

## Why Faith?

### John 3:16–21 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- *John 3:16 is probably one of the most quoted verses in the Bible.*
- *“whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” - It clearly shows the relationship between faith and salvation.*

<sup>17</sup>For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

- *John 3:17 continues on with the thought that God’s heart is to do whatever He can to bring everyone to salvation—even having His own son Jesus Christ die the most horrible death on the cross.*
- *If one reads only verses 16 and 17 one may misunderstand them, underestimating how terrible our sins and rebellion have truly been, even to the point of drifting into the idea of universalism which believes everyone will be saved and go to Heaven.*

### 1 Timothy 2:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup>who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- *In one way God is a universalist, not that all people will be saved, but that God desires for all people to be saved.*
- *However, some have misunderstood that just because Jesus died for the sins of each person who ever lived or will live, they think that means everyone will be saved.*
- *However the verses following John 3:17 provide a complete picture and bring about a balanced view of God’s plan of salvation.*

<sup>18</sup>“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- *“but he who does not believe is condemned already” - Some people focus on the fact that God is love and is merciful and longsuffering, but fail to recognize that He is also just and will judge and punish evil.*
- *“because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” – If an unbeliever reads verse 18 he or she may think that God is too severe and even petty, demanding that we believe exactly what He wants us to believe or we will be damned.*
- *How is it fair that those who simply believe the wrong thing are damned for eternity?*

<sup>19</sup>And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

- “that men loved darkness rather than light” – *We see that putting our faith in Christ is not a matter of the head, but of the heart, and reflects what we truly desire.*
- “Because their deeds were evil” – *One of the reasons that people do not want to put their faith in Christ is because they would have to acknowledge that the things they are doing are sinful and wrong – in short that they are sinners.*

<sup>20</sup>For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

“For everyone practicing evil hates the light” – *Verse 20 even gives additional details why some choose not to believe because not only do they love the darkness, but they hate the light because the light exposes their unrighteousness.*

<sup>21</sup>But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

- *When a person desires to walk in truth and do God’s will they will desire to come to the light, so their lives and deeds will be exposed, so they are free from fear and shame.*

*There are three reasons that people who want to walk with God are attracted to the light of Christ:*

1. *When an unregenerated person recognizes his or her lost and sinful state and wants to be forgiven and set free to live lives that are truly fulfilling and bring glory to God.*
  2. *When Believers desire to glorify Christ they are willing to allow God to reveal anything in their hearts or lives that may bring shame to God or destruction to their lives.*
  3. *When Believers are not ashamed of how they are living their lives, but know their lives bring glory to God.*
- *When the Bible speaks about “saving faith” it does not speak about what one believes intellectually, but what one believes in his or her heart.*
  - *Christians who fail to understand that faith is a matter of the heart and not solely of the head end up focusing their energy on trying to “convince” people to believe in Jesus.*
  - *However, a person could believe intellectually the message of the Gospel and still remain in a lost and unregenerated state.*

## Ephesians 2

**8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

**9** not of works, lest anyone should boast.

- *“For by grace you have been saved through faith” - This tells us the way that we receive salvation.*
- *We are saved by grace—therefore grace is the means by which we are saved.*
- *One of the definitions of grace is God working in us and through us to accomplish His purposes.*
- *Grace is the power of God.*

### Hebrews 8:12 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup>For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

- *We shouldn't confuse mercy and grace.*
- *Here is one way to see the difference between mercy and grace. Mercy is not receiving what we do deserve, punishment for our sins, while grace is receiving what we do not deserve, salvation and the righteousness of Christ.*
- *When we say, “I need more grace for that person” what we really mean is we need more of God's power in our lives, so that we do not react in the flesh, but instead we are able to extend mercy to the person.*
- *“For by grace you have been saved through faith” – The Greek word for “through” is διά (dia) and it means, “the instrument, by the means of.”*
- *If grace is the power of God to save us, then faith is the conduit by which grace flows to us.*
- *“and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” – Salvation is described as a gift because we did nothing to earn or merit the forgiveness of our sins nor the imputed righteousness of Christ that we received when we were saved.*
- *“not of works, lest anyone should boast” - Since our salvation is based solely on God's goodness and not on any good thing we did or could possibly do, then we must never deceive ourselves into thinking we are better than others or somehow superior to those who have not yet received Christ.*
- *If we did nothing to merit or receive salvation and the forgiveness of our sins, then where does faith come into the equation?*
- *There are two types of error we can fall into when trying to understand our salvation.*
- *We had nothing to do with it.*
- *We had everything to do with it.*
- *Believing is our part and grace is God's part.*
- *If believing is our part, then doesn't that mean by believing we have some merit or something we have achieved by having faith?*

### Galatians 2:16 (KJV)

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

- *“not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ” – Whose faith is it? It is not our faith but it is Christ's faith.*
- *Therefore we can't take credit for having faith in Jesus Christ if God is the One who gave us that faith in the first place.*
- *“that we might be justified by the faith of Christ” – Again in this same verse, Galatians 2:16, it repeats the idea that we are justified by the faith that belongs to Christ. This faith does not originate with us, but from God.*

- “even we have believed in Jesus Christ” – *However, sandwiched between these two statements that it is Christ’s faith that we have received, then it says that even we who have believed are justified.*
- *It is very important to understand that even though the origin of our faith is from God and not something we have conjured up, we are the ones who then made the choice to act on that faith and actually believe.*

#### **John 3:18 (NKJV)**

**<sup>18</sup>“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

- *What results in eternal damnation is not our sins, but the sin of choosing not to believe in who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for us.*
- *In Hell a person will suffer for their sins, but it is the sin of unbelief and rejecting the faith of Jesus Christ that results in damnation.*

#### **Romans 2:4–5 (NKJV)**

**<sup>4</sup>Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**

**<sup>5</sup>But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,**

- “But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath” – *The act of unbelief is not an intellectual decision, but really reflects a heart that is hardened and unrepentant.*
- *How does a person then experience or receive this faith of Christ?*

#### **Romans 10:17 (NKJV)**

**17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

- *There many different ways that God speaks to each person to woo him or her to put his or her faith in Christ.*

#### **Romans 1:19–20 (NKJV)**

**<sup>19</sup>because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.**

**<sup>20</sup>For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,**

- *Creation itself testifies to the reality and nature of God.*

#### **Titus 2:11 (NKJV)**

**<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,**

- *God supernaturally speaks to those who have never heard the Gospel.*

- *Muslims in isolated areas have received visions and dreams testifying of Jesus Christ.*

**Romans 10:8-10 (NKJV)**

**8** But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

**9** that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

**10** For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- *Salvation requires two things:*
- *Believing in your heart.*
- *Choosing to respond with one’s will.*
- *Romans 10 clearly shows how saving faith operates.*
- *“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” – There are two components involved in saving faith; the words in our mouth and the faith in our heart.*
- *“If you believe in your heart” – This is not an intellectual faith that has been received by persuasive arguments, but something that God imparts to the heart of the hearer.*
- *“If you confess with your mouth” – Saving faith requires us to respond to that faith, make a confession of faith, and choose to act on that faith.*
- *“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” – For one to receive salvation requires both a heartfelt faith and then the choice to act on that faith through our words.*

“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

- *What are the components of the confession of our faith?*
- *The Lord Jesus – Jesus Christ is the Lord and thus He is God.*
- *God raised Him from the dead – Meaning He came in the flesh, and died for our sins and overcame death through the resurrection.*
- *You will be saved – We are sinners and helpless to save ourselves and we need the Lord Jesus to be our Saviour.*

**1 Peter 3:15 (NKJV)**

**15** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

- *True faith deals with a spiritual reality and our responsibility is not to try to force people to believe, but to testify to the truth, and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work of imparting faith.*

**Acts 2:39–41 (NKJV)**

**39** For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

<sup>40</sup>And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

<sup>41</sup>Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

- *An evangelist does not plead with people to believe, he pleads with people to respond to the gospel message.*

**James 2:26 (NKJV)**

**26** For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

- *James was an apostle and also the pastor of the church in Jerusalem.*
- *A pastor does not plead with Christians to believe, he pleads with them to obey.*
- *Christians who do not act on their faith will not experience the benefits of God’s promises and purposes for their lives.*
- *Faith without works is dead because it lacks obedience.*
- *But works without faith is dead because it lacks God.*
- *Choice alone does not produce life. Choosing to believe and obey God produces life.*
- *Believing is the human reaction to God’s primary action of the faith of Christ.*
- *God initiates, but we must choose to respond.*
- *This is the balance between God’s Sovereignty and Man’s Responsibility.*
- *There are two parts of faith: God’s part and our part.*
- *God’s part is a mystery.*
- *Our part is straight forward—choosing to trust and obey Him.*
- *The concept for faith in both the Old and the New Testaments conveys the idea of trust, confidence, and believing.*
- *Faith has the nuance of obedience.*
- *The Greek word for faith can also mean faithfulness.*
- *A person who trusts in God will be faithful.*
- *The progression should be faith which results in obedience, and obedience which will result in faithfulness.*
- *The great faith chapter in the Bible is Hebrews 11, and it stresses that to believe is to obey.*

**Romans 1:17 (NKJV)**

**17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

- *The way we grow from faith to faith is to live a life of faith.*
- *When we exercise our faith by believing God’s promises and trust His faithfulness our faith and confidence in Him grows.*

**Romans 12:6 (NKJV)**

**6** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

- *We need to step out with faith in God, so our confidence in God will grow.*

**Matthew 13:12 (NKJV)**

**12** For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

- *This is a principle in God's kingdom — The more we use what God has given us the more we will receive.*

**Jude 20 (NKJV)**

**20** But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

- *The Greek word for “building yourselves up” means, “to finish the structure of which the foundation has already been laid”*
- *How do we build ourselves up in our most holy faith?*
- *Read, study, and meditate upon the Word of God.*
- *Deepen your prayer life and pray in the Spirit.*
- *Encourage one another in godly fellowship.*
- *Testify to others of God's faithfulness.*
- *Step out in faith and expect the supernatural.*
- **Four Facets of Faith and how it releases God's Glory:**
- **Creative Faith – This is the power of faith - the Glory of His Name**
- **Doctrinal Faith – This is the truth of faith – the Glory of His Word**
- **Persevering Faith – This is the strength of faith – the Glory of His Life**
- **God-Conscious Faith – This is the reality of faith – the Glory of His Presence**