

# “The Essentials Of Our Faith”

## Session XXIII

March 20, 2011

### “JUSTIFICATION”:

## The Person And Work Of Jesus Christ!

### Part Four: “What Is Saving Faith?”

The warden of the prison in Philippi, Asia Minor, around A.D. 50, when confronted with the miraculous release of the Christian missionaries, Paul and Silas, asked them the most basic question facing mankind, “**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**” The answer given by this missionary team was simple and direct, “**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . .**” (See Acts 16:30-31).

#### What is “SAVING FAITH”?

#### What does it mean to “BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS”?

Notice the assumption of the Philippian jailor – that salvation involved something he must “**DO**” in order to be “saved” from the righteous judgment of holy God! Imagine his surprise when he was told that the **only** requirement was to “**BELIEVE**” in something someone else had already done for him!

Almost 1500 years later, a German priest and teacher of theology in Wittenberg, named Martin Luther, had a similar experience. After years of following a similar assumption to that of the Philippian jailor – that mankind must “**DO**” certain things to merit salvation – he recognized the same message of salvation while translating Paul’s epistle to the Romans,

*“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who **believes**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by **faith**.’ ”*  
Romans 1:16-17

*“With joy, Luther now believed and taught that salvation is a gift of God’s grace, received by faith and trust in God’s promise to forgive sins for the sake of Christ’s death on the cross. This he believed was God’s work from beginning to end.”*

--Anonymous

# **I. The Biblical Requirement for Salvation is to “\_\_\_\_\_” in Jesus Christ → to Exercise Personal “\_\_\_\_\_” in Him!**

## **A. The Statement of Scripture: (What does God “say”?)**

### **1. John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47.**

*“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever **believes** in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and **believes** Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”*

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who **believes** has eternal life.”*

### **2. Acts 16: 30-31.**

*“ . . . Sirs, what must I do to be saved? They said, ‘**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . . ’ ”*

### **3. Romans 4:3-5.**

*“For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham **believed** God and it was credited to him as righteousness.’ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who works not, but **believes** in Him who justifies the ungodly, his **faith** is credited as righteousness.”*

### **4. Romans 5:1.**

*“Therefore, having been justified by **faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

### **5. Romans 9:30-33.**

*“What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is attained by **faith**; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by **faith**, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone . . . he who **believes** in Him will not be disappointed. ”*

### **6. Ephesians 2:8-9.**

*“For by grace you have been saved through **faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

### **7. I Timothy 1:15-16.**

*“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would **believe** in Him for eternal life.”*

## B. The Meaning of Scripture: (What does “believe”/ “faith” mean?)

### 1. The Words:

- a. “Faith” = *pistis* = “faith”, “belief”, “persuasion”, “confidence”.  
(Acts 6:7; 14:27; Rom. 1:5,17; 3:22,25,28; Gal. 1:23; 5:6; Eph. 4:5; Heb. 11:1,6)
- b. “Believe” = *pisteuo* = “to have faith”, “to believe”, “to give credit to”.  
(John 3:15,16,18; 5:46; 12:11,38; 14:1; Rom. 3:2; 4:5,24; Rom.14:2; I Cor. 9:17; Gal.2:7; I Thess. 2:4)

### 2. Comments from Richard C. Barth:

#### a. The Word: “**Faith**”

- “*Personal confidence in God*” → “*trusting God, believing what He has said just because He said it.*”
- “*Faith is not believing in God; it is believing God. Some people think they have faith because they believe God exists. This does not require faith; it is obvious there must be a God. But believing Him is taking Him at His Word.*”

#### b. The Meaning: “**Faith**” = “**the appropriation of God’s grace.**”

- “**Saving faith** is a person’s acceptance of Jesus Christ as God’s provision for his salvation.”
- “*Now, here is what He tells us about salvation, ‘And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.’*” (I John 5:11,12)
- “**Saving faith** is recognizing that Jesus Christ paid the debt for our sin, and putting our **trust** in Him. We receive salvation when we take the Savior of the world as our own Savior. Notice that we are not saved by our faith, but by the object of our faith, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- “*Faith does not necessarily involve complete understanding of all God has said: but it means recognizing that because He said it, it is true.*”
- “*The reason faith is so important is that God always deals with us in grace. We cannot work for His gifts. We can receive them only by trusting Him. We believe God and therefore act upon what He has told us. . . . The only possible way we can know God is by faith. Many people follow religious rituals or seek emotional experiences in an attempt to ‘feel’ the presence of God. But He cannot be reached by means of the physical senses.*”

### 3. Comments from Charles C. Ryrie:

#### a. The Word: ***“Faith”***

- *“To be convinced of something or to give credence to.”*
- *“Means ‘confidence, trust, holding something as true.’ ”*
- *“Specifically to believe in the Gospel is ‘to put one’s trust in the Gospel.’ ”*

#### b. The Meaning:

- *“Faith must have some content. There must be confidence ***about*** something or in someone. To believe in Christ for salvation means to have ***confidence*** that He can remove the guilt of sin and give eternal life. It means to believe that He can solve the problem of sin which is what keeps a person out of heaven.”*
- *“ . . . the use of the word ***trust*** may be particularly appropriate today, for the words believe and faith sometimes seem to be watered down so that they convey little more than knowing facts. ***Trust***, however, implies reliance . . . and ***confidence*** in the object or truths that one is trusting. An element of commitment must be present in trusting Christ for salvation, ***but it is commitment to to Him, His promise, and His ability to give eternal life to those who BELIEVE.***”*
- *“When a person gives credence to the historical facts that Christ died and rose from the dead and the doctrinal fact that this was for his sins.”*

## II. What is the “\_\_\_\_\_” of Saving Faith? (“What” must be believed to be genuinely saved?)

### A. The Answer from the Gospel of John.

#### 1. Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, John 1:1-18.

*“In the beginning was the Word (logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”*

John 1:1-2

*“And the Word (logos) became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained (‘exegeted’) Him.”*

John 1:14,18

2. **Jesus was the “\_\_\_\_\_” for Sin.**

*“The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.’ ” John 1:29  
(See I John 2:2)*

3. **Jesus was the “\_\_\_\_\_” possessing the “\_\_\_\_\_” of Eternal Life.**

*“And I give **eternal life** to them, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.” John 10:28-30*

**B. The Answer from the Apostle Paul.**

1. Jesus “\_\_\_\_\_” for our sins:

a. **Romans 4:25.**

*“He (Jesus our Lord) who was delivered over because of our transgressions . . .” Romans 4:25*

b. **I Corinthians 15:3.**

*“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” I Cor. 15:3*

2. Jesus was “\_\_\_\_\_” from the dead:

a. **Romans 4:25.**

*“ . . . and was raised because of our justification.” Romans 4:25*

b. **I Corinthians 15:4.**

*“And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” I Cor. 15:4*

**Note:** “The essential **facts** are that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead (I Cor. 15:3-4; Rom. 4:25). In addition, faith involves assent or **agreement** with the truth of those facts. One can know the facts of the Gospel and either agree or disagree with them. But faith also involves an **act of the will**, for we can decide either to obey or to reject God’s command to ‘**believe**’ (Acts 16:31).” Charles C. Ryrie

**Saving faith = Simply “Believing” Jesus Christ’s Promise!**

## Misstatements of the Gospel

(From Dr. Charles Ryrie: Taken from real-life statements)

1. "Repent, believe, confess your sin to God, and confess Him before men and you will be saved."
2. "The clearest statement of the Gospel in the N.T. is found in Luke 9:23, 'If any man wishes to come after Me, let Him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.' "
3. "Perhaps the most comprehensive invitation to salvation in the epistles comes in James 4:7-10: 'Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.' "
4. "May the Lord reveal to the sinners that the only way for them to be saved from their sins is to repent with a godly sorrow in their hearts to the Lord."
5. "Utter the prayer of the prodigal son - ask Jesus to be your Lord and Master."
6. "Come forward and follow Christ in baptism."
7. "Place your hand in the nail-scarred hands of Jesus."
8. "Find Christ by praying through to Him."
9. "Believe in Him, trust Him, accept Him, commit your life to Him."
10. "We have the warning of Christ that He will not receive us into His Kingdom until we are ready to give up all, until we are ready to turn from all sin in our lives."
11. "God offers eternal life freely to sinners who will surrender to Him in humble, repentant faith."
12. "Do we literally have to give everything we own to become a Christian? No, but we have to be willing to forsake all."
13. "Matthew 7:13-14 is pure Gospel: 'Enter by the narrow gate . . . ' "
14. "No one can receive Christ as his Savior while He rejects Him as his Lord."
15. "Give your heart to Christ."

**--Notice:** These give different meanings to the Gospel message. Some give a wrong message; others, an unclear message!