

Order of Salvation – All of Grace

Faith

To partake of salvation, we need to repent and believe the gospel (Mk. 1:15). Which comes first? “There is no priority. The faith that is unto salvation is a penitent faith and the repentance that is unto life is a believing repentance” (J. Murray). We need both.

Faith is important. “Without faith, it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6). The inquiring jailor was exhorted to believe (Acts 16:31). The way to partake of salvation and receive everlasting life is through faith (Jn. 3:16).

Kinds of faith

1. **Historical faith.** This is an intellectual agreement with the truth of the Bible without fleeing to Christ, loving His word, and bearing fruit to God’s honour (Js. 2:19).
2. **Temporary faith.** This faith is affected by the Word, may weep and even rejoice in (parts of) its message. “Such faith does not show itself in true repentance. Such faith fades away as the emotions fade away in the midst of troubles or temptations, like the seed in stony and thorny ground” (G.R. Procee).
3. **Miraculous faith.** There were those who believed in Jesus because of His miracles, to whom Christ did not commit Himself (Jn. 2:23; Matt. 7:22-23). It is possible to have faith that can move mountains, and to lack love (1 Cor. 13:2).
4. **True saving faith.** This faith is described in the Bible in different ways. It is convinced of the truth and reliability of God’s promises, and whole-heartedly believes them (Gen. 15:6). It finds refuge in God and enjoys safety and security in Him (Ps. 91:2). It resorts to Christ (Mk. 5:28; 10:47) and trusts in Christ the Saviour (2 Tim. 1:12).

Anatomy of Faith

1. **Head of faith.** There are things that must be known of God, Christ and His salvation to trust Him. “We must know who Christ is, what He has done, and what He is able to do” (J. Murray). “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).
2. **Heart of faith.** “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness” (Rom. 10:10). The heart is drawn out to Christ (e.g. Acts 16:15, 34). We are convinced that the Lord Jesus meets our need perfectly as the Saviour of lost sinners.
3. **Hand of faith.** The soul is set in motion, and the hand of the soul stretches out to Him. It is the hand of the beggar stretched out to the King who has gifts to give, to receive access, to receive healing. “Faith is a whole-souled movement of self-commitment to Christ for salvation from sin and its consequences” (J. Murray).

Experience of faith

The Holy Spirit works this faith by the gospel in my heart (LD 7). He opens ears to hear, enlightens minds to see, and inclines hearts to embrace and trust the word of God and Son of God for salvation. He not only clears away all obstacles to faith and works it, but also revives and strengthens it throughout the life of a believer.

The focus of faith is not faith itself. After all, our faith does not save us. Christ saves through faith, and that faith looks away from itself to the object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The believer should be continually taking refuge to Christ, resting on Him alone, stretching out his empty hands to receive from His fullness (Rom. 1:17; 2 Cor. 5:7).

Lessons about faith

1. **A word of examination** (2 Cor. 13:5). Do you believe?
2. **A word of direction.** If not, we must come to Christ by faith without delay
If you have not the right feelings yet, ask Him to give you right feelings. If you dare not think that you have true faith yet, ask Him to give you faith. But in any case do not sit still. Do not idle away your soul into hell—in ignorant unscriptural sloth. Do not live on in senseless inactivity—waiting for you know not what—expecting what you cannot explain—increasing your guilt every day—offending God by continuing in lazy unbelief—and hourly digging a grave in hell for your own soul. Arise and call upon Christ! Awake and cry to Jesus about your soul! Whatever difficulties there may be about believing, one thing at least is abundantly clear—no man ever perished and went to hell—from the foot of the cross. If you can do nothing else, lie down at the foot of the cross (J.C. Ryle)
3. **A word of exhortation.** The believer should seek for increase of faith (Lk. 17:5). Be diligent in the means of grace... watchful over your time, temper and tongue.
Would you have more faith? Then seek to become more acquainted with Jesus Christ. Study your blessed Saviour more and more, and strive to know more of the length, and breadth and height of His love. Study Him in all His offices, as the Priest, the Physician, the Redeemer, the Advocate, the Friend, the Teacher, the Shepherd of His believing people. Study Him as one who not only died for you—but is also living for you at the right hand of God; as one who not only shed His blood for you—but daily intercedes for you at the right hand of God; as one who is soon coming again for you, and will stand once more on this earth. The miner who is fully persuaded that the rope which draws him up from the pit will not break, is drawn up without anxiety and alarm. The believer who is thoroughly acquainted with the fullness of Jesus Christ, is the believer who travels from grace to glory with the greatest comfort and peace (J.C. Ryle)

Questions for Discussion

1. What makes true saving faith different from other types of faith?
2. Can you think of other illustrations the Bible gives of faith? Explain them.
3. Why is faith so important for the beginning of the Christian life and the continuation of the Christian life?