

Salvation—Justification: Faith (9th)

(In this podcast we are continuing the study of the role of faith regarding the doctrine of justification.)

Previously we showed that many teach that faith is “the” (or “a”) condition of justification. Some who teach this will further affirm that while faith is essential to justification the real ground is the righteousness of God as reflected in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I well remember in my early years of being a Christian as I read such writers I became more confused as to exactly what they meant by such language. In our previous study I gave a quote from Jonathan Edwards whereby he said “yet this matter is not clearly and sufficiently explained by saying that faith is the condition of justification; and that because the word seems ambiguous, both in common use, and also as used in divinity. In one sense, Christ alone performs the condition of our justification and salvation; in another sense, faith is the condition of justification; in another sense, other qualifications and acts are conditions of salvation and justification too.” However, the Scriptures plainly teach that our justification is based on nothing other than the finished work of Christ. If anything else is needed then salvation and/or justification is not by Christ alone. Equally, as we have seen in previous podcasts, Christ did not make salvation and/or justification possible for the whole human race; He actually redeemed the elect, the sheep, or the believer. Robert Traill summarized it well as follows:

Christ did not consecrate and make himself a way to heaven, and send the gospel into the world, that men, according as they incline, and according to the direction of their free-will, might come in and get life and salvation by him. Our Lord Jesus went about his work more knowingly, more fixedly than that; he knew what would come of it. It is done, I say, for particular persons. Consider, with respect to this,

1. That all the springs of salvation are towards particular persons.
2. That the covenant, the charter of salvation, is with, and for, and to particular persons.
3. The possession of it is by, and for particular persons.

1. The great springs of salvation are all for particular persons; the three grand springs of salvation, are the election of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the sanctification of the Holy Ghost. Now, all these are determined towards distinct and particular persons, 1st, The election of grace is upon persons; there is no election of qualifications, the election is of persons. Wherever it is spoken in the word, it is spoken of persons: *He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.* The election is all of persons.

2dly, The grace of redemption by our Lord, with his redeeming love, is of persons: *He laid down his life for his sheep,* and, *I know you are not of my sheep,* says our Lord. ...

3dly, The sanctification of the Spirit, which is the great spring of salvation, as it is begun in us, is of persons. ... But as it is a work on particular persons, this work must pass upon particular men; the springs must work in every man that is called to this salvation. ... So that we find, I say, that the springs of salvation are all about particular persons. The springs run in one distinct channel towards particular persons, and always answer the same. Every one that is elected by the grace of the Father, is redeemed by the blood of his Son; every one that is elected and redeemed, is sanctified by the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost: they are not equally visible, but equally certain. (*The Works of Robert Traill*, Vol. 3, pp. 204-206, by The Banner of Truth Trust.)

Traill further enlarged by showing that the “charter of salvation” and the “possession of salvation” are equally limited to “particular persons.” The Person and work of Christ regarding justification is limited to “particular persons” and it should never be presented that the ground of justification is the faith of anyone. The Lord willing we will enlarge on the importance of faith and the certainty of faith in the elect in future studies, but it must be clear that faith is not the ground of justification. Though we do not have time to enter into a study of the priesthood of Christ here, it must be pointed out that His priesthood was set up in the eternal counsel of God and He was only a priest to and for the elect sheep of God. He never was a priest for the human race. As with Israel of old, the priesthood was limited to that nation and form of worship and not for any other nation, likewise the priesthood of the new covenant is limited to those chosen and ordained by God in the eternal counsel.

Another reason that faith is sometimes misunderstood is because of the plethora of modern translations set forth to the public today. We have stated from the beginning of these podcasts, and reiterated at various times that our standard is the King James Version of 1611 and that we believe it is the best English translation and that it is based on the best Hebrew and Greek texts. To show how the modern translations have contributed to the confusion of “faith” and its meaning, let us look at Hebrew 11:1. As stated in the King James Version (KJV), “Now faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The New International Version (NIV) states, “Now faith is *confidence* in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” The New American Standard Bible (NASB) says, “Now faith is *the certainty* of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen.” The New English Translation (NET) declares, “Now faith is *being sure* of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see.” The American Standard Version (ASV): “Now faith is *assurance* of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.” The list could be enlarged but this should be enough to show why so many people are confused as to what the Bible teaches. All who believe the Bible agree that salvation is by grace through faith and that it is the gift of God, Ephesians 2:8. Therefore it is essential that we know *what* faith is. By looking at the different translations of Hebrew 11:1, we find that they do not agree at least regarding one part of the verse. This is seen in the how the Greek word ὑπόστασις (hypostasis) is translated. The KJV says *substance*; the NIV states *confidence*; the NASB gives *certainty*; the NET says *being sure*; and, the ASV supplies *assurance*.

Thayer gives the meaning of this Greek word as follows: ... **1.** *a setting or placing under; substructure, foundation: ... 2. that which has foundation, is firm; hence, a. that which has actual existence; a substance, real being: ... b. the substantial quality, nature, of any person or thing.* [Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967). pp. 644-645.] Richard Soule in his thesaurus give the following synonyms for substance: reality, hypostasis, ... essential nature, real being, real existence, ... essence, ... soul, chief part, essential part, vital part, body, ... stuff, ... (*Theol.*) divine essence, divine being. (Richard Soule, *A Dictionary of English Synonymes*, rev. ed. by George H. Howison (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1891, 1920). p. 413.) “By this we find that *faith* is the real *existence*, the *essence*, the *essential part*, the *vital part*, the *stuff* of things for which we hope. Faith is not a dream. It is not self-persuasion. It is not the product of one’s imagination or something which has been conceived in the mind by emotional desires. This would be mysticism and existentialism. However, this is usually the contemporary concept of faith: a leap in the dark. But faith cannot actually be unless that in which faith rests is an actual fact.” (*Justification: The Heart of the Gospel* by Jimmy Barber, page 102.) From this we are told that faith is *reality, real existence, essence, or stuff* of that which is “hoped for” or of that which one expects to receive, it is not derived by the *confidence* or *assurance* that is conjured by a person’s inner thoughts, mental process, or human will.

With all of these different ideas of faith as given by the various translations (and many other examples could be given), the average person is confused as to what faith is. One person thinks one thing and another person believes it to be something else. Multiply this by the many different ideas presented

by the different translation and the average person in the pew is perplexed as to what faith really is. However, this is simply a small fraction of the problem. Multiply all the differences of the translations by the various translations and the confusion is so astronomical that hardly can any two people agree on anything that the Bible says. There must be a standard and that standard must be one and not two or three or more different concepts. This is one of the many reasons that the standard that I use is the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament and the Textus Receptus or the Received Text of the New Testament, with the English translation of the King James Bible as given by the providence of God. Regardless of what the higher critics and scholars say, I am persuaded these are the best and safest manuscripts and English translation.

By way of summary of the last two podcasts, William Styles concisely points out this twofold aspect of faith as follows:

We believe that Faith should be regarded — Firstly as a **principle** or faculty imparted by the Holy Spirit to every Regenerated person (Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 1:29; II Timothy 1:5; II Peter 1:1); and Secondly as an **act** which arises from the existence of this principle and which specially characterises [sic] the true children of God (Mark 4:40; 11:22; Romans 4:19; 10:17; II Corinthians 1:24; Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:4; 2:5-7; I John 5:4; Hebrews 6:12). (*A Manual of Faith and Practice: Designed for Young and Enquiring Christians* by William Jeyes Styles, 1897, pp. 186-187. See also *Justification: The Heart of the Gospel* by Jimmy K. Barber, pp. 105-106.)

The Lord willing we will discuss more fully this second aspect in the future, but our time is up for today. Farewell.