

Biblical Faith # 1

Four Aspects of Biblical Faith

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Introduction – Four Aspects of Faith – Biblical Faith # 1 - June 10, 2001

As we come to scripture and as we read scripture, we have a frame of reference, and our frame of reference comes from things that we've read, comes from things we've heard, been taught, etc.

If I were to ask you about love, you would immediately in your frame of reference, have an understanding in your own mind in terms of what love is. And if I asked you the same thing about grace or righteousness or faith, any one of those things, you have in your mind a frame of reference that you would speak from.

LOVE

So, if I take an example, like love, and the key word in the New Testament, and the key word in Christianity, is the word love. In Greek it is agapae, or agapeo, which is the verb form of agapae.

We know that as we read scripture over in first John where it says that God is love. If we go to John chapter 3 verse 16, for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. And if we went over to Romans 8 verse 35, it says that nothing, nothing in this entire universe, can ever separate us from the love of Christ, the agapae of Christ.

So, if you would ask me, I would come to you and say something like, my frame of reference about love is the fact that it's the essence of God, God being the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and they all have the same essence which is infinite, and it manifests itself in infinite goodness, infinite grace, infinite mercy, infinite kindness towards man.

Would you say that would be an acceptable definition of love?
The Answer is **no!**

Turn to John 3:18. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God".

This is the passage of scripture that convicted me that I was all that God said I was, a sinner, lost in my sins.

My reasoning was this, for God so loved the world.. yeah, but I'm not going to reject Him, but neither am I going to accept Him. So I was walking this line, I'm not going to accept Him, but I'm not going to reject Him. And then somebody shared this passage of scripture with me, and it convicted me on the spot, that there is no line that you can walk.

Go to verse 19; "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil". The word love there is, agapeo. Men loved darkness rather than light.

So as you go through scripture and you look at this word love, agapae, you always think of it in a very positive sense, God's love, Christ's love for us, our love for one another, but yet, it's used here in a very negative sense. So that, in our definition of love we've got to also account for this love of darkness rather than light.

The same can be said about the word righteousness, because scripture talks about the righteousness of God, but it also talks about the righteousness of man. And it uses it in the negative sense. And when it talks about the righteousness of man in its negative sense, it's talking about his unrighteousness, diametrically opposed to the righteousness of God.

So, depending upon the context of the passage of scripture we're reading, we have to determine what that word means.

1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is **love**

John 3:16 For God so **loved** the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Romans 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the **love** of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that **loved** us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the **love** of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:18. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men **loved** darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.

FAITH

Now, how about faith, the word faith, and that's the word we're going to be concentrating on, faith.

What's the first thing that comes to your mind about faith, like if I asked you, what does agapae mean, what does love mean? What's the first thing that comes to your mind about faith? ...Belief, trust, confidence, dependence, rest, proof.. ok.

Now when we talk about trust, rest, dependence, whose trust, whose rest, whose dependence are we talking about? .. Ours! So when we talk about faith, we usually think of faith in terms of our faith, us, the focus is on personal faith. Nothing wrong about that, and nothing wrong about any one of those definitions.

What I want to do is take a look at some passages of scripture, and see if the definition you just gave me matches the definition that the passage teaches us.

Turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 8, verse 5. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy ...

Look at the mental attitude of this centurion soldier. Now, who was in charge? Were the Romans in charge? They were in charge. A centurion is a leader of a hundred men, he's a leader in the Roman army, he's got jurisdiction over the people there, jurisdiction over the Lord Jesus Christ. And he says, I am not worthy, (what a correct assessment)

...that You should come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, & he does it.

...When Jesus heard this, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel... As the Lord Jesus Christ, from His frame of reference, looks at all of Israel, he hasn't found that kind of faith, and He looks at those outside of Israel, to those outside the seed of Abraham, and He says, I have not found so great faith.

...And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as you have believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the very same hour.

Question. This centurion's faith, was it trust, dependence, reliance, and all of the things that you've mentioned? .. All of the above. True! So our definition, our understanding of faith so far, it holds.

Now I want you to turn to one more. Just turn over to the book of Hebrews, and chapter 11. What I like to call the "hall of famers" of faith. God has His own hall of fame. And He puts believers in His hall of fame.

And so you start out with verse 4; by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

Then you go to verse 5, by faith, Enoch was translated that he should not see death.

Matthew 8:5-13

5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great **faith**, no, not in Israel. 11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

Hebrews 11:1-5

1 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.
5 By **faith** Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

And then verse 7, By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.

Verse 8, By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went.

Verse 20, by faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

Verse 21, by faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph.

Verse 23, by faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months of his parents.

Verse 24, by faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Verse 30, by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

Verse 31, by faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she received the spies with peace.

Verse 32, And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David, and of Samuel, and the prophets.

They all walked by faith.

Hebrews 11: 6-32

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.

7 By **faith** Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by **faith**.

8 By **faith** Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By **faith** he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

11 Through **faith** also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

13 These all died in **faith**, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city. 17 By **faith** Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

20 By **faith** Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 By **faith** Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

22 By **faith** Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

23 By **faith** Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By **faith** Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

27 By **faith** he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible. 28 Through **faith** he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

29 By **faith** they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

30 By **faith** the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days Hebrews 11:31-37

31 By **faith** the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through **faith** subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

And you know, God gives a commentary about man. Whether its unbelieving man or believing man. He has His frame of reference about man. And the wonderful thing is this, that He shares it with us. Whether it be negative or whether it be positive. And look at God's frame of reference on those who walk by faith. And we're asked to walk by faith. And here is God's commentary about walking by faith.

Look at verse 38, of whom the world was not worthy, they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. But, those words there, of whom the world was not worthy.

Hebrews 11:38 (**Of whom the world was not worthy:**) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

What is interesting is this; as we walk by faith, and that's all the Lord ever asks us to do, is to walk by faith, moment by moment in our lives. And God will say about us, "and the world was not worthy of us".

Isn't that a wonderful commentary, don't you want to be in this hall of fame, with all of these others? I do. I would love to have the Lord say of me, that the world was not worthy of me. But it's the Lord Jesus Christ in me. It's not me! But it's the Lord Jesus Christ in me.

I'm going to close here, but I want to tell you where we're going, and what we're going to be doing in the next couple of weeks. We're going to be looking at faith. And next week I'm going to show you that there are many aspects of what I've indicated here as Biblical faith. And understand, there's a whole category of non-Biblical faith which is also listed in scripture.

4 MAJOR ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL FAITH

- 1. FAITH - ITS ESSENCE**
- 2. FAITH - THE FAITH**
- 3. FAITH - PERSONAL**
- 4. FAITH - AS A PRINCIPLE**

And as we look at Biblical faith, we're going to find this; that faith has an essence. And we'll look at the very essence of faith. And when we look at the essence of faith, we're going to find out it has nothing to do with us, zero to do with us. And when we think that faith is trust, dependence, reliance, etc, that's good! But that has nothing to do with faith in its essence.

We're going to look at faith where, in scripture, it's used with a definite article. It talks about the faith. And if you come into a passage of scripture like that and if you're thinking about your faith, your trust, your reliance, your belief, the passage doesn't make sense! And so, you hit these passages of scripture where your frame of reference about faith doesn't make any sense. So, we're going to be looking at that.

But, when we come to passages like we just read in Mathew and in Hebrews eleven, where it talks about personal faith, our faith, then our frame of reference or our understanding in terms of trust, dependence, reliance, and all of that, that's a good definition!

Then there is another aspect of faith as a principle. Because, the scripture talks about, the law of faith. So now if you put, the law of trust, reliance, dependence, it doesn't quite fit!

So, the point is, when we're trying to understand the word faith, there's major aspects of how it's used in scripture. And it's not always used meaning our personal faith.

That's where we're going.

QUESTIONS

- 1. WHAT IS NON-BIBLICAL FAITH?**
- 2. IS FAITH A GIFT?**
- 3. IS FAITH A WORK?**
- 4. ARE FAITH AND BELIEF THE SAME?**
- 5. ARE THERE DEGREES OF FAITH?**
- 6. DOES OUR FAITH GROW OR INCREASE?**
- 7. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAITH & KNOWLEDGE?**
- 8. DOES GOD TEST OUR FAITH?**
- 9. DOES FAITH DETERMINE OUR WALK?**
- 10. WHAT ENERGIZES OUR FAITH?**

As I've been sitting in studies and talking to people, people have all these questions. And so, I've been logging questions for the last month. Not all of these come from my logging, but my question to you would be, is faith always positive like love, or is faith always Biblical? There is a non-Biblical faith.

Question, is faith a gift? In terms of you believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, the first time you heard the gospel about the person and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order for you to believe, did God give you a gift of faith to believe?

Question, is faith a work? Are you going to get merit badges because of your faith?

Are faith and belief the same? One of your definitions of faith was belief. Can I always substitute belief in terms of the word faith?

Are there degrees of faith, little faith, more faith, a lot of faith?

Does our faith increase and grow?

What's the difference between faith and knowledge? Is there a difference between the two?

Does God test our faith? Believers who go through trials. Could that trial be from God? So does God test our faith?

Does faith determine our walk?

What energizes our faith? Is there something that energizes our faith?

Friday night, I was talking to a young couple. The husband said, you know, there must be more to church than always being bombarded by financial projections, and growth, and how many people that we need to get into this fellowship in order to meet our financial prediction, in order to meet our budget, and to build new stuff, and to start new programs.. and he said, you know, that's all we get bombarded with. And his wife said, you know, I never get to know about the Lord, in terms of.. here's the words she used, in terms of intimacy with the Lord. I said, wooh! Let's talk about intimacy with the Lord. We spent a half hour, talking about many subjects.

FAITH

Intimacy with the Lord

So, that's where we're going, and those are the questions we're going to try to answer.