will ask: “What is faith, and how is it described in the Scriptures?” Listen as we try to answer this question.

The act of faith, the coming to Christ as the object of our faith, is described in the Scriptures under many names. In Isaiah 45:22 we find the word, “*look*” to describe saving faith. “*look* unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else.” This same truth is brought out in Hebrews 12:1-2, “let us run with patience the race that is set before us, *looking* unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” Again, this truth of using the *eyes* of the soul to see Him Who is invisible is given us by John the Baptist in John 1:29: “*behold* the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” Yes, the *eye of faith* goes out of oneself to Him Who alone has been lifted up for our transgressions and raised again for our justification (Rom 4:25).

Also the *ear* is used to show how saving faith comes into the soul. In Isaiah 55:3 we read: “Incline your *ear*, and come unto me: *hear*, and your soul shall live.” John 5:25 tells us that the dead (the spiritually dead), “shall *hear* the voice of the Son of God [as He speaks from His Word by His Spirit]: and they that *hear* shall live.” And as Romans 10:17 tells us, “faith cometh by *hearing*, and hearing by the Word of God.” So in all these Scriptures, faith is described as hearing.

The Scriptures also use the expression “*take*,” as a means to describe saving faith: “And whosoever will, let him *take* the water of life freely” (Rev 22:17); “But as many as *received* him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Joh 1:12). Here faith is described as a *hand* that takes and receives.

Then, Matthew 7:7 and Romans 10:13 show how the *mouth* is used as a means of faith: “Ask, and it shall be given you;” “For whosoever shall *call* upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Yes, we are to ask and to call, and this is an act of faith. And again we read these words in Romans 10:9-10: “That if thou shalt confess with thy *mouth* the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the *mouth* confession is made unto salvation.”

How gracious our living God is to us, to give us such an array of descriptions by which we may know how to come to Christ savingly! The members of the physical body are used to describe how the soul comes to Christ savingly. With the *feet* we walk and stand in faith. With the *hands* we take and receive in faith. With the *eyes* we behold by faith Him Who is invisible. With the *ears* we hear His voice by faith as He speaks to us out of His Word. With the *mouth* we call upon Him in faith. And then, with all our affections, described as the *heart*, we believe and trust Him as He is lifted up out of the Word by His Spirit.

Also, as we have described in our past messages, this saving faith works by love: the affections are drawn out to Christ as He is lifted up in the gospel, and the Holy Spirit, Who has been given us, makes us willing in the day of His power to close in with Christ.

Now in Hebrews 11:1 we find a Scriptural description of faith: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” As the Amplified translation puts it, “Faith is assurance [the confirmation, the title-deed] of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality—faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses.” Dear friend, I believe if we would take

these words and refer them to saving faith, we would understand them to mean *confidence* in the Lord's character and motives, *confidence* in His ability to perform all that He said He would do, and the *assurance* that He cannot lie; for He is "the faithful and true witness" (Rev 1:5).

*The faith that saves has the word of God as its basis, its foundation:* "for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17). Therefore, faith acknowledges the necessity and merit of Christ's death and the power of His resurrection. It acknowledges Christ's death as the only sufficient means of redeeming the soul from eternal death in hell, and His resurrection as the sufficient power in the gospel to save, keep and give victory over sin. The faith that saves believes and appropriates the Word: "He was delivered up for our sins, and raised again for our justification" (Rom 4:25). You see, the Christian faith, the faith that saves, gives assent to *the whole gospel*, relying fully on the blood of Christ as having been shed in his behalf to put away his sins from before the face of a sin-hating God.

Again, *saving faith is a practical thing*. It is not some fantasy, nor far-fetched idea of getting to some place, some experience, or some feeling. Oh no! saving faith is taking God at His Word and looking only to Christ for all that is needed for time and eternity. It is resting the whole man in the hands of the whole Christ, Who is Prophet, Priest and King. It is like the diseased woman touching the hem of His garments, or like the man in the temple smiting himself upon his breast. In the same manner you cry like Jacob, "I will not let you go until you bless me" (Gen 32:26), or as Ephraim, "Turn me Lord, and I shall be turned" (Jer 31:18). Yours is the cry of Peter: "Lord, save me!" (Mat 14:30), and of Job: "Though you slay me, yet will I trust you" (Job 13:15).

Then we find that the Psalms are full of the cry of faith which are given us to plead like the Psalmist day by day. Psalm 38:15, "For in thee, O Lord, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God." Psalm 32:7, "Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." Psalm 57:2, "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me." Psalm 106:4, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation." Dear friend, all of these and many more have been left poor, seeking, believing sinners who cry unto the living God; for these are cries of faith.

Again, saving faith draws from Christ justification, righteousness, peace, joy, deliverance, mercy, grace, hope, strength, blessings, guidance and forgiveness. Faith casts the whole man upon Christ for time and eternity in the practical things of everyday life; for faith is the lifeline between the soul and its Savior, between earth and heaven. Faith cries unto Christ for all things, in all things: for victory over sin, self, Satan and the world. Faith reminds the Savior of His promises and will not let go until the blessing comes.

Saving faith knows only *one life*, that which is lived by the faith of the Son of God (Gal 2:20). Faith believes in the future life, but it knows also that *it must overcome in this life*, and therefore goes to its Author and Finisher, Jesus Christ Himself. Faith knows that its strength lies in Christ and it continues to go to Him day by day; for like Peter it says, "to whom shall I go? thou alone has the words of eternal life" (Joh 6:68).

You see, based upon the eternal Word, God's promise, faith knows that it will not be denied; it knows that 1 John 5:14-15 is the very truth of God: "This is the *confidence* that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

Having now set before you this precious gift of *saving faith* by the grace of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit, my prayer is that our gracious, living God will be pleased to honor His Word, and work this grace of faith in your heart.

## Part Two

# Saving Faith: Who Is Its Object?

## 1. All of Christ

In past messages on the subject of true saving faith and how it is produced in the soul, my one desire has been to be true to the living God, His unbroken Word, and to your never-dying souls. I leave the results to Him Who said, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa 55:11). In this present series of messages then, I have been led by the Holy Spirit to point you to the One Who is the OBJECT of true saving faith, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who came for the express purpose of bringing many sons into glory, and to Whom we are commanded to look for God's salvation. Yes, the Scriptures are plain that God has set before us His only Begotten Son as the object of true saving faith, declaring that only in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3), and that the way to the Father and the glories of heaven is by and through the Son Who declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn.14:6). Follow us now into this subject, trusting the Holy Spirit to direct our hearts unto Christ, Who is the *object* of true saving faith.

John the Baptist, who came upon the scene as the forerunner of God's Substitute for sinners, said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (Joh 1:29). He said in effect, "If you desire salvation, deliverance from and the forgiveness of sin, to be justified before God and to have a home in heaven at last, then look to Him and Him alone Who was lifted up for our offences and raised again for our justification, even Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God. Yes, John the Baptist spoke the key words of all the

prophets, evangelists and apostles when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Let us see how this truth is so clearly set forth in the Scriptures: To the large crowd gathered on the day of Pentecost who had been convicted in their hearts of the sin of crucifying the Lord of Glory, Brother Peter declared, "God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ...repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Act 2:36, 38). Brother Peter pointed these awakened souls to the Object of saving faith, to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Not to themselves, not to their conviction, not to the church, but to the Person of Christ, Who had offered Himself without spot to God, so by His one offering for sin many could be made righteous and brought into glory.

Again, when he stood with brother John before the Sanhedrin, that body of men who had our Blessed Lord put to death, Peter declared that there is salvation in none other but the Lord Jesus Christ: "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Act 4:12). Therefore, the only Person to Whom we can look for salvation for the deliverance from the power and penalty of sin is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Lord of Glory.

In Acts 5, when all of the apostles were brought before the Sanhedrin, we find Peter again firmly and boldly declaring that it was Christ Jesus the Lord and Him alone Whom God had exalted with His right hand to the place of honor, to be a Prince and a Savior, "For to give repentance and forgiveness of sin." Once again we are told that the Object of saving faith is none other than the God-Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was lifted up for our offences and raised again for our justification (Rom 4:25).

We find in Acts 8 the story of Philip the evangelist, being sent to Gaza to instruct the Ethiopian eunuch. And how did he instruct him? Philip took the very Scripture which the eunuch was reading (Isa 53) and began to preach unto him Jesus, how He was God manifested in the flesh, sent to bear witness of the righteous and holy Father, being full of grace and truth. Philip preached unto him Jesus, the One Who came to save His people from their sins. He preached unto him Jesus, the One Who came to die for the ungodly so the ungodly, by faith in His precious Person, in His precious blood and in His gracious redemptive grace, could be saved from the wrath of God and the never-ending second death in hell. Yes, Philip pointed this precious soul unto Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

As we go further in the Book of Acts, we find in chapter 13 that brother Paul in his message at Antioch proclaimed: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." They were pointed unto a Person Who was to be the object of their faith, for it was He Who could forgive them of their sins, He alone. They were not pointed to some priest or preacher, some church or set of rules, but unto Christ Himself Who alone can save.

Also, when answering the question of the convicted and convinced Philippian jailer as to what he must do to be saved (Act 16), brother Paul and brother Silas answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The object of his faith, to be true saving faith, was to be the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was to see in Him his only hope for deliverance from the power and penalty of sin. He was to see in the Lord, His King and Ruler; he was to see in Jesus, his Savior and High Priest; and he was to see in Christ, God's anointed One, Who was to teach him. The object of his faith was to be the whole Savior, the whole Deliverer in all of His offices: as Prophet to teach him, as Priest to die for him and as Lord to rule over him. Oh, what a blessed Person then is held before us in the gospel! this Person of the Lord Jesus Christ Whom God has set forth as a covering for our sins through faith in His blood (Rom 3:25).

Let me lay it out before you in love. For our faith to be true saving faith, it must have the whole Christ as its Object: it must have in view the Lord Jesus Christ in ALL of His offices or the eye of faith is not singular, but double. It must have in view the Person of Christ Himself, not the fruits of salvation, not what He gives, but His Person. The benefits of this looking to Him will come, for He gives abundantly; but these benefits are not the object of our faith. Salvation will come; remission of sins and eternal life He will give; justification will be ours; He will be made sanctification unto us; He will give access to God and the Gift of the Holy Spirit, spiritual light and rest in heaven, but it is to HIM that we look for all these precious gifts; we must look to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ for these things. Without Him, His Person, being the Object of our faith, none of these benefits will be ours. Don't get me wrong! I am not taking away from His blessed benefits, for surely these are the tokens of His love, but it is with Himself that He wants us to be taken up, not so much with His gifts. I praise the Lord that the Scriptures declare Christ to be our Peace; but peace is not to be the object of our faith, only Christ Himself. To have peace without Christ is to have nothing but a bubble that will burst. The Scriptures declare Christ to be our Joy, but joy is not to be the object of our faith, only Christ Himself. Alas! How many poor souls make peace and joy the objects of their faith, so when peace and joy have fled away, they have no salvation. They are looking to their peace and joy instead of Him of Whom it is said, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever," the One Who changes not (Heb 13:8).

The apostle Paul in writing to the Hebrews declared, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us..." Doing what? Looking to the depravity of our own hearts? NO! Looking to our doubts and fears? NO! Looking to our joys and peace? NO! Looking to our fellow-traveler? NO! But "...looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb 12:1-2). He tells us to go outside of ourselves and have in view one Person and one Person only, the God-Man Christ Jesus, the One Who came in the likeness of sinful flesh so He might die in the place of His people and pay their sin-debt in full. Oh, that I could cry around the world, "Look unto Jesus; He is the Author and Finisher of our faith!"

Also, in Philippians 3 brother Paul prayed that he might be found in Christ, that he might know Him. It made no difference what else he had or what else he knew; his only

desire, which was truly a saving desire, was to know the Person of Christ and to be in Him and then he would be satisfied. Then the Lord Jesus Himself in His high priestly prayer of John 17 declared: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (vs. 3). Yes, we must know Him in that living, loving and lasting union of salvation. So we declare unto you today that the Scriptures set forth all things as being in a Person, Christ; therefore, we must know Him; our eye of faith is to be upon Him. We are to embrace Him if indeed we exercise true saving faith.

To know Christ then, is to be accepted in Him, to be identified with His Person, and to be saved and safe forever in Him. Listen to how the Scriptures put this blessed truth: "accepted *in the beloved*" (Eph 1:6); "made to sit together in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*" (Eph 2:6); "created *in Christ Jesus* unto good works" (Eph 2:10); "*In Christ Jesus* ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph 2:13); "ye are light *in the Lord*" (Eph 5:8); "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*" (Rom 8:1); "nothing is able to separate us from the love of God, which is *in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom 8:39); "therefore if any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Co 5:17). Oh how precious it is to know that God has purposed, planned and given to sinners a salvation that puts them into the eternal Son of God!

What a blessed portion this is then, for those who have the Lord Jesus Christ as the Object of their faiths. They and they alone are accepted in Him, known of Him and blessed by Him. They can say with the apostle Paul in Galatians 2:20, "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." They can say with the bride, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his" (Song 2:16). They can say with blessed assurance, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom 5:1-5).

What a blessed hope to have the person of the Lord Jesus Christ full in faith's sight.

Can you say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His"? If not, I can tell you today where to get this faith, and that is by searching His precious Word, crying for the Holy Spirit to work this faith in you, because "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom 10:17).

*I was once far away from the Savior,  
And as vile as a sinner could be;  
I wonder'd if Christ the Redeemer,  
Would save a poor sinner like me.*

*I was wandering on in the darkness,  
Not a ray of the light could I see,  
The thought fill'd my heart with sadness,  
There's no hope for a sinner like me.*

*And then, in that dark, lonely hour,  
A voice whispered sweetly to me,  
Saying, Christ the Redeemer has power,  
To save a poor sinner like me.*

*I listened and lo! 'twas the Savior,  
That was speaking so kindly to me,  
I cried, I'm the chief of sinners,  
Thou cans't save a poor sinner like me.*

*I then fully trusted in Jesus,  
And Oh what a joy came to me!  
My heart was filled with His praises,  
For saving a sinner like me.*

—C. J. Butler

## **2. The Surety of the New Covenant**

My heart's desire and prayer is that each one of you would know personally the Lord Jesus Christ in that living, loving and lasting union of salvation which God Himself has prepared for all of His people. Yes, my prayer unto my living Lord has been that He by His Spirit will so work in the hearts and lives of each one of you dear friends that you may hunger and thirst after the Person of Christ, to be found in Him, not having your own righteousness, but "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ" (Rom 3:22; Phi 3:9).

In this present series on True Saving Faith, we have seen that it pleases God to save poor sinners by His grace through the medium of faith; and the only Object of that faith is the lovely Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I desire to set before you the Lord Jesus Christ, the object of true saving faith, in His Person as our Surety, the Surety of the New Covenant. Listen to these Scriptures! "He [Christ] is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb 8:6). "For all the promises of God in him [Christ] are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2Co 1:20). "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure" (2Sa 23:5).

When we think of the everlasting covenant as revealed in the Scripture, we must go back to the ages before the fall. We find there in the Counsels of Eternity, that covenant that was made between the Father and the Son. There, foreseeing the ruin that was to

come upon the human race through the awful power of sin, God the Father entered into a covenant with His beloved Son. There the Lord Jesus, our “Great Shepherd of the sheep”, signed the covenant as our Surety in His own precious blood: “Now the God of peace...brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb 13:20). There, on the condition that Christ would assume the liabilities and nature of His fallen people, the Father guaranteed to give Him a complete salvation, ordered in all things and sure (Isa 55:3) for His blood-bought people. Yes, He promised to give to Christ as our Representative, all those for whom He died as a reward to share His glory and be heirs with Him in His kingdom (Joh 17:2, 6, 11, 22-24; Rom 8:17; Eph 1:3; Heb 2:10-11).

On the part of Christ as our Surety since we have sinned. and come short of the glory of God-it was necessary that HE should take the sinner’s place, that HE should stoop from His high and exalted position and become not only a man, but a despised and a rejected Man, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa 53:1-5). He was to die upon the cross as a Sacrifice for the sins of His people who had forfeited all claims to God and His salvation. It meant that Christ was to be made sin for us so we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2Co 5:21). It meant that Christ was to go to the cruel cross and bear the taunts and cruelties of men, the pains of death and the assaults and insults of the devil and all his legions. It meant that Christ would pay the supreme sacrifice for His people, so the justice and holiness of God would be satisfied. Oh, what a wonderful and beautiful Savior is set before the eye of faith in the gospel! It is the sight of a bleeding, suffering, dying Surety, Who died in the place of those for whom He went their bond. What a wonderful and beautiful savior is set before the eye of faith in the gospel! It is unto Him that we are encouraged to look for salvation, for *Christ is the object of true saving faith.*

Not only was Christ to die beneath the sins of those for whom He became Surety, but He was to take their sins far away into the grave and leave them there, showing that He had paid for them in full by His rising the third day. Yes, Christ was to come forth as the First-born from among the dead, so for the ages to come He would sit upon the throne in heaven, interceding for them as a merciful and faithful High Priest. Yes, as part of the covenant, He would undertake for them as High Priest, bearing the burdens of His people, making continual intercession for them, enduring with much patience their many infirmities and failures, and guarding them with unceasing love until His work might be completed in all their lives. What a wonderful and beautiful savior is set before the eye of faith in the gospel, that Christ sits upon the right hand of the Father in heaven as the High Priest and Representative of His people, ever living to intercede for them so He might present them faultless in Himself in the last great day!

Let us see, then, what the heavenly Father will do as His part of the everlasting covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. On account of the fulfillment of these conditions met by Christ, the Father promised He would give eternal life to all who received His Son and came to Him by faith. He promised He would create within them a new heart, freely forgiving and justifying them from all their transgressions (Eze 36:26). To

ensure all of this; He promised to send His Holy Spirit Who would work in the hearts and lives of each one for whom Christ died (Joh 16:7-11). The Holy Spirit would sanctify and perfect them in holiness. He would supply them with all needed grace, power, love and blessing, imparting to them a new, divine nature that would hunger and desire after Christ.

Further, He promised that His Spirit would take up His abode in them and witness with their spirits that they have indeed been made heirs of His glory and partakers of His divine nature (Rom 8:15-17; 2Pe 1:4). He promised that the Holy Spirit would write this new covenant upon the hearts of each one who comes to Christ so they would endure to the end (Heb 8:10). Also, He promised that the Holy Spirit would take the things of Christ and reveal them unto these precious, believing sinners so they would be taken up with the Object of their faith, the Lord Jesus Christ (1Co 2:10). He further promised that the Holy Spirit would at last raise them from the dead, glorifying them with the Lord Jesus in the ages to come with a place of honor and blessing higher than Adam ever knew, higher than angels shall ever possess, more than compensating for all the evils and miseries of the fall (Rom 8:11). *What a wonderful and gracious savior is set before the eye of faith in the gospel!* This is solid, meaningful truth on which faith can rest as it goes out of itself unto the Person of Christ as set forth in the gospel.

I know what you are asking: “What was Christ’s answer to the Father when this everlasting covenant of grace was proposed?” Listen to Psalm 40:7-8 where it is recorded that our blessed Lord Jesus accepted this covenant and became our Surety: “Lo, I come,” was His glad answer, “in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, Oh my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” Yes, He willingly and joyously agreed to the terms of the everlasting covenant, for He said while He was here on earth, “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (Joh 10:17-18).

Our blessed Lord and Surety came, lived, loved, and died, and at last could say in His closing prayer as He committed His work to the Father, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (Joh 17:4); and on the cross He could shout, “It is finished” (Joh 19:30). Yes, it is finished; Christ has finished the work of redemption; praise the Lord! This is the word of faith that we preach to you, that “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom 10:4); and that “if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom 10:9-10). *What a wonderful and gracious savior is set before the eye of faith in the gospel,* One Who was willing to bear in His own body on the cruel cross all of our sins, making us His very own by the new birth and adoption!

The question is asked, “How do we know that God the Father is satisfied with the work of Christ as set forth in the everlasting covenant?” I answer, He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand, the place of honor and glory. Yes, the Fa-

ther put His seal upon the finished work of Christ by raising Him from the dead and so declaring forever that the covenant had been fulfilled, the conditions met, and the great redemption completed. Therefore we can say that Christ's resurrection from the tomb and His ascension into glory is the seal of all this.

These precious words in Hebrews 1:3 always stand out as proof that Christ has finished the work of salvation: "When he [Christ] had by himself purged our sins, [He] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Don't you see in this verse that if there had been one sin or failure of His people that had not been paid for in full, Christ would not have been accepted back into heaven? But He was, which is clear proof that as our Surety He had accomplished all that was required of Him. Therefore He sat down at the right hand of the Father as our Representative, and we have been accepted in Him, the Beloved One (Eph 1:6). *What a wonderful and gracious savior is set before the eye of faith in the gospel,*

We have further proof that the Father was satisfied with the Surety's work because when Christ returned to heaven, He sent the love-gift of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to His people. Listen to what Peter said in his sermon in Acts 2:33: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Yes, the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was a second seal that the Surety's work was complete and that the everlasting covenant was ordered in all things, and sure (Eph 1:13-14).

The salvation of every believer since that day has been a further seal that the covenant is satisfied and forever holds fast. Yes, every answer to prayer in the name of Jesus and every blessing that comes to our life are echoes from the cross: "It is finished;" and we KNOW that the covenant is fulfilled and ordered in all things and SURE. This is the ground of our salvation. It is not because we have a covenant with God, but our Lord Jesus has; and we are accepted in Him as we come to Him by faith, looking only to our Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, it is all in Christ. We come into His covenant by His power, for He could say to the Father in John 17:2, "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." And then He could add, "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (Joh 17:11).

What a wonderful and gracious savior is set before the eye of faith in the gospel: the Person of our Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ! So look to Him and live; for as Romans 10:17 tells us, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. My prayer is that as you have heard the Word of God in this message, the Holy Spirit will give true saving faith to look to the Object, the Lord Jesus Christ, our eternal SURETY.

### 3. Christ's Willingness to Save Sinners

“Blessed Lord, by Thy Spirit take Your message home to the heart of each reader. Cause them to hear as for eternity. Work Thy work of grace in their hearts. Send the effectual, irresistible call of grace to their hearts to cause them to close in with Christ.” Oh, that the Lord would revive His work in the midst of the years is my prayer, that in wrath He will remember mercy! And I ask you who are on pleading grounds and interceding terms with the Lord to join me, pleading and wrestling in prayer that He will rend the heavens and come down and pour upon us His Spirit, that souls may seek His face and turn in repentance and faith to Him.

As we continue this present series on Saving Faith, I want to repeat once again, that the wonderful Personage set before us in the Scriptures, as the Object for faith to lay hold of, is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who alone is provided for sinners as God's salvation. The apostle Paul tells us in Philippians that after he had been awakened by the Holy Spirit to his awful, ruined, sinful condition before God, he was made to cry after Christ, to desire Him above all things, and to know Him as He was lifted up in the Word: “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Phi 3:7-10). And as with the apostle Paul, so with every sinner whom God saves: he is made to hunger and thirst after the Person of Christ as He is revealed out of the Scriptures and lifted up in His offices as Prophet, Priest and King.

In this message, I feel led of the Holy Spirit to lay before our hearts CHRIST, the object of saving faith, as revealed in His willingness to save sinners. In Revelation 3:20 we read, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” May the Lord be pleased to take His Word home to our hearts as we behold Christ, the One Who is willing to save sinners and have communion with them. I trust to bring before our hearts three things: Christ's willingness as seen *in His incarnation*, His willingness as seen *in His walk among men* in the days of His flesh, and His willingness as seen *in His death and resurrection* on our behalf.

#### *In His incarnation*

First, let us see Christ as the object of saving faith in HIS WILLINGNESS TO BECOME MAN. As we showed you in our last message, the Lord Jesus Christ agreed to become the Surety of the everlasting covenant and to die in the place of His people. From eternity He agreed to the terms of the covenant of grace by telling the Father, “Lo I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God” (Psa

40:7-8). The terms of the covenant were that He would make His soul an offering for sin, so He would see His seed and the travail of His soul, and would be satisfied. Yes, He put a high value upon our souls by submitting to such costly terms to redeem us. Therefore, this willingness on the part of our blessed Lord to submit Himself to death for His people is set before us in the Scriptures as something solid for saving faith to lay hold of, for it shows His love for poor sinners like you and me.

#### *In His walk among men*

In the second place, I would set before you CHRIST as the object of saving faith in HIS WILLINGNESS TO ASSUME OUR NATURE. In Hebrews 2:16 we read, “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” Yes, He passed by the fallen angels that He might take on the nature of fallen man to save him from his ruin. Rom.8:3 brings out this truth in these words: “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.” His body was not sinful, but perfect and holy; but He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Or as John 1:14 tells us, “And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”

The whole life of Christ upon earth was an evident proof and demonstration of the desire of His heart to save us from the pit of destruction and be in union and communion with us. He said in John 17:19: “For their sakes I sanctify myself”, or, “I set myself apart unto death for them; I freely give myself up to God as a Sacrifice for them.” His miracles were works of mercy to show His willingness to save and sanctify sinners. His power was employed to heal, deliver, and save the souls of men. His first message in the synagogue of Nazareth was a message of grace. Listen to Luke 4:18-19: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” His whole life in this world was nothing else but a wooing, a drawing of the hearts of sinners to Himself. He rejected not the vilest of sinners, but declared plainly that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Mat 9:13).

His doctrine, or teaching, was a wooing and inviting doctrine. Never a man spake as He spoke. Whenever He opened His lips, heaven opened, the very heart of God was opened to sinners. Listen to His gracious invitation to poor, sin-sick souls: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mat 11:28). “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (Joh 7:37). Hear Him as He weeps over Jerusalem, and see Him as the willing One to save sinners: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!” (Luk 13:34).

Oh, that I could lift up Christ so you would see in Him a beauty and a glory in His willingness to save sinners!

The joy He always expressed for the success of the gospel speaks of His interest in saving sinners. Listen to Luke 10:21: “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I

thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

*In His death and resurrection*

But I believe the third point of our message brings out the greatest scene of His willingness to save sinners, and that is in His DEATH. Yes, the death of Christ is the fullest demonstration that He loves sinners and desires to save them and have communion with them. He was put to death in the flesh; His body was violently rent asunder by the wrath of both man and God while He became sin for us. He died a cursed death, the cursed death of the cross. He hung on the cross as a sin offering for us, because He bore our sins. Our sins were put upon Him as He hung in our place to pay in full the sin-debt that we owe to God's broken law.

But seeing Christ lifted up in the Scriptures as my Substitute, I believe the inward agonies that He suffered were far greater than His bodily sufferings: His very soul was made an offering for sin, and it made Him cry unto God for the deliverance from sin to no avail, for He was the sinner's Substitute. Oh, what suffering must the holy soul of Christ have gone through as He had to drink the bitter cup of our ruin! He felt in His soul that awful forsaking by the Father that made Him cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Listen, poor sin-tossed soul, to that agonizing cry from the heart and lips of Him Who was made to be sin for you, and let that cry break your heart: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Why? because God is of purer eyes than to behold sin. He lays it on the back of His Son and punishes it.

Oh, as you hear that cry from the cross from Him Who was forsaken of God for you, I ask, What think you now of the willingness of Christ to save your soul? Do you still listen to the voice of Satan, that Christ's death is not for you? Oh, do you not see by faith in His willingness to go to hell for you, a sure sign that He will receive you and save you by His blood, by His power, and by His grace if you cast yourself upon Him?

I hear someone say, “But Pastor, you don't know the vileness, the wretchedness, and guiltiness of my never-dying soul! Therefore, I am afraid He won't receive me.” But, my dear awakened sinner friend, this is all the more a reason for your closing in with Him, for He calls for the halt, the blind, the withered, the lost and the sinful to come unto Him and find salvation, deliverance, hope and mercy. Your very vileness commends you unto God, for He came to save sinners from their sin. Listen, and let me tell you that heaven is filled with dunghill sinners washed by faith in the blood of the Lamb. Heaven is filled with sinners who, being lost, cried after Christ for deliverance and mercy and were saved. Yes, heaven is filled with dunghill sinners, while the self-righteous are left on the outside.

See in the death of Christ His willingness to deliver us from sin, self, Satan and the world! See in His death the full payment of all the demands of the broken law! See in His death a complete righteousness for guilty sinners! Oh, dear friend, see in the death of Christ FULL PAYMENT to the justice of God for the law you have broken! See in His death a cleansing from all sin, a putting away of sin forever! Hear Him say: “I, even I, am

he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Isa 43:25)! Hear Him when He says, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee” (Isa 44:22)! With the ear of faith hear Him saying, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, those who have fled to Me for refuge, for I have abundantly pardoned them.” See Him with the eye of faith as He poured out His life’s blood to fill the fountain of cleansing for your never-dying soul! See in His resurrection your justification before God (Rom 4:25).

I hear someone say, “Lord, I am convinced I am nothing but an unclean thing. I have nothing but a hateful, sinful heart and nature. I am nothing but a heap of uncleanness, an abhorrence to God and myself! How shall such a heart as mine be cleansed?” Oh, my friend, let me tell you today that Christ hears you as you mourn over sin. Listen to what He says: “Come unto me, for I am a Fountain of Cleansing opened to cleanse you from all your sins and to wash you whiter than snow.” Therefore, let me persuade you to close in with Christ, for He loves your sinful soul and His desire is to save you. Come, find in Him all that God has prepared for sinful men! Come just as you are! Come wholly as you are! Come only as you are! Come to Christ and find in Him a sure resting place for your sinful, darkened, never-dying soul! May God the Holy Spirit enable you to come is my prayer.

## 4. We Must “Know Christ”

As we continue to answer the question: “Saving faith: Who is its object?” we have been considering the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Lord of Glory, Who was sent to work out God’s salvation by the shedding of His Own precious blood.

Everywhere in Scripture the Lord Jesus Christ is set before us as the Object of our faith, and that to know HIM is salvation. To know Him in that living, loving, and lasting union should be the one desire of every soul under the sound of my voice today, for to know Him is to have *life*, eternal life. To know Him is to have your sins forgiven and blotted out forever before the face of our sovereign God by the precious blood of our Redeemer. To know Him is to be partaker of the divine nature of Christ and to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. To know Him is to be made suitable to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. To know Him is to be delivered from the power of darkness and to be translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col 1:12-13). Yes, to know Christ is to know the power of His cleansing blood, and to know the preciousness of that blood which flowed from Emmanuel’s veins.

Do you have an interest in Christ? Can you say, “I know Him”? Do you know anything about the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment? Do you know anything about mourning over sin as being committed against a holy God? Do you know anything about your powerlessness against sin? Do you know

anything about the evil heart of unbelief that possesses every soul outside of Christ? Can you say, "As a poor, lost sinner I lay at His feet in repentance with a hatred for sin, knowing the burden and guilt of sin, desiring to be delivered by the Lord Jesus Christ?" Do you know anything about waiting before God for the Holy Spirit to work faith and assurance in your heart by the eternal word of God?

If you say, "Yes, Pastor, that is the way the Holy Spirit has dealt, or is dealing, with my heart; I want to know Christ and Him alone in the salvation of my never-dying soul," then will you listen as we go into our message today on Christ as the Object of true saving faith because of the shedding of His precious blood?

In 1 Peter 1:18-19 we read, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Yes, it is through the redeeming blood of Christ that we are saved. It is through faith in His shed blood on the cross that we are cleansed from all sin. We see in our text the precious blood of a precious Lord, shed for the remission of sins: the precious blood of the precious God, the precious blood of the suffering Savior, the precious blood of the precious Redeemer, and the precious blood of the precious Lamb slain for the sins of His people! Therefore, the Scriptures declare that without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin (Heb 9:22).

We hear the Lord speaking to our hearts about the blood of Christ in these words: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exo 12:13); or, "When I see the blood of Christ applied to your heart by faith, then I will pass over you." Christ's death on the cross makes an atonement for the lost soul. And that death is manifested in the shed blood of Christ. It is the blood of Christ that reconciles you unto God. It is the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that cleanseth from all sin (1Jo 1:9). Let me repeat it over and over: It is through faith in His blood (Rom 3:25) that all the benefits of Christ's death upon the cross become ours. It is not when we see the blood, but it is when, by faith, we apply that precious blood to the door posts of our hearts and God sees the blood that God's condemnation and judgment no longer rests upon us. Yes, it is when He sees the blood.

I press home to your hearts the value of the blood of Christ and this searching question: Do you have a personal interest in that blood that flowed from the Savior's body on the cross? Oh, to have an interest in that precious blood, to know its power to deliver from sin, its power to cleanse from sin, its power to sanctify us in spirit, soul and body! To know its power as it speaks to our hearts from the pages of Holy Writ should be the cry of each heart today.

The questions are asked, "Wherein does the power of the precious blood of Christ lie? How is it set forth in Scripture as that which cleanses me, a poor, lost, guilty, vile, sin-laden sinner?" Listen now as we try, by the gracious Holy Spirit, to set before you this precious blood!

First, the precious blood of Christ has A REDEEMING POWER, because it redeems us from the curse of the law. Listen to Galatians 3:13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that

hangeth on a tree.” Yes, because we were under the death penalty of God’s holy law for breaking it in every point, then we could only be brought out from under its curse and its penalty if Someone became a curse for us, paying the price it demanded. The Lord Jesus Christ, loving us with a real, self-sacrificing love, came and took our place, being made a curse for us, and poured out His lifeblood to deliver us from the curse of God. Therein we see the power of the blood to save us, because that was precious, holy blood yes, God’s blood, that was shed for the remission of our sins (Acts 20: 28). So when a poor, lost sinner comes with repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and His shed blood, then our gracious God will justify him freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus our Lord, delivering Him from sin and the wrath to come.

The POWER of the precious blood of Christ lies also in its ATONING EFFICACY, for it is the blood which makes an atonement for the soul. You see, my friend, in the Old Testament God never forgave sin apart from the shedding of blood; the blood alone put away sin. God never forgave sin apart from a substitute, a sacrificial offering; it was only by blood that a sinner could appease a holy God. It was only by the blood of the appointed slain animal that the high priest could enter into the most holy place once a year, for that blood spoke of the shedding of blood by our Lord Jesus for His people. So it is in the salvation of our never-dying souls: it is only by the blood of Christ, shed as an atonement for the soul, that any man can be saved. Christ therefore came and was punished in the place of all His people, making a complete atonement. God is satisfied with His cross work and His rising from the grave, and so will accept poor sinners in Him.

The value of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ lies in its POWER TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL SIN. These precious words are found in 1 John 1:7: “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Not our good works, not the prayers of saints or priests or ministers, but the precious blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. It is on the basis of this shed blood that we are given the invitation, “Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa 1:18). Then I cry, “O precious blood, which removes the hell-stains of abundant iniquity and permits me to stand accepted in the Beloved, notwithstanding all the many ways in which I have rebelled against my God!” It was because of the cleansing effect of the blood that David could cry in Psalm 51:2, 7: “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

Further, the value of the precious blood of Christ lies in its PRESERVING POWER. We have many examples of this in the Old Testament. When the children of Israel were in Egypt the night the Death Angel passed over, they were preserved and delivered because they had put the blood of that slain lamb upon the door posts of their homes. Also, we see the plagues stayed and the Israelites preserved in the wilderness as the high priest offered a sacrifice for the people. So it is with those who know Christ and His cross work.

They alone are preserved by the blood of Christ day by day from the power of indwelling sin, as well as from the wrath to come.

Again, the value of the precious blood of Christ lies in its MELTING POWER. We read in Zechariah 12:10 that when a poor sinner looks by faith upon Christ Whom he has pierced with his sins, then he shall mourn for Him with such a mourning as one does at the death of his firstborn. Oh how precious this truth is, that one sight by faith of a bleeding Savior will break the heart of the most hard-hearted sinner, because he sees in Christ, as He is lifted up out of the Word of God, a precious Savior for him. He sees His love and grace and beauty, and begins to cry after Him, “O precious Lord and Savior, I see in Thee a suitableness for my sin-sick soul. Please have mercy upon me!” Yes, the awakened sinner, when he comes to the end of his way, finds in Christ’s wounds a melting power that melts him at the feet of Christ, crying, “Lord, take me, save me, make me Thine own! Thou hast won my heart with Thy love.”

Also the value of the precious blood of Christ lies in its PLEADING POWER. We read in Hebrews 12:24 that we come to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel, whose blood cried out for revenge. But the precious blood of the Lamb of God speaks mercy and compassion to the poor, repenting, believing sinner. His blood speaks peace to the troubled, sin-tossed soul. The Scripture says that there is no peace for the wicked; but they who have fled to Christ for refuge, looking to Him by faith, have peace with God because the blood speaks it to their hearts out of the Word of God.

Praise the Lord for that God-given peace that comes from knowing Christ! Listen to Romans 5:1: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Listen again to Colossians 1:20: Christ “having made peace through the blood of his cross...” And as Ephesians 2:14 puts it, Christ is “our peace.” Praise the Lord that those who are in Christ have peace with God, all because the precious blood of Christ speaks for them! There is one other Scripture that brings out this most precious truth: “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever” (Isa 32:17). Oh, my friend, is Christ your peace? Do you have peace with God by saving faith in Christ and His blood?

But I believe one of the most precious truths (as if they were not all precious!) is that the value of the blood of Christ lies in its POWER TO GIVE US ENTRANCE INTO THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD. In Hebrews 10:19 we read, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus”—boldness to come to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. What a blessing to us who know Christ, that by His precious blood we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and can come into the very presence of God to worship Him and offer the sacrifice of our lips, which is thanksgiving, finding that mercy and that grace which is so greatly needed in every time of need!

Last but not least, I would say that the value of the blood of Christ lies in its OVERCOMING POWER. Listen to Revelation 12:11, “And they overcame him [Satan, the accuser of the brethren] by the blood of the Lamb.” Oh how precious that is! What a beauty and a glory we find here in our Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His shed blood!

Yes, by that blood we have the victory over our enemy, the devil. How many times since God saved me has this precious promise been fulfilled, to be enabled by the grace and power of God through faith in the Lamb, to overcome the accuser, and rout him with the blood!

Victory! Victory! This is through the blood of Christ. How precious is His blood to every born-again believer! I am trusting, my sinner friend, that by this precious blood you will find entrance into His presence to be melted at His feet, cleansed from all your sins and iniquities and delivered from the power and penalty of sin. You will then find overcoming, preserving and persevering power to live for Him.

## **5. Looking unto Jesus**

In this final message on Faith, I desire by the grace of God and the Holy Spirit working in us, to look with you at the one expression in God's Word that, more than any other, characterizes the subject we have been endeavoring to lay before your hearts these many weeks: It is the expression found in Hebrews 12:2 which reads, "LOOKING UNTO JESUS, the author and finisher of our faith." I believe we find in the three words, "looking unto Jesus" the secret of the Christian life, the life that is in the Lord Jesus Christ, the life of faith whereby we are saved, justified, sanctified, kept, and comforted; by which also we overcome the world, sin and Satan, and persevere to the end.

As we look closely at these words, may the Holy Spirit open our understanding to the way of faith and how "looking unto Jesus" shall bring us home to Him at last. We are to "look unto Jesus" in the Holy Scriptures to learn Who He is, What He has done and what He gives in His finished work of redemption. We are to "look unto Jesus" and His full satisfaction in our behalf to God's broken law (Gal 3:13; Heb 1:3), vindicating God's justice, His name and His character. We are to look unto Him for all the needs and wants of our never-dying soul.

We are to "look unto Jesus" in His offices of Prophet (Act 3:22), Priest (Rom 8:34), and King (Act 2:36; Eph 1:20-23). As Prophet He teaches us, as Priest He is our Substitute, our Savior and Intercessor, and as King He rules over us and delivers us from the power of sin (Rom 6:14), Satan (Col 1:13), and the world (Gal 1:4).

We are to "look unto Jesus" as the GREAT I AM, Who was sent by God the Father to be the "way, the truth, and the life," for "no man cometh unto the Father" but by Him (Joh 14:6). The Lord Jesus said Himself, I AM the bread of life" sent down by the Father to give spiritual life to poor sinners, so "he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (Joh 6:35). I AM the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Joh 8:12). "I AM the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (Joh 11:25). "I AM the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (Joh 10:9). "I AM the good shepherd: the good shepherd

giveth his life for the sheep” (Joh 10:11). I Am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (Joh 15:5). So in all these characters as the Great I AM, we are to “LOOK UNTO JESUS , the author and finisher of our faith”, for without Him we can do nothing, for He alone is our life (Col 3:4).

Let us go further! We are to “look unto Jesus” CRUCIFIED as our divine Substitute, to find in His blood our only cleansing from sin before God (1Jn 1:7), our only justification before God (Rom 5:9), our only entrance into His holy presence (Heb 10:19), our only ransom from sin’s captivity (Col 1:13-14), our only deliverance from the wrath to come (Rom 5:9), and the only lasting Peace found in the whole universe, because He “made peace through the blood of his cross” (Col 1:20). Yes, we are to “behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Joh 1:29), as our Offering, the One Who was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2Co 5:21). I say praise the Lord for the “precious blood of Christ” (1Pe 1:19), and for the forgiveness of sins, so that by Christ all that believe are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses (Act 13:38-39).

Again, we are to “look unto Jesus” RISEN FROM THE GRAVE as our justification, for Romans 4:25 tells us that “He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Yes, we serve a risen Lord, One Who lives at God’s right hand for us, and is “made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1Co 1:30). He alone is our standing before God; for we who have believed upon Him to the saving of our never-dying souls have been “accepted in the beloved”, in Christ Himself (Eph 1:6).

We are also directed in Scripture to “look unto Jesus” as the One Whom God has EXALTED with His right hand, or to His right hand, “to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance and forgiveness of sins” (Act 5:31). Yes, repentance and faith are gifts from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, so we are to look to Him for these gifts which God requires of us. The Scriptures declare that without repentance we shall perish (Luk 13:3) and without faith, it is impossible to please and come to God (Heb 11:6). So what a mercy! what a grace, to have One Who gives these spiritual graces of repentance (Act 11:18), and faith (Eph 2:8-9; Gal 2:20). Oh my dear friend, there is no end to all Christ Jesus our Lord has done for poor sinners and what flows out to us from His lovely Person as we lay down our arms of rebellion against Him in repentance, hoist the white flag of surrender to Him as Lord, turn to Him from sin, self, the world and our own way, beholding Him by faith as the One Whom God has exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior!

Again, we are to “look unto Jesus” GLORIFIED as our RULING KING, highly exalted. Listen to Philippians 2:9-11! “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Yes, He is King now, my King and Ruler, sitting upon David’s spiritual throne, “...in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name

that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and God the Father hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all (Eph 1:20-23). And when the end comes, at His second coming, He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; “when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1Co 15:24-26).

Yes, dear friend, Jesus the Lord, the Christ of God, REIGNS NOW AS KING upon His throne and we are to look unto Him as Lord and King now or we cannot be saved; for it is by His power as King that He delivers us from sin and its power. We must bow to His scepter now or we shall know nothing of His Saviorship and redemption. You see, the New Testament knows nothing of a future kingship of Christ sitting upon an earthly throne ruling as a political monarch from physical Jerusalem; but praise the Lord, it has much to say about Him ruling now as King over the sons of men as Sovereign and Lord, as the One Who received this place of honor by virtue of His blood-shedding and resurrection.

Again, we must “look unto Jesus” GLORIFIED to find in Him our heavenly Advocate appearing in the presence of God for us (Heb 9:24), ever living to make intercession for us (Heb 2:17-18; 4:15-16; 7:24). So we “look unto Jesus” for strength in our weakness, for wisdom in our stupidity, for grace in our affliction, for peace in our storms, for comfort in our sorrows, for joy in our depression, for mercy in our failures, for hope in our darkness, for life in our deadness, and for faith in our trials.

We are to “look unto Jesus” to keep us in His faith until the end, to keep us from falling, to present us holy and unblameable and unproveable in God’s sight at the last great day (Col 1:22). We are to “LOOK UNTO JESUS” to take us into the home which He has gone to prepare for us, and to present us to the Father, saying, “Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me (Heb 2:13); I have kept these in thy name that thou gavest me and I have lost none of them” (Joh 17:12).

We are to “look unto Jesus” and not to ourselves, our thoughts, our desires or our purposes, but to all that God has made us in Him by His marvelous grace.

We are to “look unto Jesus” and not to the world, its lusts, its joys, nor its pleasures, but unto Him Who is our Joy and Pleasure, anticipating all that He will bring us into in that last great day; for “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1Co 2:9), even those who look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith.

We are to “look unto Jesus” and not to Satan in all his rage as a roaring lion, nor to all his flattery as an angel of light, for we are no longer in his kingdom and power, or under his authority, because we have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col 1:13).

We are to “look unto Jesus” and not to our meditation and prayers, to our pious conversation or edifying reading, nor to our meetings, our fellowship, or our experiences;

for all of these are sinking sand. Only Christ is the Foundation Stone of our souls; only in Him. can we rest.

We are to “look unto Jesus” and not to our position in the church as pastor, deacon, elder, teacher or song leader. We are to “look unto Jesus”, not to the church name we bear, nor to the doctrine which we profess. We are to “look unto Jesus” and not to our brethren who may fail us. We are to “look unto Jesus” and not to our baptism nor to any of our duties. We are to “look unto Jesus” and not to the obstacles which meet us on our journey, nor to our temporal blessings which we enjoy. We are to “look unto Jesus” and not to our own strength, nor to our own weakness, nor to our own sins. We are to “look unto Jesus” and not to the apparent success of our efforts or the spiritual gifts which we have received. We are to “look unto Jesus” and not to the degree of grief which our sins have caused us, nor to the degree of humiliation which they produce in us. We are to “look unto Jesus and not to the liveliness of our joy or the fervor of our love, neither are we to look to OUR faith, but unto the Author and Finisher of our faith.

Dear friend, we are to “look unto Jesus” all the while we remain upon this earth, moment by moment, casting all upon Him, for He alone is our Life, the Author and Finisher of our faith and the Lifter up of our head.

We are to “look unto Jesus” now; we are to “look unto Jesus” ever; we are to “look unto Jesus” alone; we are to “look unto Jesus” again and again. Yes, we are to “LOOK UNTO JESUS” always, for it is by faith with open face that we behold the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory, by His Spirit Who has been given unto us Who believe.

What a glorious way to spend our lives down here for His glory, just “looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith until we shall behold His face in righteousness, as we see Him in His glory and are finally made in His likeness forever (1Jo 3:1-3).

#### *Some Concluding Thoughts*

Having dealt with the subject of *saving faith: its meaning and its object* in these ten messages, we are brought to face these great truths:

1. There is no salvation in Christ apart from faith, and no instrumental means other than faith, as these Scriptures bring out so clearly: “For by grace are ye saved through faith” (Eph 2:8); “The just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:17); and “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb 11:6).

2. Saving faith must of a necessity be a gift of God because it comes to us by grace through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts by the Word of God: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph 2:8-9). When Apollos had come to Achaia, he “helped them much *which had believed through grace*” (Act 18:27). “When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which *effectually worketh also in you that believe*” (1Th 2:13). “That our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power” (2Th 1:11). “And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration

of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1Co 2:4-5).

3. Even though the Scriptures show plainly that true saving faith is a gift of God, worked in us by the Holy Spirit which comes to us by grace, yet in no place does it teach that the Holy Spirit believes for us; the Holy Spirit frees our wills to enable us to believe. Therefore the act of faith, the coming to Christ as the Object of our faith, is spoken of in Scripture as the sinner abandoning all hope in himself to merit salvation, the going outside of himself to another for help, and the looking only to Jesus, the Christ of the Bible, Whom he has personally trusted and obeyed. This is clearly shown in 2 Timothy 1:12 in these words: “For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

4. Saving faith is not an isolated act, but is continuous all the days of our lives. The Amplified Bible brings this out in such a blessed way in Romans 1:17: “For in the Gospel a righteousness which God ascribes is revealed, both springing from faith and leading to faith—disclosed through the way of faith that arouses to more faith. As it is written, The man who through faith is just and upright shall live, and shall live by faith.” The eleventh chapter of Hebrews tells us that the Old Testament saints were saved by faith, lived and worked by faith, and died in faith, as does every soul whom God saves.

As it was at conversion, so it is every day of our lives: the impulse to faith is a felt need, the motion of faith is always from self to another, and the Object of faith is always Christ Himself. As we came then, empty-handed to receive of Him (Joh 1:11-12; Col 2:6), so we do now. As we came then, hungering and thirsting after Christ Who is the Water of Life and the Bread of Life (Isa 55:1; Mat 5:6; Joh 6:35, 50-56; Joh 7:37), so we do now. As we came then, casting our heavy burden of sin and all of our ways and works upon Him (Mat 11:28-30; 1Pe 5:7), so we do now. As we came then, turning our weary eyes upon Him Who alone could save us, forgive us, and cleanse us (Isa 45:22; Joh 1:29; Joh 3:14-15, with Num 21:8, Zec 12:10, and Heb 12:2), so we do now. As we came then, fleeing to Him as our Refuge and our Hiding Place (Heb 6:18), so we do now. As we came then to receive all our needs from Him (Joh 6:35, 37; Phi 4:19), so we do now.

Surely the child of God follows the Lamb “whithersoever He goeth” (Rev 14:4) all the days of his life.

5. Therefore, since “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom 10:17), how important it is for us to heed our blessed Lord’s admonition: “Search the Scriptures...for they testify of me” (Joh 5:39). “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luk 24:27). Search the Scriptures, for we find in them the Foundation of our hope; it is the Word that testifies of Christ and His ability to save.

Then, when we have searched them, how important it is to believe what we read and the witness God gives of His Son. As 1 John 5:9-12 tells us: “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave

of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

The question is asked, “What is the record that God has given us that testifies of His Son’s ability and willingness to save?” The record we are to believe is that the Lord Jesus Christ *came voluntarily* from heaven’s heights to earth’s depths to be born of a virgin, to take upon Himself the nature of man, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, that He might deliver them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb 2:14-15).

The record we are to believe is that the Lord Jesus Christ emptied Himself so He could manifest the glory of the Father here upon earth, doing the will of the Father, so He might pay our sin-debt in full by the giving up of Himself upon the cross as God’s substitute for sinners. It is that He died, the just for the unjust, the godly for the ungodly, the righteous for the unrighteous, so He might bring many sons into glory, and by the shedding of His blood satisfy God’s holy law and justice.

The record we are to believe is that in His death, burial, and resurrection, our blessed Lord has opened the way for poor sinners to come back to God in repentance and faith, and that God can be just in justifying every poor sinner who comes unto Him through Christ.

My prayer is that as you read the Scriptures, you will meditate upon them and cry unto the living God of the Bible that He, by His Spirit, will make the promises, which are beacons that lead us to Christ, real to your heart, so your faith will rest in Christ Himself, Who is the very life of the promise, the very marrow and sweetness of the promise, Who alone can be our resting place, our Refuge, our Mediator, our Salvation, and our standing before God for time and eternity.

*Willing to take the cross was He,  
Willing to suffer misery,  
Willing to go to Calvary,  
Laying His glory aside;*

*Willing to hang there on the tree,  
Willing to bear the agony,  
Willing to die for you and me;  
Jesus the Crucified.*

—F.W. Hawkins

