

speaking to God's people

freegiftfromgod

bible studies

Subject: **Walking with Jesus – Pt 1 – Faith**

Scripture

Introduction

Commentary

The great focus of many ministries in the world today is on making disciples. Most churches take what is called the Great Commission very seriously where Jesus said to go into all the world and make disciples.

But once a person has become a Christian, what then? It is the responsibility of those who bring them to the Lord to finish off the process. The Great Commission is often seen as being a call to make disciples, but there are actually three aspects to this commandment of the Lord.

Matthew 28:19-20 shows us what the Great Commission is all about. It says:

*19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.*

	<p>So we can see from this that the three parts of the Commission are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Make disciples of all nations2. Baptise them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit3. Teach them to observe all that Jesus commanded <p>It is this third aspect that I will look at over the coming few bible studies. Not that I will be teaching you all that the Lord commanded, but rather to show you the process for progressing in your walk with the Lord.</p> <p>The apostle Peter defined this process and how we are to progress as Christians, and so I will be using the pattern he defined in 2 Peter 1:5-7, which says:</p> <p><i>5 For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,</i> <i>6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,</i> <i>7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.</i></p>
2 Peter 1:5	<p>As you can see from the above scripture, Peter is explaining to us a method on how to grow as Christians. He is saying that as we walk with the Lord there are definite steps that need to be taken, and they need to be taken in order.</p> <p>Just as when you learn any new skill you need to begin at a certain place and progressively add to your knowledge and abilities, so too as Christians we need to progressively add to our knowledge of the Lord progressively. In any human skill you cannot go from an absolute beginner to a master overnight, so too in Christ we cannot move from a brand new convert to being in the image of Jesus Christ overnight either. We must first learn how to walk and then progressively move forward through the leading of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Peter here shows us a pathway to achieve that goal, and the beginning point of our walk is faith. Indeed in the Lord faith is the starting point for everything, and as we shall see shortly that faith is the first and most critical element of our life in Christ.</p>

<p>Romans 4:19-22</p>	<p>Now faith is not a new thing and faith existed before the introduction of the New Covenant in Jesus. We see faith as a forerunner in the Old Testament in many places, most notably in the righteousness by faith that Abraham received. We see this in this scripture:</p> <p><i>19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. 20 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 That is why his faith was "reckoned to him as righteousness."</i></p> <p>The Bible tells us that Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Abraham believed something very specific, that God would make him the father of many peoples and nations and give him a son, Isaac, by his wife Sarah. And though Abraham was approaching one hundred years old and Sarah was both barren, unable to bear children and had passed through menopause being about ninety years old, Abraham believed God could do anything. He grew strong in his faith and because he did not doubt God, God declared him righteous.</p>
<p>John 3:14-15</p>	<p>And it is the same for us. Abraham was given something specific to believe and we too are given something specific to believe. And just as Abraham's faith was reckoned to him as righteousness, so too our faith is reckoned as righteousness when we believe in God who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.</p> <p>We see this especially in an analogy teaching where there is life in the death of Jesus in this scripture.</p> <p><i>14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.</i></p> <p>There is a tremendous amount of insight to be gained in a study of this scripture, but rather than go into it here, I recently wrote a post on this topic in my blog, which I encourage you to check out at the following link: http://freegiftfromgod.com/blog/2012/06/the-son-of-man-will-be-lifted-up/</p>

	<p>Jesus said himself that when he was lifted up from the earth he would draw all men to himself. (John 12:32) And the way we are drawn and come to Him is through our faith.</p>
Hebrews 11:6	<p>The writer of Hebrews tells us quite clearly just how important and essential it is to have faith. As you can see from the following scripture, there are three points that are made.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.</i></p> <p>First, he says we cannot possibly please God unless we have faith. If you read the whole of Hebrews chapter 11 you begin to see the power of faith in the lives of many who followed God. We also see that the people described in that section had the other two attributes as well.</p> <p>The second is that we must first believe that God exists. How can a person draw near to God unless they first believe there is a God? So the very first part of faith is recognition that there is a God. Needless to say this leaves those who do not believe there is a God in a very difficult place. In God, and especially in Christ Jesus we have hope. But the unbeliever has no hope.</p> <p>And the third and final aspect of this scripture is that God rewards those who do have faith. In our case as Christians that reward is in the promise of eternal life and a better life here and now. It is the promise that we can put all our problems and issues into his hands and know that he will be with us to resolve them and support us as we go through them.</p> <p>It is a marvellous promise and a wonderful place to be and it is all based upon faith.</p>
	<p>So unlike the people of this world who do not have faith, we are looking towards a positive future. There is no positive future in this world for all that is offered is strife, trouble and difficulties. The recent and ongoing collapse of the world economic systems is a sure sign of those issues and there is no end in sight. In addition the nature of the world economy is such that even when this current crisis is resolved, there will be</p>

<p>2 Corinthians 5:6-7</p>	<p>another as there has been a recession or depression every 7-10 years for many, many years.</p> <p>And that is aside from the troubles of nations fighting with each other, graft, greed and corruption leading to civil wars in others and the basic inhumanity of man towards their fellow man.</p> <p>That is why Paul showed that a life in Christ is different, for we do not walk and live as the world does. He said,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>6 So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.</i></p> <p>We walk by faith knowing that in our faith in Jesus Christ we are protected from the events of the world and we have a hope for the future that is based on the government of God rather than the governments of man. We look at the events of the world through the eyes of the Lord and we understand that the things we are seeing have to occur.</p> <p>If we consider some of the events already mentioned, we see that these things were prophesied thousands of years ago and that they would come to pass in our day. We see also things like the changing weather events, earthquakes and so on and know, through our faith, that these are signs of the times. They begin to announce the imminent return of the Lord who will establish His government.</p> <p>So our faith holds us in good stead for in it we learn not to fear the things of this world. While we may suffer under the issues going on around us, we know that in Jesus through our faith we have a hope for the future that cannot be taken away by men.</p>
<p>Hebrews 11:1</p>	<p>Our faith gives us a great level of assurance, as the writer of Hebrews shows here.</p> <p><i>1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.</i></p>

<p>John 15:19</p> <p>John 17:14-16</p> <p>1 John 4:4-6</p>	<p>We hope and long for a better time and a better life with the Lord, and it is through our faith that we are assured of these things. And when we are assured of a positive future with the Lord, we are comforted and can put up with the imperfections and issues of this life, for we know that there is a better place awaiting us in due course.</p> <p>Through faith we come to the realisation that we are not of this world. Although we live “in” this world, we are not “of” this world. As Christians we are no longer living according to the dictates of men but according to the ways of God through Jesus Christ. While we have to abide by the rules and regulations of the governments of this world, unless they are opposed to the word of God, our spirits and our hearts serve the Lord Jesus Christ as we look to a future kingdom where God is on the throne.</p> <p>In relation to this matter of being “in” but not “of” this world I would recommend a review of the following scriptures.</p> <p><i>19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.</i></p> <p><i>14 I have given them thy word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.</i></p> <p><i>4 Little children, you are of God, and have overcome them; for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 5 They are of the world, therefore what they say is of the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are of God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.</i></p>
	<p>So if faith is so important, how do we gain faith? The apostles asked Jesus this exact question in the following scripture.</p>

Luke 17:5-6

5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

6 And the Lord said, "If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamine tree, 'Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

What we see from the Lord's response is that you don't need a lot of faith to do miraculous things. You need only faith as the grain of a mustard seed to be able to move mountains. But then how do you measure faith anyway? You can't see it, weigh it, put a ruler on it and so on.

The thing about faith is that it is not about increasing it, but it's all about having it. People either have faith or they don't. They either believe or they don't. And even if their faith is only tiny, even if it is miniscule, it is still a level of faith. And as Jesus said, even the smallest amount of faith is enough to do remarkable things.

But the purpose of faith is not about doing miracles. It's about coming to the Lord and learning his ways so that we can ultimately live with him in His kingdom. It's about changing our lives so that we can live a life in harmony with God. And that can be increased and grown within us.

Paul wrote,

Romans 10:17

17 So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.

The gateway to increasing your faith comes through knowledge. Not just any knowledge, but the knowledge of the gospel of Christ. The more we learn about the working of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the greater will our faith be. As we understand how the gospel applies and works in our lives on a day-to-day basis, we begin to understand how it works and what our role in the process of walking with Christ is to be. We begin to see that faith is the key to all that God has offered and promised to us in Jesus Christ, and our faith increases as we learn.

So I encourage everyone to continue to seek the knowledge of the truth of the gospel for yourself. Take in the precious words of Jesus Christ and make them your own for the outcome of your faith will be eternal life.

1 Peter 1:8-9	<p>The apostle Peter wrote,</p> <p><i>8 Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy.</i></p> <p><i>9 As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls.</i></p> <p>This is the outcome of our faith, salvation. It is only through faith in Jesus Christ that we can be saved and receive his salvation. While there is certainly salvation under the law of God, the salvation in Jesus Christ is much better for in it we learn the ways of Christ and we begin to be transformed into his image.</p> <p>All who come to God eventually must be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ for we cannot stand before the Father as men and women of the flesh. We must learn to live in the Spirit and that comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.</p>
So what next?	<p>This is a brief discussion and introduction into this critical teaching about faith. There is much more that can be added, but I hope in this “taste” you will continue the search and grow in the faith in Jesus Christ. Please feel free to send me any comments or things you have learned in your own studies or as a result of this information.</p> <p>So now it’s your turn. What would you like to add to this conversation? Send me an email (link below) or engage with me on Twitter (@JohnBLemmon) or send me a comment on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/FreeGiftFromGod and let’s have the discussion continue.</p> <p>Feel free also to send this to others so they can join the conversation. I hope this has added value to your own walk with Christ.</p>

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