

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Faith is the cornerstone of salvation. Jesus Christ was sacrificed for sins but a sinner must have faith that His shed blood covers and cleanses sins and that He bore those sins to His grave through death. His sacrifice brings about complete remission of sins for eternal salvation:

LUKE 1:77 To give **knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins**,

There are many other scriptures¹, all of which should be familiar. While the above verse mentions a “knowledge”, that word in the Greek is a knowledge that is absolute, exhaustive, and rational. It is not based upon personal observation or a perception that comes through physical senses. In other words, “**knowledge of salvation**” is grounded in the assurance and confidence of something immovable and undeniable. It is what leads to baptism in which a person is joined into the death of Jesus Christ. Although a simple symbolic ceremony, it is an expression of absolute faith! But faith unto salvation was a foreign concept to Gentiles who likely did not even have a grasp of sin. Perhaps this is why Paul described salvation in such detail to the Romans:

ROMANS 3:21-26 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, **through faith in Jesus Christ**, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace **through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith**, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and **the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus**.

The faith required for remission of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is rare. It is more than simple understanding; it is an extraordinary depth of conviction of both the heart AND mind. For that reason, faith must proven²:

1 PETER 1:5-9 who are kept by the power of God **through faith for salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the **genuineness [proof-testing] of your faith**, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, **yet believing**, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the **end of your faith—the salvation** of *your* souls.

Peter calls faith unto salvation Genuine Faith and says it is more precious than fine gold. No one knows the value of gold unless it has been assayed or proof-tested for

¹ Matt. 26:28; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 10:43; et al.

² Also Jas. 1:2-4.

purity. God does the same for Genuine Faith through trials. But why does God need to assay and prove faith? If a person had Genuine Faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, why does faith need to be proven after baptism?

There are two primary reasons, the first being that Genuine Faith is required for more than remission of sins. Once sins are cleansed and remitted, the sinner must be forgiven—and that, too, requires faith:

1 JOHN 1:7, 9 But if we walk in the light as He [*God the Father*] is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.** ... 9 **If we confess our sins, He [*God the Father*] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Remission of sins alone is insufficient for salvation because it also requires the forgiveness of God. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the ransom from the penalty of death for those who were convicted of sin³, but salvation requires a sinner to BE the opposite of sin—righteousness⁴:

ROMANS 10:4, 10 For Christ *is* the end of the law **for righteousness to everyone who believes.** ... 10 For **with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

The problem is that a sinner whose sins are remitted is still, at best, an ex-Convict who was ransomed from serving out the sentence. Therefore, God has to pardon the conviction of the sinner. In fact, His forgiveness is so complete that He imputes His own perfect righteousness to the sinner, making the ex-Lawbreaker into a LAWKEEPER after the perfection of God the Father. Genuine Faith is required to believe and accept that the blood of Jesus Christ and God's forgiveness makes sinners sinless to the extent that Believers wear a robe of the righteousness of God Himself⁵. As confirmation of this, God then seals the person with the Holy Spirit⁶:

EPHESIANS 1:12-13 that we who first **trusted in Christ** should be to the praise of His glory. 13 In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, **having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit** of promise,

The Holy Spirit marks those who belong to God the Father⁷ because of their Genuine Faith. It is given only to those whose sins are remitted and now are Lawkeepers after the righteousness of God:

ROMANS 8:10-11 And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but **the Spirit is life because of righteousness.** 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He [*God the Father*] who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His [*God the Father's*] Spirit [that] dwells in you.

³ Rom. 6:23.

⁴ Also Rom. 3:22; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:9.

⁵ Isa. 61:10; Zech. 3:3-4.

⁶ Acts 2:38; 10:45; Heb. 2:4; 6:4.

⁷ Ps. 100:3; Rom. 14:8; Isa. 43:1; 1 Cor. 6:19; 1 John 4:4.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit in a person is the seed of begetting unto eternal life:

JOHN 3:5-6 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is **born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.** 6 “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

God the Father seals those who have Genuine Faith with the Holy Spirit. But having the Holy Spirit requires faith in the doctrine of resurrection of the dead⁸:

ROMANS 10:9 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.**

Considering that only a handful of Believers witnessed Jesus Christ alive after His death, Genuine Faith is required to accept that God raised Him up from the grave and will do the same for all Believers.

All of this—remission of sins, ransom from death, pardon of the conviction for sin, transformation by the righteousness of God from a Lawbreaker to a Lawkeeper, and the resurrection from the dead—is the grace of God⁹:

EPHESIANS 2:8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith,** and that not of yourselves; **it is the gift of God,**

God’s grace of all that is required for salvation is an outpouring of His love for eternal children. Genuine Faith is required for salvation because only a few have actually witnessed the grace of God through His Son while He was on earth. A Gospel delivered by an unseen Creator God to fallible human beings produces Genuine Faith because it is life-changing. For that reason, Genuine Faith must be proven.

But there is another reason for testing Genuine Faith—over time it can grow or weaken. One of the threats that diminish faith is fear:

JAMES 2:19 **You believe** that there is one God. You do well. Even **the demons believe—and tremble!**

There is no place for fear in faith. Instead of confident assurance that God will manifest the promised gift of eternal life to us (*personally*), Fearful Faith anticipates or expects eternal death. Fearful Faith is NOT rooted in a sound mind¹⁰. It is faith tormented¹¹ by the same fear of the demons because it denies the whole desire of God is to save people¹². Worse than Fearful Faith, however, is Futile Faith¹³:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-4, 12-13, 16-18 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless **you believed in vain.** 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that

⁸ Heb. 6:2. Also Acts 17:31.

⁹ Also Acts 15:11; 16:31.

¹⁰ 2 Tim. 1:7.

¹¹ 1 John 4:18.

¹² John 3:16; 2 Pet. 2:1

¹³ Also Heb. 10:38-39; 2 Thess. 2:8-12.

He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ... 12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do **some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?** 13 **But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.** 14 **And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.** ... 16 For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, **your faith is futile [useless]**; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

Every single aspect of the grace of God—remission of sins, ransom from death, pardon of the conviction for sin, and transformation by the righteousness of God from a Lawbreaker to a Lawkeeper—is part of salvation. Questioning any of these, like the Corinthians who doubted the resurrection—is Futile Faith because it denies the possibility of salvation. But the worst of all is Dead Faith:

JAMES 2:17, 20 Thus also **faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.** ... 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead?**

Dead Faith is the result of a lack of agape love and Good Works. Someone can have Genuine Faith in remission of sins, ransom from death, pardon of the conviction for sin, and transformation by the righteousness of God from a Lawbreaker to a Lawkeeper for salvation but lack in agape love and Good Works—which are required for salvation and not matters of faith. This brings death instead of life. Genuine Faith without agape love and Good Works is pointless, useless, and *dead*.

Futile Faith, Fearful Faith, and Dead Faith are likely the main reason why too many Believers will not be saved. In reality, someone cannot truly have Genuine Faith WITHOUT also having agape love and Good Works. Genuine Faith, agape love, and Good Works cannot be separated:

GALATIANS 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but **faith working through love.**

Genuine Faith is more precious than fine gold; as such, God assays or proof-tests the purity and steadfastness of faith because it is through trials that faith is purified even more. Unlike gold that does not change when it is assayed for purity, Genuine Faith actually becomes more pure during testing because it is “God who works in you”¹⁴:

TITUS 2:14 [*Jesus Christ*] who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and **purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.**

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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¹⁴ Phil. 2:13.