

# Saving Faith

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Perhaps the reader is already a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet that, of itself, is no proof he has been born again and is journeying to Heaven. The New Testament tells us "many *believed* in His name when they saw the miracles which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them" (John 2:23, 24). "As He spake these words *many believed* on Him" (John 8:30), yet v. 59 shows that a little later they sought to stone Him! "Among the chief rulers also *many believed* (not simply about, but) *on* Him." Ah! but note what immediately follows: "but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men *more* than the praise of God" (John 12:42, 43)—what a proof that they were utter strangers to a saving work of God in their souls: yet they were "believers" in the Lord Jesus!

There is a faith in Christ which is saving, and there is a faith in Christ which is *not* saving. Possibly the reader says, "But I know that mine is the former: I have seen myself as a lost sinner, realize I can do nothing to gain acceptance with God, and have put my trust in the finished work of His Son." Ah! my friend, the heart is terribly deceitful (Jer. 17:9) and Satan deludes many (Rev. 12:9). So much is at stake that it behooves each of us to *make sure*. Only a fool is ready to give himself the "benefit of the doubt" in an issue so momentous as this.

Probably many a reader is ready to continue, "But I *know* that my faith in Christ is a genuine and saving one, for it rests upon the sure Word of God." Dear friends, others who were equally sure as you are now in Hell! Suffer us to enquire, Have you *tested* your faith by Scripture? Have you taken the trouble to ascertain whether your faith is accompanied by those evidences which are inseparable from a *saving* faith? A saving faith is a *supernatural* thing, and brings forth supernatural fruit. Is this true in *your case*? Do these questions somewhat puzzle? Then let us try to explain.

In Acts 15:9 we read, "purifying their hearts by faith"—compare Matt. 5:8; I Pet. 1:22. A purified heart is one that has been purged of all impure idols and turned to a pure object (I Thess. 1:9). It loathes all that is sinful, and loves all that is holy. A pure heart is one that has been cleansed from the love of all that is evil.

Another characteristic of *saving* faith is that it "worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Faith is a mighty principle of operation by which the Christian lives unto God, by which he treads the path of obedience, by which he resists the Devil and denies the flesh. And this, not from fear, but "by *love*." Perfectly? In this life, No, but actually and in the main, Yes.

"Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). God has opened the eyes of the Christian to see the hollowness and worthlessness of the best that this poor world has to offer; and has weaned his heart from it by satisfying with spiritual and heavenly things.

Now, dear reader, is it not evident that as a fountain is known by the waters which issue from it, so the nature of your faith may be ascertained by what it is bringing forth? Have you been saved from a dislike of God's commands and a disrelish for His holiness? Have you been saved from pride, from covetousness, from murmuring? Christ died not to procure the pardon of our sins and the taking us to Heaven, while our hearts still remain clinging to the things of earth. No, He lived and died so that His Spirit might quicken His people into newness of life, making them "*new creatures*", and causing them to sojourn in this world as those who are not of it, but as those whose hearts are already departed from it.

But do we not read, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31)? Yes, but note the apostles did not tell the jailor to "rest on the finished *work* of Christ"; instead, they set before him a *Person*. Nor did they say "Believe on the Saviour", but "on *the Lord Jesus Christ*." Saving faith necessarily involved the *renouncing* of our *own* sinful, "lordship", the throwing down of the weapons of our warfare against Him, and the submitting to His yoke and rule. And before any sinful rebel is brought to *that* place, a miracle of grace has to be wrought within him. Saving faith consists of the complete surrender of my whole being and life to the lordship of Christ: "they first gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Cor. 8:5). Have you? Have you? ☞