

Help Thou Mine Unbelief

So far, we have looked at how we can know God through our conscious spirit and especially through our conscience. We have also looked at the fact that it is by our own free will that we can choose God or not. We examined how that there is no such thing as choosing not to choose. Choosing not to choose means that we remain in the default position of being a sinner on our way to Hell. You cannot escape that choice. You *might* die before you can decide to choose to accept God's offer, but that is not a gamble you should take. If you choose to remain in your sin, it is a sure bet that you will die and go to Hell. So the two things we have examined about mankind is that we have the capacity to know God and we have the capacity to choose. Today we are going to look at another aspect of man: we have the ability to believe. Faith is one of the faculties of man.

1. Help Thou Mine Unbelief -

There are some theologies that teach that our spirit is dead and we cannot respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. They will point out that a corpse in a coffin can't do *anything*, let alone, believe. It is one thing to be physically dead and on our way to the cemetery, but that is not the only way the word *death* is used. One can be *morally* dead, which is more appropriate when we think of our standing before God. A person can be alienated from God, corrupted by sin, and subject to judgment, but still have consciousness, reason, and the capacity to respond.

This distinction is important as early as the Fall when Eve heard about God's warning that she would die if she ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She and Adam did *not* drop dead *physically* on the spot. Instead, they experienced spiritual separation, hid from God, were expelled from the garden, and began to suffer the consequences of sin. The death was real, but it was not biological. It was a

relational and moral rupture.

Paul speaks of this kind of death in Romans 8. Here, the body is called dead *morally*.

Rom 8:10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

Here, the "body is dead" doesn't mean the believer is a corpse, but that the body bears the curse and corruption of sin. It's *morally* affected. This death refers to a *condition*, not the absence of all faculties. It is a state of brokenness, separation, or condemnation. The same is true for our dead spirit.

Though we might be *morally* dead in our sins, we still retain the ability to exercise faith and believe, even if it is wrongfully placed. David wrote about this in Psalm 115

Psalm 115:4-8 Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

5 They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:

6 They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:

7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.

8 They that make them are like unto them; *so is* every one that trusteth in them.

Idolaters still have the capacity to choose what they trust. David condemns them not for *inability*, but for *misdirected* faith. They can still perceive, reason, and respond, however corrupted their motives or darkened their understanding may be.

In reality, we exercise faith all the time. We have faith in our weathermen, even though their predictions are only about 95% right for today's weather and only about 70% right for the five day forecast. If I offer you a seat, you are

exercising faith when you sit down that the seat will hold you up.

This brings us to the case of the father whose son was possessed by a demon.

Mark 9:23-24 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

He believed, even though it was imperfectly and desperately.

We are like the father who had faith, but who knew that he needed help with that faith. We have the ability to have faith, but sometimes we exercise that faith incorrectly which can lead to disappointment.

2. Not all faith is true faith -

Even though we might not be idolaters, it is possible to have a wrong kind of faith.

- **Intellectual only**

Later on, we will look at how the intellect is important, but it is possible to have an intellectual faith without trust. When someone says they believe in God, we have find out what they actually mean. It is possible to believe without being saved. This is the kind of belief that the devil has.

Jas 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

It was God Who threw Satan out of heaven. Even though he *knows* very well that God is real, he is not saved. In Romans 1 we see that *everyone* knows God.

Rom 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who

hold the truth in unrighteousness;
19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

- **Mind over matter**

Some describe faith in a way that closely resembles mind over matter, though they may not use that phrase. They might say that "Faith is a force, and it is released by words." For them, faith is a spiritual substance or energy that is activated through words. They say, "You create your reality with your words." They think that whatever you speak in faith, believing it in your heart, it will come to pass. They say, "Don't speak doubt." They think that any negative statement is treated not merely as pessimism, but as spiritually damaging. It is almost like speaking a curse over yourself. For them, faith is the act of continuously affirming good outcomes. "See it, say it, seize it" is a catchphrase that captures their emphasis: envision what you want, confess it boldly, and it will manifest. Faith becomes more like mental certainty or positive visualization instead of humble trust in God's will. It treats the mind and mouth as *tools* to *manipulate* God and outcomes, rather than means of submitting to God's purposes. Healing, wealth, and success are seen as guaranteed if you just believe strongly and speak rightly.

- **Mistaking sincerity for faith**

Many people today confuse sincerity with saving faith. They believe that as long as someone is genuine in their belief, whether Muslim, Buddhist, or anything else, that must be enough for God. Sincerity is admirable, but it is not the measure of truth. A person can be sincerely wrong. You can take the wrong medicine with full conviction and still die. The Bible does not leave the way of

salvation open to whatever someone happens to believe sincerely. It declares this clearly and with authority.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

That name is Jesus Christ. Sincerity may describe the attitude of a heart, but only faith in the right object, faith in Christ, saves the soul.

There's a moment in the play Peter Pan that captures all of this. In one of the most emotional scenes, Tinker Bell, the tiny fairy companion of Peter, drinks poison that was meant for him. As she begins to die, Peter is heartbroken. But in that story, fairies live only so long as children believe in them. So Peter turns to the audience and pleads, "Do you believe in fairies? If you do, clap your hands!" And in that moment, the whole theater is drawn into the drama—not just as observers, but as participants. The louder the clapping, the brighter her light shines, until finally, she revives, rescued by the belief of those who chose to act on it. You can choose to believe intellectually that fairies exist, but you would be wrong. You can clap with all your strength, but it doesn't make that belief real. It's a play, a fantasy, and your sincerity about Tinker Bell doesn't make a difference.

3. Components of Faith -

Just as the father in Mark 9, we would like to have a stronger faith. But the significance of faith is not an issue of straining and straining and straining to believe harder. We do not force God's hand by the strength of our faith. Our faith might be weak because we don't exactly know how to connect with God. The question is not how strong or weak our faith is. The question is if our faith is in God Who is strong. Jesus taught this in Luke 18 about the Pharisee who had a strong religion and the publican who had no strength to boast of.

Luke 18:10-14 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Heb 11:1-4 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

There are certain components that make faith real.

- **An informed faith**

There is an intellectual component, for sure, that is part of our *trust*. We do not have a *blind* faith. We have an *informed* faith. From the start, we have the miracle of God's Word. We started off the series of messages a number of months ago examining how impossible it is to have the Bible unless

God was inspiring the prophets who wrote the books of the Bible. It is heartening to hear of those who have taken up the challenge to actually read the Bible through and hear of their discoveries and challenges. God did not leave mankind alone but gave us a way to know Him and His blessings. As someone put it, the letters in the word *Bible* could stand for *Basics Instructions Before Leaving Earth*. Someone else has said, *Best Instruction Book for Living Everyday*, or, *Be Informed Before Life Ends*. When we do outreach, we ask the question, "If you were to die today, would you know 100% for sure that you would go to heaven?" Always, that word 100% makes people stop to think. Many people guess and hope to go because they aren't so bad, only to find out that God says in His Word that their good works don't get us there. The ultimate answer is that you can know you are going to heaven because God almighty tells us Himself by the authority of His Word how to know. When we place our faith in the work of Christ on the cross to pay the punishment we deserve, then we have an informed assurance of heaven.

Rom 10:13-17 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

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

- **A rational faith**

We not only have an informed faith, we have a rational faith. God's plan is logical and fits together. You are a sinner. God loves you. But, He also has to judge you for your sins. You can "calculate" your sinfulness. In front of an infinitely holy God, your sin and rebellion earns you an infinite punishment. Only Jesus, Who is infinitely righteous, could pay the infinite price for your infinitely sinfulness. You are made infinitely saved by the infinite power of God.

Isa 1:18 Come now, and **let us reason together**, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Rom 6:23 For the **wages** of sin *is* **death**; but the gift of God *is* **eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- **A properly defined faith**

Heb 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

The apostles laid out the plan. Peter didn't just say, "Believe." He spelled it out.

Acts 10:39-43 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was

ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead.

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

Paul did the same thing when he wrote to the Corinthians.

1Cor 15:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

- **A volitional faith**

We not only have an intellectual faith, but we also have a volitional, or willful, faith. The last component of faith is to willfully trust in Christ. This is what makes it more than an intellectual exercise. There are two words that are translated *believe*. One is simply *to believe*, which will secure a relationship with God. But sometimes, another word is used. Sometimes it is translated *believe*. Sometimes it is translated *obey*. Sometimes it is translated *persuade*. It always has the idea of being convinced and persuaded to the point that we actually act upon what we hear and call out to God for salvation.

Rom 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

I can obey commands like, "Stand up. Sit down. Turn around." How do you obey a concept, like "obey the Gospel"? It means that we are persuaded and

convinced that the Gospel is the answer and we do something about it. According to a previous verse, we call out to God and ask Him to save us.

Rom 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Paul uses these two words in 2 Timothy.

2Tim 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have **believed [simple faith]**, and am **persuaded [obedient faith]** that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

It would have been correct to translate this as "I have believed and believe," but that wouldn't convey the fact that he not only believed but that he believed to the point of actually putting his trust in Christ.

Sometimes I ask if someone believes in God. They will say that they do. I then ask how they spell *God*. They will say "G-O-D." Then I ask them do they mean capital *G* or little *g*. I explain that many people mean little *g* as a god who is like a good luck charm, or a genie granting them wishes. When you say capital *G*, that means that He is God Almighty, ruler of the universe, our creator and sustainer, Who is infinitely holy and righteous and ought to be obeyed. *That* is what people struggle with. They are not persuaded to trust and obey God.

People only want to trust that God will make them comfortable in this world. There *will* be a sense of comfort in this world when we have the strength God gives us to fulfill our mission. But, there will be a sense of discomfort also because life is rough and people who are rougher in how they treat us. We are going to die. Our faith will deliver us from time to time, but it will ultimately deliver us out of this world and into heaven. Steven, when he was martyred,

pointed this out:

Acts 7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

Yes, God will give us success sometimes as we live for Him, but sometimes we will come up against people who will present problems. Our trust in God will give us certain kinds of success in this world, but we will have the ultimate success in the next world.

You *can* believe. God made you that way. He gave you a spirit that can sense eternity, a conscience that can be challenged, and a will that can choose. You are not a machine. You are not a corpse. You are a person created in the image of God with the capacity to hear Him, respond to Him, and *trust* Him. You will place your faith somewhere. You already do, every day. The question is: Where is your faith right now?

You may have sincere beliefs, but sincerity is no substitute for truth. You may have some faith, but misdirected faith will not save you. You may believe in God, but even the devils do that and tremble. You may believe with your mind, but have you trusted Him with your heart?

Jesus said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." And the father cried, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." That is where you may be today: aware of your weakness, your doubts, your flaws. But Jesus does not ask for perfect faith. He asks for faith placed in a perfect Savior. When the disciples asked Jesus about the faith it took to cast out the demon, Jesus said:

Matt 17:20 ...Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall

remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

So if you've never trusted Christ as your Savior, capital G God, not a lucky charm or a good feeling, but the risen Son of God who died for your sin and rose again, now is your time. You have enough light to choose. You have enough faith to call. The Scripture says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Will you?

And if you have believed, but your life has drifted, then remember this: Faith is not only for salvation; it is for service. God has given you the ability to live for Him in a world that will not always applaud you. Like Stephen, like Paul, like the publican in the temple, you are not called to boast, but to believe, to live boldly, and to keep trusting when the world is against you.

So here's the invitation: If you need to be saved, believe and call upon Him today. If you *are* saved, act like it. Live like it. Trust like it. Serve like it. Let your faith not just be a statement. It must become a surrender. Faith that doesn't produce works is a dead faith.

Luke 9:23-26 And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and of the holy angels.

Put down the drugs. Leave the lottery behind. Don't consult the demonic horoscopes. Turn off the filth and open the Word of God. Turn your music, your media, your mind, and your mouth over

to Christ. Take up your cross daily and follow Jesus.

1. Help Thou Mine Unbelief - Rom 8:10, Psalm 115:4-8, Mark 9:23-24
2. Not all faith is true faith - Jas 2:19, Rom 1:18-20, Acts 4:12
3. Components of Faith - Luke 18:10-14, Heb 11:1-4, Rom 10:13-17, Isa 1:18, Rom 6:23, Heb 11:6, Acts 10:39-43, 1Cor 15:1-4, Rom 10:16, 10:13, 2Tim 1:12, Acts 7:52, Matt 17:20, Luke 9:23-26