

Lesson 6: Faith (Heb 11:6)

We will continue to study "Foundations Class." This week is the 6th lesson and we will study about "Faith".

1. What is faith?

How would you answer, if you are asked "What is your faith?" Some may answer "66 books of the Bible are the Word of God and the truth." The others may answer, quoting the Apostles' Creed and say "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: And so on"

Let's open the Bible,

James 2:19

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.

The Bible says that even the demons and the evil spirits believe that there is one God, holy God. Demons and evil spirits don't deny the existence of God. In fact, they know God far better than we do. Then what is the difference between their believing God and our faith in God? And by what action can we show our faith?

Hebrew 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

This verse gives us a hint to understand what faith is. Faith is to be with God, knowing that God is pleased with you. We have been saved by God's grace, and led into relationship with Him. It is His joy to have fellowship with us. Knowing this, we come near to God. That is faith.

Faith is our actual connection with God, our committed relationship with God. It is not what kind of knowledge you have about God, nor what kind of religious ritual you are taking part in or practicing, nor in which religious group your name is listed as a member. Faith is our actual connection with God, our committed relationship with God.

I will give you an illustration.

There was a man who performed tightrope walking in a circus. He not only walked on a rope stretched on high, but also rode a motorbike over it. People loved his performance. Then this time he carried a load of 100 kg on the back of his motorbike and went on the rope. Back and forth. All the people there stood up for excitement, gave cheers and applause for his performance.

Now the man talked to the people, "Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you enjoyed my performance!" The people responded, "Ye—s!! You are great performer!!" The man bowed to thank his audience and said, "I have just carried a load of 100 kg on the back of my motorbike and went on the rope. Now do you believe if I say I can carry a person of 60 kg on the back of my motorbike and ride across the rope?" The people responded all together, "Yes, we believe. Of course you can!!"

The man bowed again and said, "Then, is there any volunteer who will ride behind me?" Suddenly the people became all silent. Some looked down, some pretended to be asleep.

Then a boy raised his hand and said, "Let me ride behind you!" He climbed up a ladder and jumped on the motorbike at behind the man. The boy shouted, "Let's go!" and the man rode across the rope.

When the boy came down, people asked him, "Were you not afraid?" The boy smiled, "No, not at all! Because he is my father!"

Faith is not what kind of knowledge you have about God, nor what kind of religious ritual you are taking part in or practicing. Faith is our actual connection with God, our committed relationship with God.

2. Walking by faith

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

We have been justified through faith. The Bible clearly says that a man is justified through faith not by works.

Even this faith in Jesus is the gift from God (1 Cor 12:3). Without the work of the Holy Spirit, we cannot believe in Jesus. By the work of the Holy Spirit, faith is given to us.

Through faith, we are justified. Even this faith in Jesus is the gift from God.

This illustration may help you to understand this.

As you were walking in the field at night, you fell into a deep pit. No matter how hard you tried, you couldn't climb up to come out of the pit. Then a big strong man walked by the pit. He had ability to raise you up out of the pit easily. But you were at the bottom of the deep pit and the strong man was on the ground. You needed a rope to connect you to the strong man. And you needed it to be thrown down from above.

The man threw down a rope. Were you saved? Not yet. You had to choose whether to entrust all of you to the man or not entrust anything at all. You could not entrust just a part of you. You entrusted all of you to the man through the rope. Now you were saved by the man out of the pit.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). We have been saved by grace through faith. Faith is like a rope which connect you to grace, Jesus Christ. Faith is given to you, but it's up to you whether you use it or not. If you don't use it, it has no value.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

We have gained access into grace by faith. It is into God's grace that we have entered by faith. We came into God's grace through faith. By faith, the power of God's grace actually started to work in us. By faith, we have taken hold of God's grace. By faith, we started to live in God's grace. This is the new life of the redeemed.

However, Satan wants to drag us out of God's grace. Satan reminds us of our mistakes, failures and shortcomings, and makes us think "God doesn't like me. God is disappointed with me." Then, you wouldn't like to have fellowship with God, because you don't want to have fellowship with someone who don't like you. You may avoid God on purpose. And you wouldn't introduce God who hates you to others. "I want to introduce wonderful Jesus to you. But you know, He hates me." Nobody do that.

Satan reminds us of our mistakes, failures and shortcomings, and makes us think "God doesn't love me. God is judging me always." Some people might try hard to be loved by God. Clenching your teeth, you might invite others, "Trust in Jesus and be saved like me! But you have to work very hard to be love by God." Nobody wanted to do that.

The thought, "God doesn't like me. God is disappointed with me." is the lie from Satan.

Let's think of parents and children. Even when their child comes back covered with mud and sweaty, no parents will hate him, but they will make him take a shower, and change clothes.

It is natural for fish to live in water. It is natural for birds to live in the sky. It is natural for a child of God to live in the fellowship with God. It is natural for a born-again person to live in holiness. It is un-natural for him to live in sin. God helps us grow as people who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus and reconciled with him.

Eph 5:25-27

... Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

God is always cleansing the church, that is us. This way, our fellowship with God will be maintained and deepened by God's grace. What we need is faith in God. It is His joy to have fellowship with us. Knowing this, we come near to God.

Christian life starts by faith, kept by faith, and completed by faith.

3. Four keys to faith

Now, let's study about four keys to make our faith grow.

1) Hearing the Word of God.

Romans 10:17

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

If you don't listen to His Word, how can you have relationship with Him? If you don't want to know more about Jesus, how can you trust Him more? If we don't listen to His Word and store up the Word in our heart, we don't have seed of faith and the power which makes our faith grow. If we don't have seed, there is no growth or bearing fruit. Moreover, other things will fill our heart instead of the Word of God. And they will grow and bear fruit. The first key to faith is "hearing the Word of God and store up the Word in our heart".

2) Speaking the Word of God

Romans 10:8

But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:

Notice the phrase, "in your heart". It is not just saying some Bible verses with mouth. Speaking the Word of God means speaking the Word of God in the sense of agreement with what God has revealed in His word.

I sometimes speak the Word of God to myself. When things don't go well as I expected, doubt becomes bigger and bigger in my mind. Then, I proclaim the Word of God to myself. "God said this." "God promised me that." My faith arises again. The second key to faith is "speaking the Word of God".

3) Praying in the Holy Spirit

Jude 20

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit helps us to understand about Jesus deeply (John 15:26). Jesus is so great that we cannot understand Him fully by our intellect. When we pray in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus' greatness in our spirit, beyond our intellect (John 16:14). And when we pray in the Holy Spirit, we will not be limited by our intellect and we can fellowship with God as in the connection between Spirit and spirit (1 Cor 2:11-13). It not only makes our faith grow, but it also edifies us (John 14:26). The third key to faith is "praying in the Holy Spirit".

4) Acting on God's Word

If we want to make our faith grow, we have to act on God's Word by faith. If we shut ourselves in our room, read and hear the Word of God, speak the Word of God, and pray in the Holy Spirit, *but* if we don't act on God's Word by faith, our faith will not grow. And, if you don't use your faith, or hide it, your faith will not grow and even what you have will be taken away from you (Matt 25:14-30).

God knows very well what we can do and what we can't. He never asks us to do what we cannot. And He knows the size of our faith. He never asks us to do extraordinarily big thing that doesn't match the size of our faith. And He

won't just ask us to do things so easy that we don't need to gather up our courage to step out by faith. God is concerned with us so that our faith will grow.

Luke 5:1-3

¹ One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, ² he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

Jesus first got into Simon Peter's boat and asked him to put out a little from shore. It was very easy for Peter, who was a fisherman. But because he was washing his net, he needed to give priority to Jesus' Word over his own will. When he obeyed Jesus' Word, he could hear the message Jesus gave to the crowd.

Luke 5:4-7

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." ⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." ⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

Next Jesus asked him to put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch. It was not difficult for Peter, but a little troublesome. He was washing his nets after a hard work of fishing all night. If he let down the nets again into the water, he had to wash them again. Moreover, he was a professional fisherman, yet he couldn't catch anything after fishing all night. His judgment as a professional fisherman was to finish fishing for today. That is, here he needed to give priority to Jesus' Word over his feeling of troublesomeness and his judgment as a professional.

When he obeyed Jesus' Word, he actually experienced the power of Jesus' Word.

Luke 5:8-11

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from

now on you will catch men." ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Hearing the word of Jesus and watching the power of Jesus' word, Peter noticed that he had a distrust of Jesus in his heart, so he repented and showed his faith in Jesus. And finally, Jesus invited Peter to be his disciple and he left everything and followed Jesus. Jesus made Peter's faith grow step by step, starting from little, easy task.

First we need to be faithful in little things. What we need for the growth of our faith is not a new teaching. It is not a marvelous story that touches our heart or makes us excited. What we need is to do what we already know we need to do and stop what we know we need to stop. It's act on God's Word by faith. When we act on God's Word, our faith will grow step by step.

We can learn three important things from Peter about the essence of obedience to God's Word.

The first is to act on it immediately. Peter, when he heard Jesus' Word, immediately responded to the Word. He didn't say, "Yes, I believe your Word completely. As you say so, I'll let down the nets, tomorrow." But he immediately obeyed.

The second is not to choose which Words to obey and which ones not to obey. When Jesus talked to Peter, he didn't judge which of Jesus' words he had to listen to and which ones he could ignore. Even though it was troublesome and didn't agree with his judgment as a professional fisherman, he obeyed each Word of Jesus.

The third is to act with right attitude. If you act on the Word of Jesus angrily, unwillingly or in a bad mood, though you do the Word, the Word of Jesus is only a nuisance for you. Your relationship with Jesus will never be deepened. Peter obeyed Jesus' Word with right attitude.

Let's review four keys to make our faith grow. (1) Hearing the Word of God, (2) Speaking the Word of God, (3) Praying in the Holy Spirit, and (4) Acting on the Word of God.

Today we studied about faith. Faith is not knowledge. If you just say, "Today I had a good study about faith, now I know very well about faith", but don't do what you learned, your time of this study is wasted. If you learned something from today's study, something about faith, what you need is to DO what you learned.

"You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did" (James 2:22).