

The Gift of Faith

This second week of advent we want to celebrate the gift of faith.

Hebrews 11:6 NKJV “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

Why is it impossible to please God without faith?

In-spite of everything that Jesus did to restore God’s plan for man, it is impossible for us to receive the promises without faith.

We need to start by killing a sacred cow here.

Many of us were taught that God’s will happens automatically, that man has no role in the matter.

The truth is that from the beginning God gave man the great privilege to choose his destiny. God has a plan for every person’s life, but can’t be fulfilled without your consent and cooperation.

God never chooses for you or overrides your choices.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 NKJV “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

2 Peter 3:9 NKJV “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

If God’s will happens automatically then everyone would be saved.

The gift of salvation has already been paid for but must be received by faith.

Romans 10:10 NKJV “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

So let’s define faith.

Faith is like two sides on a coin.

On one side you have belief, it is the supernatural ability to believe what you can’t see.

The other side is faith, it is the choice to act on what you believe.

It requires both belief and faith to receive from God.

Think about salvation, you had to believe something you never saw (Jesus paying for your sins).

You had to choose the gift by your profession faith.

Everyone who is part of the Christmas story used belief and faith to do their part.

Isaiah

Isaiah 7:14 NKJV “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

Isaiah had to believe that the voice he was hearing was truly God.

He had to believe that if God said it, it must be true.

Think about it, no one had ever had a virgin birth, yet he chose to believe because God said so.

How did he exercise his faith in what he believed?

He spoke (prophesied) God’s word, and it became one of over three hundred prophecies that were fulfilled through the life of Jesus proving the infallibility of God’s word.

Mary

Luke 1:26-38 NKJV “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.” Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.”

Mary had to believe that it was indeed an angel sent from God.

Mary did not question if it would happen, she simply asked how it would happen.

Mary’s faith was released through her confession “let it be unto me according to your word.”

That faith confession released the incorruptible seed of God’s word into her womb, and it produced Jesus the perfect lamb.

Joseph

Matthew 1:18-20 NKJV “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”

Joseph also had to believe that the angel was from God and declaring His truth. How did he exercise his faith? He took a pregnant woman to be his wife, and raised Jesus like his own son.

Jesus

Jesus left the glory of heaven where he was one with the Father.

He believed that in spite of being despised and rejected by the very ones he came to save that many people would believe on him and receive His gift of salvation.

Jesus exercised His faith by allowing man to crucify him.

John 10:18 NLT “No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.”

John 19:10-11 NKJV “Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?” Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”

What about us, what do we have faith in?

Jesus was sent to be our savior.

Luke 2:11 NKJV “For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

The word savior comes from the root word *sozo*, which means to heal, deliver, restore, set free, save from eternal destruction.

We have to believe that Jesus came to do more than give us a get out of hell pass and leave us under the curse of sin and death.

Jesus came to make right what Adam made wrong.

Romans 5:12 NKJV “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—”

Sin here is not talking about wrong behavior, it is talking about how man’s nature became corrupted when he lost the nature of God.

Death represents the fruit of our corrupted nature: sickness, disease, oppression, depression, condemnation....

Jesus the savior came to take away the root of sin and the fruit of death so we could be restored back to his original design.

1 Peter 2:24 NKJV “who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.”

On the cross Jesus our savior, bore the root of sin and the fruit of death so that we could now experience life again.

Romans 6:10-11 NKJV “For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The truth is our faith is producing what we believe.

If you believe that Jesus died for your sin yet left you with the nature of Adam and all of the effects of the curse like sickness, oppression, condemnation that is what you will continue to experience.

If you will renew your mind to believe what the Bible says, that you are dead to the nature of sin and alive unto God because you are now in Christ and begin to declare and act as if it is true you will begin to experience the abundant life that Jesus offered.