

## Faith And The Christian Fight (Part Two)

Saved By Grace Through Faith

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We are going to begin this sermon by turning to I Timothy 6.

**I Timothy 6:11-12** But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.

You will see there that Paul mentioned "fighting the good fight of faith." That is more or less the title of the series that I am going through here. I have titled it "Faith and the Christian's Fight." This is Part 2.

When we left off the last time, we had reached Hebrews 11:4 and its example of Abel's use of faith in God, and Jesus Christ, or the word of God. Before we got there, though, we had seen that faith in these three comes about in us as a result of *hearing* the Word of God—most specifically the gospel. That is taken from Romans 10:17.

One element very critical to a proper understanding of this faith is that it is not our response to hearing the gospel. The emphasis there is on the word "not *ours*." Rather, it is far better to our spiritual understanding to know that *this* faith is given by God, and the hearing of the gospel is the *media* in which God gives this awesome gift. We are talking about a very specific faith—the faith required for salvation. I say this because one can easily have faith in any number of people, or products, or religions through common human experience, and so we hear statements made by people that they have such faith in General Motors automobiles, or in Kenmore washing machines, or in some athletic team, or in some person's character.

This quote that I am going to give you comes from Aiden W. Tozer, and I personally consider him one of the best of the Protestant theologians of the

past century or so. Mr. Tozer said this: "We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge in us that spurs us to the pursuit."

All of us are familiar with John 6:44, but I want you to turn there again, because this is foundational to the subject that we are covering here in this sermon.

**John 6:44** No man [or no one] can come to me [that is, to Jesus Christ] except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Now "saving faith" is a very special faith. It exists in one only because of something that *God* does. Tozer called it "an *urge*." We might call it an inclination, or a desire, or an opening of the mind. This is something that *God* does. It is *not* generated internally by logical human reason, common sense, or human experience. This has to be; otherwise a scriptural contradiction is produced, and that is an impossibility, because God also says in His word "the scripture cannot be broken."

We just read Jesus' statement on this very subject. *No one* can come to Him except the Father draw one. A person has to be drawn. A person has to have motivation that comes from a faith that God gives miraculously for a person to *move* in the direction of faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior, and later as his High Priest.

Now if faith is not freely given of God, but rather is our own internally-generated response to hearing the gospel, it puts God in debt to us. In other words, He would owe us because we, on our own, provided the faith to begin and to continue in God's way.

In John 6, I want you to notice verses 27 through 30. In a way these verses provided a foundation for understanding John 6:44 better.

**John 6:27-30** Labor not for the meat [or the food] which perishes, but for that food which endures unto everlasting life which the Son of man shall *give* unto you: for him has God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work

of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent. They said therefore unto him, What sign show you then that we may see, and believe you? What do you work?

These several verses provide an interesting element in that Jesus clearly said that the faith of which *He* speaks is *God's work*. *He* did it. It is *God's* work. He is clearly saying that this specific belief is God's work in and through us. In other words, Jesus is saying that God is the originator and source, or we would not have the faith of which He speaks.

Now as usual, the Jews did not even begin to understand. We can understand why they did not begin to understand, because it is that He did not give them the *faith* to understand. Remember in Matthew 13 the disciples said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" And Jesus said, "Unto *you* it is given to understand, but to them it is not, and they are still blind; otherwise, I would be required to heal them."

Do you begin to see what a unique position this puts any individual in, whom God has given that urge to seek Him (to seek Christ out, to seek out *the faith* that leads to salvation)? The better part of the beginning of this sermon is going to be on this theme, and I hope to put together a case here like a prosecuting attorney so I can back us all into the corner and remove any doubt at all that salvation is a gift of God; all we are required to do is respond to what He motivates us to do. So we have a part in this, but everything that really matters is generated by God.

We are going to look at Ephesians 2:1 so that we can see how the case was set, founded, established, and based by Paul.

**Ephesians 2:1** And you has he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin.

"Quicken" means "made alive." The "he" is referring back to the previous chapter where he is talking about Jesus Christ. "And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin."

**Ephesians 2:8-10** For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any

man should boast. For we are *his* workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

The overall emphasis in this chapter is on what *God does*. So *He* made us alive. It is not talking about a physical creation here. He is talking about spiritual things here, and thus Paul, beginning in the first verse, continues his subject to make sure that we understand it is God who is giving what we spiritually possess.

In verse 8—"For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God?—it matters not whether we believe the pronoun "it" refers to grace, or to faith. It does not matter. Either one. Either one is a gift.

Grace is God's kindness to us, shown or demonstrated by Him *revealing* Himself to us. I will give you an illustration that I think you ought to be able to relate to. It involves Moses and the burning bush incident before God ever sent him forth into Egypt. If God did not freely purpose on the strength of His own will to reveal Himself in the bush, Moses would never have found Him. So you see, by the same token, though we are not confronted by God with the burning bush, He nonetheless reveals Himself to us a little bit differently than He did with Moses. With Moses He did it visually. With us He puts that *urge* in us to turn our attention in a spiritual direction that we never would have done had He not done what He did first.

One of the reasons that it is so difficult for us, and why God has to reveal Himself, is because Satan has deceived us so well that we do not have the foggiest idea what to look for.

Let us go back to Ephesians 2:3. Remember that the subject of the first two or three verses here is about Satan being the author of the course of this world.

**Ephesians 2:3-5** Among whom also we all had our conduct in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith

he loved us, even when we were dead in sins [not a literal death, but we were as good as dead spiritually because of sin], has he quickened us [made alive] together with Christ, (by grace you are saved).

What we are looking at here in this subject of grace is a complete package of many individual gifts. The gospel is the media providing the object of faith that He gives. The gospel contains the doctrinal package of what we believe and trust in. It is because Paul saw the whole package and used the term "grace" as its label. He then goes on in verses 9 and 10 of this chapter to present the *next* logical overall step in God's purpose, and that is, "being created in Christ Jesus" and "works."

We can reach a little bit of a conclusion here—a preliminary one—that our works, according to as far as we have gone, in no way jump-started the justification, sanctification, and glorification process. All the works done, beginning with repentance and continuing through the sanctification period, are directly dependent upon the freely-given kindness and faith that God provided.

Now the good works which God has ordained, or appointed, (as he says in verse 10) *is* our response to the faith that God gives. Works are the external evidence of the unseen internal faith given to us. (Remember Hebrews 11:1.) In other words, those works would not be done by the person doing them unless God had done what *He* did in giving the gift. So the preliminary conclusion is that these good works of verse 10 follow. They do not precede.

We are going to take another step, and this time we are going to go back to II Corinthians 5:17. There is even a concluding word at the beginning of this verse.

**II Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, [We are being created in Christ Jesus] he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Now another thing that this verse confirms is that God is working *in* the person, and what He is doing in creating us in Christ Jesus is termed "a *new* creation." The Christian is His workmanship—tying it to Ephesians 2:10.

Think of this simple principle. Nothing *new* creates itself; therefore we are the workmanship of another. Because of what God does, we then cooperate and produce the works that He ordains.

At the end of II Corinthians 5, the subject actually continues on. It reaches a little mini conclusion, but I want you to read verse 1 of chapter 6.

**II Corinthians 6:1** We then, as workers together with him, . . .

The translators understood the flow of what Paul was teaching there in chapter 5. We are a new creation, but we are workers *with* Him in that creation. Our cooperation is required. Once God jumpstarts it with His gift of grace, He continues with us, and we work *with* Him by responding—by yielding to what He has given to us, and what He continues to teach us so that we can be molded and shaped and conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

One of the more modern translations that I looked at a little bit earlier regarding that term—"workers together with him"—is changed into the English—"we cooperate with Him." That is easily understood. And so, in a sense, there is a team of beings working together to produce the end-product, and that team consists of the Father and the Son and us. We cooperate together to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

Now we will continue a little bit, showing that we have a necessary part of this process that is going on by going to Philippians 2:12-13.

**Philippians 2:12-13** Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Let us clarify something right here, when Paul says to "work out your own salvation," he is not saying that we should work *for* salvation in order to obtain it. The Greek indicates the continuing use of something one already possesses, and what we already possess is the grace, and the gifts that came

with it, so that we could work with God. We already possess it. That phrase indicates carrying something to its logical conclusion. The phrase, "work out your own salvation," indicates carrying something to its logical conclusion, and the conclusion is to live a life worthy of the gospel, doing the works God has ordained, as we saw in Ephesians 2:10.

Once you begin to see the process here, all these scriptures just fit together like a puzzle. It is a beautiful, simple picture. So we have a teamwork-process here, with the Father and the Son giving us of their spirit, and then we cooperate with them. They jumpstart things and they work with us, as it says in verse 13—"For it is God which works in you." That is a continuous process. It has a beginning when He calls us, and then it continues right on through the process.

Notice what it says there: "For it is God which works in you both *to will* and *to do* of his good pleasure." In other words, He supplies us with the desire, the *urge*, to keep on going. That is the will. Not only does He give us that urge, He points the direction in which we are to go. Sometimes we are pretty blind. We do not see. I am sure He does that to test us. He is pointing, but we do not see the finger. We do not see the direction the finger is pointing in, but He is patient, and then He finds a way to get our attention. "Oh! Is *that* the way?" It is so obvious when we know it.

There is another very clear section of scriptures that covers a great deal of this subject in one section of about ten or eleven verses. We are going to go to Romans 9:9-19. The beginning of chapter 9 begins a three-chapter section—9, 10, and 11—where Paul explores the question and answers to this question: "What is happening with Israel? Are they all lost?" But he gives the answer to that, and in the way that he gives it we can learn a good deal about ourselves as well.

As we begin this, the subject is Abraham and Sarah—the bareness of Sarah's womb. Abraham is one hundred years old, and between the two of them they cannot produce a child, and yet God's promise says, "I am going to make nations out of you."

"Yeah. How? I don't even have a kid yet. You know the way Sara is. She cannot have any kids. She went through menopause."

But God said, "You are going to have a kid." So Paul just starts that subject, and then he goes off onto something else, but it is part of the same process.

**Romans 9:9-11** For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, [Jacob and Esau are still in her womb.] neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls;)

God is the One who chooses who it is into whom He is going to put that *urge* to respond to Him. It is *His* choice. He elects those to whom He is going to give that urge, that desire, to follow after Him and Jesus Christ. Now remember, that these two—Esau and Jacob—are still in the womb. They have not done a thing yet—nothing good, nothing bad.

**Romans 9:11-13** For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls. [It is completely God's work.] It was said unto her [unto Rebecca], The elder [Esau, who was the first one born] shall serve the younger [Jacob of the twins to be born]. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

This was a conclusion then that had to be reached, because God said that the elder (Esau) will serve the younger (Jacob). It was completely God's work. Jacob had done nothing to earn what God gave him, but denied Esau.

**Romans 9:14** What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid [or Certainly not!]

There are a lot of people who feel that they are able to pursue after God on the basis of their intellect without God's calling. They really do not believe that God has to call a person. They do not believe that God has to choose somebody to whom He will reveal Himself. They take it upon themselves to feel that they have sought after God. "No way!" it says here. Now did that



make God unfair because He chose Jacob rather than Esau, when neither one of them had done a thing to reach that place? Even as Jacob had done no good, Esau had not done any evil either. Now God explains it this way:

**Romans 9:15** For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

God is saying, "Hey! That is My choice. It is My creation. I can do whatever I want."

**Romans 9:16** So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.

Verse 17 is kind of interesting. Paul gives another illustration.

**Romans 9:17** For the scripture says unto Pharaoh [a bad guy], Even for this same purpose have I raised you up, that I might show my power to you, and that *my* name might be declared throughout all the earth.

"Oh boy, mister Pharaoh. I chose you because I knew that I could bend you to My will to do all these things that really put the pressure on the Israelites." It not only put the pressure on them, it gave *Me* the opportunity to overcome what you did so the Israelites would know that I was on their side. See, a faith builder. So God not only rules over the Israelitish people, He not only rules over His church, He rules over the entire creation—over the converted and the heathen both.

**Romans 9:18-19** Therefore has he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens. You will say then unto me, Why does he yet find fault? For who has resisted his will?

I think that we can see that; but from this we will make a parallel here. Jacob represents those who are called into the church. Esau represents those that God has simply withheld His love for the time being. Those in the church, like Jacob, have received God's love in the form of gifts given to help them

prepare for the Kingdom of God. Those same gifts are withheld by God from others.

Let us begin to make a connection with the book of Hebrews because that is where we were in the last sermon. We spent most of the time in the book of Hebrews, and eventually we are going to get to the book of Hebrews again.

What had happened to the people to whom the book of Hebrews was written? If they had not lost it, in some cases some of them were losing much of their former conviction. At one time they were zealous and well prepared to fight the battle of Christian faith, but things had begun to slip. They had neglected what was given to them. As Paul shows through the book of Hebrews, they had plenty to believe in relation to God, but their conviction was dissipating through neglect. They were not working out their salvation, and thus they were losing it in tiny increments, but it was nonetheless dissipating.

Now "conviction" is the opposite of "superficiality." Let me throw something else in here. Maybe you will think it is a curve. This does not mean that a superficial person cannot be religious. A superficial person might be quite religious, but his religion is outward in terms of appearance. When it comes to real, true inward transformation of the heart, that person is lacking, as evidence that there is no zeal in seeking change or real application of righteousness. This is what was happening in Hebrews. The people in Hebrews to whom Paul was writing had lost the internal certainty that what they believed was right and trustworthy, and they were allowing other conditions too much time and attention.

In the world, the forces of a hostile skepticism are everywhere. They are always pressing in on a Christian from every angle, and the world represents the Christian's largest, broadest field of battle. A Christian is in contact with it almost constantly. This reality puts almost constant pressure to drive a wedge into the carnality that lies within us.

Now what happens if the right use of God's gift of grace is neglected? Well, this is the point in the book of Hebrews. The Christian does not immediately lose it, as we might say, but spiritual life becomes merely an intellectual pursuit, not a striving after righteousness, and God becomes merely an object

of intellectual thought, not a motivation for change of behavior and attitude. Church attendance and religion become intellectualized, but not experiential, and that, brethren, is how Laodiceanism is produced.

Jesus Christ never says in Revelation 3:14 that the Laodiceans are dumb. They were not ignorant, and there is every indication that they were prosperous, which indicates that they were probably pretty hard workers, successful in business, and successful in their occupations, but they were nonetheless Laodicean. I think that what happened is that their religion had become intellectualized. It was just something that went on in their minds, but it was never translated into actual works of overcoming and growing. Their behavior was not changing. Instead, they were declining. It is interesting that in Revelation 3 it begins to show that this is especially likely to occur when a general body of people is in a fairly comfortable economic condition.

God's gift of faith is intended by Him to be both intellectual *and* practical. This brings us back to the many examples Paul gives in Hebrews 11 as illustration of how faith is to be used. In that chapter he gives us an orderly arrangement of instruction, going all the way back to basic things and building towards the more complex.

One of the most basic truths of all of God's programs involves the fact that "the wages of sin is death." The death that we are intended to understand here is the *second* death. There are only two alternative truths regarding this basic truth. Number one is this: All of us ultimately face, and must choose, because all of us must be paid that wage because all of us have sinned and have come short of the glory of God. That is the first alternative.

The second alternative is this: Another One, an *innocent* One—One on whom death has no claim because He never sinned—must pay that wage in our stead; that is, a substitute of His death for ours, or the law will not be satisfied.

We find both of those alternatives applied to practical Christian life in the book of Romans.

**Romans 5:8** But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Notice the word "for." It is essential that we thoroughly understand that Christ died, not merely as a benefit, but *for* us; that is, *in our stead*. Do you remember whenever Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac, what did God do? He supplied a substitute, and the lamb died instead of Isaac. That is what we are talking about. The illustration is so clear. It is essential that we understand that Christ died, not merely as a benefit, but *for* us; that is, *in our stead*. His death is as a substitute for our-earned-through-sin's death—a very well deserved death.

We are now going to go to Romans 4:1-5. This begins to show the process of what it takes to satisfy God's requirement regarding having the sacrifice of Christ substitute for *our* death.

**Romans 4:1-4** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he has whereof to glory; but not before God. For what says the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

If you worked for justification, then God owes it to you; God is in debt to us because of our works. "Not so," Paul says. He is looking to Abraham as the example for all Christians.

**Romans 4:5** But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his *faith* is counted for righteousness.

This debt that is owed by us is so huge and serious that an already-defiled-by-sin person cannot work it off. Jesus even gave a parable on this—the one that involved the unjust steward who would not forgive a little bit when God forgave his unpayable debt. Once one has sinned, the debt is absolutely unpayable by him unless he dies, or Christ pays it. You see, there are the two

alternatives right there. These are the only payments acceptable to God. It is either one, or the other.

What Paul is leading to here is, "What in the world did Abraham do that allowed his sins to be forgiven?" The point is—*nothing!* There is nothing he *could* do, but he believed what God said. That is the issue.

**Romans 4:10-13** How was it [Abraham's justification] then reckoned? When he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Circumcision is a symbol here of any work, or any body of works, that one might attempt to use as payment for the debt that accrues to us because of sin. Paul's point here is that they are unacceptable. Verse 16 begins to tell us one reason why they are unacceptable, but it is a very important one.

**Romans 4:16** Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end [to the goal as to why it has to be by grace] the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

Right here is a major reason why justification absolutely must be by grace through faith. What is the reason? We already have one reason. God is not going to be in debt to anybody. A second reason is that it is by means of grace that *everybody* is given a fair chance for salvation. Paul uses a general term of circumcision, or uncircumcision, meaning those who aware of the law, and those who are not aware of the law—meaning the Israelitish people who are aware of the law, and the Gentiles who were not aware of the law

because God never gave it to them. He never revealed it to them. And so *grace* is the means by which God gives everybody a fair chance for salvation. In other words, God levels the playing field.

What happens to those people who cannot match the impressive body of works of an Abraham? There is nobody within the hearing of my voice who could match what Abraham was like, but even *he* had to be justified by faith. He had to meet the same requirements that God presents to everybody. Nobody's works are good enough. God is not going to be in debt to anybody.

So what does that mean? *Everybody*—from Abraham on, regardless of ethnicity, regardless of race, regardless of whether they heard the law, it matters not—would fail to be justified, and so grace gives everybody a chance. That is really beautiful. And so the truth is that not even Abraham was justified by his circumcision works, because in actual time sense, chronologically, the circumcision came *after* he believed. As great as Abraham was, God put everything into order so that the picture becomes very clear. He too was justified by means of God's grace, and the gifts contained with it.

We are going to turn now to Genesis 6:8 to a very interesting plain statement regarding Noah, just before the Flood.

**Genesis 6:8** But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

That is why Noah and his family were spared when the Flood came. Noah too found grace.

We are going to go back again to Romans, chapter 4. This is still talking about Abraham.

**Romans 4:18-21** Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations according to that which was spoken, So shall your seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; [She had gone through menopause. She was not putting out eggs anymore.] he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief;

but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.

Do we understand now that it was God who made possible the faith that Abraham demonstrated in this example? Abraham cooperated with God. He used the faith that God gave him, and he cooperated with God, believing Him.

**Romans 4:22-25** And therefor it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it *shall* be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

The key word here in this four-verse section is the term "imputed." It means "to credit to." It means "to reckon to." It means "to assign to" or "to ascribe to" or "to account to." The subject here is still justification. Abraham's righteousness and *our* righteousness is the righteousness of Christ. It is not something that we could possibly earn. It was earned by the sinless One, and then because we believe that He is our Savior, using the faith that God gives us to do so, God then imputes it to us, He accounts to us, the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Understand that judicially—God is Judge, and the Judge makes a decision—we become *legally* righteous. It is not that we were righteous by means of our works. We become righteous because we *believe*, and because the righteousness of Jesus Christ is then put on us like a suit of clothing; we are now legally, judicially righteous, and we are let out of prison. That is what grace is.

Grace is not just forgiveness. It includes faith to motivate—to yield to what God is teaching us—to believe it, and to begin to make the right use of it, producing the work of repentance, as we shall see. So at this stage we are *judicially* righteous with the righteousness of Christ.

Now because of what God does, forgiveness and justification occur. We are made *legally* aligned with the laws of God because the righteousness of the

sinless One—Christ, who substituted for us by dying in our place—is reckoned to our account.

Let us continue on in Romans, chapter 5.

**Romans 5:1-2** Therefore [as a result of what Paul has just gone through there in chapter 4] being justified by faith, we have peace with God [because that enmity which kept us out of harmony with God, unable to come into His presence, is removed, and now peace exists between us and the Father because of Christ and the imputation of His righteousness] through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

It is just like we are standing outside the Garden of Eden, wondering how in the world we can get in, and suddenly the door swings wide open, and we are able to walk into the Garden, into the presence of God. That is the picture that is here. The flaming sword is removed. The enmity is removed. We are able to come in and have access to the Tree of Life by faith.

And not only that, we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and we can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. That is how far Paul is looking in that last phrase—"rejoice in hope of the glory of God." He is looking all the way to our glorification, and our glorification is that we will share in the very glory of God our Father and Jesus Christ, our Savior. We will not be a bright bulb like they are. They are a blazing spotlight, and we will be a little 5-watt bulb by comparison, but it will still be the glory of God, which gives strong indication that since it is the glory of God, we will be of the same kind as God is; not the glory of angels. It is the glory of God.

**Romans 5:3-4** And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; . . .

That is a bad translation of the word "experience." Modern translations replace the word "experience" with "character."



**Romans 5:4-5** . . . and patience, character, and character, hope:  
And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed  
abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.

Justification opens the way to glorification, but actually sanctification comes before that.

Let me just reiterate this, and put it in one, two, three order:

- 1) Acceptance into God's presence occurs because of justification so a true relationship can begin. Before that, we were outside the Garden, as it were.
- 2) The hope of eternal life and the glory of God then becomes a possibility.
- 3) With that is the receiving of God's Holy Spirit (verse 5).

The writing of God's law on our hearts (also verse 5, but actually it is included in verse 4).

The making of the legal righteousness of justification into practical, experiential righteousness begins through sanctification.  
Justification opens the way to enabling us to be righteous in practice. That power is given to us through access to God.

Now in much of this instruction I have given, I have emphasized the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, but there is another death that is involved in this—a spiritual death that must occur so that justification becomes a practical reality, and this death is *our* death, and it, too, is covered in the book of Romans. This death is symbolical in nature, and it has its basis in the *certainty* of the truth that God makes available and impacting.

**Romans 7:7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? [Certainly not!] God forbid. No, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, You shall not covet.

Paul was focusing in on the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment now. Notice the flow, the order of his thoughts.

**Romans 7:8** But sin, taking occasion [taking the opportunity] by the commandment [because the commandment reveals what sin is], wrought [produced] in me all manner of concupiscence [evil desire].

Now why did it do that? Because, in a serious manner, God was playing around with Paul's mind. God was not only revealing Himself, He was revealing to Paul the real, true intent of the Ten Commandments, and Paul, despite having studied under Gamaliel, who was supposed to be one of the better teachers—maybe the best and most significant teacher of the Pharisaic law—began to understand the Ten Commandments in a way that he had never understood them before. It was just opened to his mind, "Oh! What a horrible sinner I am!" Paul began to understand the spiritual intent of the law, and not merely the letter. That is when he began to say that it produced in him all manner of evil desire.

**Romans 7:8** But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire, For without the law sin was dead.

If there had not been a law there would have been no sin, but Paul realized fully that the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment applied to him.

**Romans 7:9** For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment—[that is, the knowledge, the understanding of the commandment]—came, sin revived [sin just exploded all over his mind], and I died.

Paul was as good as a dead man, even though he was yet alive. That cut him to the quick. It made him feel so guilty he did not know which way to turn. Well, thankfully, God was on the ball and turned him in the right direction.

**Romans 7:10-11** And the commandment, which was ordained [appointed] to life, I found to be unto death. ["The wages of sin is

death."] For sin, taking occasion [opportunity] by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

**Romans 6:1-4** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. ["Certainly not!" he says.] How shall we that are dead to sin [who have had our sins revealed to us and realize that the wages of sin is death] live any longer therein? Know you not, that so many of us were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Can you see the pattern? Paul is now teaching of the symbolical death we have to go through prior to baptism. Sins that we have committed become very apparent to us, and we are dead men. What you do with somebody who is dead is you bury them. You bury them symbolically in water—baptism—even as Christ was put in the tomb, and He was in that sense buried. Three days and three nights later He came out of the tomb.

**Romans 6:5-6** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: [Why?] Knowing this, that our old man is crucified [put to death with him, as a type], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

**Romans 6:8** Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

**Galatians 2:16** Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ [a faith that is given to us. It is possessed by Christ, but He gives it to us], and not by works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

**Galatians 2:19-20** For I through the law am dead to the law, ["The wages of sin is death."] that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Do you see what that says? It says, "I live by the faith of Jesus Christ that was given to us."

What all this does is that it provides a link between us and God, and that link is faith established because the right, true knowledge is believed and acted upon, thus giving evidence that the right connections are made. What this then does is that it brings us right back to Hebrews 11:4, and shows the lesson of Abel's example of faith. Abel offered by faith, and since faith comes by the hearing of the word of God, it means that Abel believed what God said and followed through in *obedience* to what God said. The belief motivated and produced a work that was in agreement with what God ordained those being created in Christ Jesus would walk in, and Abel's work was the offering of a lamb.

Now from whom did Abel hear God's word? It could have been from God Himself, because in those days when mankind was young God showed up and walked and talked with people face to face. He does not do that now. He does not have to do it because we have the word of God. The book is right there. But even though that might have occurred, I personally think that they heard through Adam and Eve. And even so, regardless, Abel's act of faith must follow the same pattern as everybody else's. He too is saved by grace through faith. Thus it was God working out His purpose who enabled Abel to believe.

By this act, recorded in Hebrews 11, he is testifying to us that the process—the creation of salvation in each and every one of us—begins and is carried forward in this same manner. God is consistent, and these things pertaining to salvation, everybody is dealt with in the same even-handed fair manner. I will give you another reason why this is done.

God has made Himself solely responsible for the existence of the faith that enables one to be justified and go on from there in order to give everybody a fair chance, because no one could muster the works sufficient to pay for the wages of sin.

There is a second very important reason, and it is given in I Corinthians 1, and I will go no further, because to go into that would take me too much time. I will just tell you what it is. Everyone of us has to operate not only by faith, but in complete humility before God, or we will not yield. Do you know that humility—"being poor in spirit"—is the very first of the Beatitudes? Everything follows from that.

Once the ice is broken by God between us and Him, if we are not humble, nothing else will fall into place. We must yield. You know the experience that God shows us in the Old Testament that He had with hard-headed, hardhearted, stiff-necked Israel. They would not yield. We must.

I Corinthians 1 give us reason to see that everything in our salvation, except for the small amount of cooperation that we give God, comes from God. So what do we have to brag about before God of anything that we have done? Nothing.