

What Every Christian Ought to Know - Adrian Rogers

About Faith and How to Have It - Chapter 8

Read Romans 10:11-17. Paul pulls a few nuggets out from the O.T. prophets.

1. Isaiah 28:16 is talking about the cornerstone that is a sure foundation which is Jesus. It continues with if you rely on Jesus, you will never be panicked (NIV) or put to shame.
2. Joel 2:32 says, “*everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*” This even includes us today. This verse continues with God will deliver you. It is something that you can count on as an absolute. God is unchangeable.
3. Isaiah 52:7 says, “*How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!*” Why are they beautiful? Because they deliver God’s gospel message. It doesn’t matter how eloquently you deliver the message, it matters that you “GO” and deliver the message. The message makes “*the feet*” beautiful.

We have women in here who make their own cards. When are the cards the most beautiful? When the person that they are meant for receives one of them and sees it. The same applies to the gospel message.

In Isaiah 53:1, Isaiah asks God who believes the message. Only God truly knows who is impacted by you sharing the gospel message. Even if they reject it when you share, they may accept it later because you moved them in the right direction.

Verse 17 of Romans 10 says, “*faith comes from hearing the message.*” If we don’t share it then they may not hear it. As Bill Gaither wrote in his Southern Gospel song, “You gotta give it away.”

“Pray, believe; you’ll receive.

Pray and doubt; you’ll do without.”

Just like the two blind men in Matthew 9:27-31, Jesus told them “*According to your faith let it be done to you*”. It is according to our faith and not our “fame”, “feelings”, “fortune”, “friends” or “fate”.

Rogers says that faith is the medium of exchange (money) for the kingdom of heaven. In the U.S., the dollar is the medium of exchange. You never want to hear Jesus say, “*I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!*” (Matthew 7:23) or “You put your faith in other things and not in me.”

Unbelief is the worst sin. The unforgivable sin is unbelief. In Matthew 12:31, Jesus tells us that “*every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.*” One of the works of the Holy Spirit is to lead us to accept the Trinity into your heart. If you do not believe then you are blaspheming the Holy Spirit or your unbelief cannot be forgiven.

If you never believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God in this lifetime then your final destination is set, it is the Lake of Fire. Your sins cannot be forgiven if you do not believe. Rogers says, “Just as you live physically by breathing and you take nourishment from food, you live spiritually by faith.”

Think of all that comes to us by faith:

Salvation – Romans 5:1

The fullness of the Spirit – Galatians 3:14

Victory over the world – 1 John 5:4

Victory over Satan – Ephesians 6:16

Sanctification – Acts 26:18

Some of the problems that come when we fail to exercise faith are worry, loneliness, guilt and disobedience. We worry because we don’t have faith in God to get us through the situation. We are lonely because God doesn’t feel close to us. We have guilt because our faith isn’t strong enough for us to trust God’s forgiveness. We are disobedient because we doubt God’s Word.

Building Your Faith

The Reality of Biblical Faith – Rogers says that “your faith is no better than its object.” What you put your faith in is what is important. Psalm 146:3-4 says “*Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save.*”

Mark 11:22 records that Jesus said, “*Have faith in God.*” Jesus continues that with your faith in God then He will move mountains for you. There is no greater place to put your faith than in the one who created everything around us, who knows more about us and our bodies than anyone or any doctor. Doctors know because they have learned, God knows because He created.

The reality of our biblical faith according to Romans 10:11 is that we believe “*on Him.*” The hymn-writer had it right when he wrote, “Why should I feel discouraged, Why should the shadows come, Why should my heart be lonely, And long for heav'n and home; When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is he; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know he watches me; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know he watches me.”

With even the smallest amount of faith in Jesus as the Son of God, you can overcome any trial in your life. Remember Jesus said, “*Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.*” (Matthew 17:20)

Hebrews 12:2 says, “*fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*” We are not to have faith in our faith, it is our faith in Jesus that saves us.

In Mark 9, we are told that the disciples could not cast demons out of a boy but Jesus did. Jesus chastised them for their lack of faith. It wasn't a small amount of faith, it was no faith. He called them an “unbelieving generation.” Although this was a special case requiring fasting and prayer regarding casting out these demons, in verse 23 He tells them, “*Everything is possible for one who believes.*” Even if

the demons were cast out, it was ultimately God that did the kicking out. It required them to have faith in God.

Strong faith comes from fully trusting God. It comes from getting to know who God is and what He is capable of. The O.T. Jews always went back to their deliverance out of Egypt by God. If He could deliver them from Egypt then He could do anything.

In Ephesians 1:19-20, Paul says that we should have faith in Jesus because we have access to Jesus' "*incomparably great power*" and that is the same great power that "*He raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.*"

Rogers uses the analogy of crossing a bridge to explain how to build up your faith. When you want to cross a bridge and you don't know if it will hold you up, you examine it. You look for flaws or defects and make sure that is solid. If others have relied on it such as semi trucks, then you have a stronger faith that it will hold you.

When you read and study His Word, then you get to know God and learn to trust Him. God is immutable or unchangeable. He is the same today as He was in the Bible. Some try to separate the God of the O.T. from the God of the N.T. but He is the same.

"The reality of faith is based on a knowledge of God. *"[One who] believes on Him will not be put to shame."* (Romans 9:33) Do you want to have strong faith? Don't try to make yourself believe. Get to know God. Psalm 9:10 says, *"Those who know your name trust in you."* Daniel 11:32 says, *"The people who know their God will be strong and take action."* That's the reality of biblical faith. Your faith is no better than its object. You must know God." (Rogers)

The Root of Biblical Faith

In the conversation between Jesus and His disciples recorded in Matthew 16:15-17, Jesus asks them, *"Who do you say I am?"* Simon Peter answered, *"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."* 17 Jesus replied, *"Blessed are you, Simon son*

of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.” Our faith comes not just from hearing but it requires a spiritual movement within us that comes from God.

Paul tells us in Philippians 1:6 that *“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”* Who began the good work? God. Now this is not like what the Calvinist believe. God doesn’t predetermine who believes. As 2 Peter 3:9 tells us, God wants everyone to come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. He gives us the ability to grasp His salvation plan.

Rogers says, “No one can believe God unless God enables him to believe. And how does God enable you to believe? God gives you a word. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Therefore, contrary to popular belief, you don’t *name it and claim it*. God speaks, and you *believe it and receive it*. *“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* (Hebrews 11:1)

Rogers uses Philippians 1:29 to show that God granted us our belief in salvation through Jesus. This verse says *“For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.”* God makes everything right for us to accept Jesus. He even plants the seed in our minds but when it comes down to it, it is still our choice.

Hebrews 3:7-8 tells us, *“So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”* Hardening our hearts prevents God from starting that *“good work in you”*.

It comes down to what Paul says in Romans 10:9, if we *believe* then we *receive*. In John 3:36, Jesus said, *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.”* Rejecting and accepting is our part. God doesn’t make us believe. Salvation is offered and everything can be perfect for us to claim it but we can still reject it.

Hebrews 11:1 says *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* (KJV) Other translations say that *“faith is the assurance of*

things hoped for". Whether your Bible says 'substance' or 'assurance', the Greek word is the same, *'hypostasis'* which points to the 'foundation'.

Faith is the foundation of Christianity, it is our belief in salvation through who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. The Word of God tells us so. The foundation of our faith came from "*hearing the word of God*", either from a parent, teacher, pastor or friend. The root of faith is the Word of God.

In the phrase, "*word of God*", 'word' was not the Greek word '*logos*' which is commonly used. It was the Greek word '*rhema*' which means 'utterance'.

When we read the Bible, God speaks to us. He gives us what we need from scripture at that time. Hebrews 4:12 tells us "*For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*" 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us "*16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*"

I picture "*God-breathed*" as an utterance from God. Much of the Bible is an utterance from God but some are actual quotes from God. Praise Pastor Brian for his latest sermon and he will respond, "It was all God." He received an utterance from God and delivered it to us.

Adrian Rogers likens a preacher to a mailman. The message comes from God and the preacher delivers it to those whom the sender, God wanted to receive it.

Romans 10:14 says that without hearing about salvation through Jesus, then how will they call on His name? If we never heard about Jesus, then we would not be where we are today. We can look at God's creation and know that there is a God but without reading His Word or someone telling us, then we cannot know about Jesus.

Previously we covered doing the will of God. Faith is necessary to do the will of God. Without our faith, no one is told about Jesus. Without our faith, nothing gets done in churches. Without our faith, the will of God does not get done.

I am not saying that God requires us to get His will done. That is just His plan. His plan includes us but He doesn't require us. Remember 2 Peter 3:9, God wants everyone to come to repentance.

Rogers says, "You cannot have faith for anything that's not the will of God. If it's not the will of God, there's no possible way that you can have faith for it. Why? Because faith is the gift of God. Faith comes from hearing the Word of God, and God's not going to give you a word on something that's not His will. And that's wonderful because God is in control. Don't think that you can just believe for whatever you want and have it."

What is the reality of faith? It is the faith in God.

What is the root of faith? You hear from God.

What is the result of faith? The result of faith is that God's will is done.

The Release of Biblical Faith

The word 'believe' came from the old English, 'by live' or what we believe, we live by.

Back in Romans 10:17, "*Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.*" (NIV) In verse 16, the NKJV says not all obeyed the message, the NIV says not all accepted the message about Christ.

Not everyone is a believer or today churches would be full. We have reached a point in man's history where we can no longer use the term 'believer'. People believe the Gospel message is true but they are not willing to put their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

James 2:19 says, "*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*" How are we different from the demons? It is our obedience and faith in Him as our savior.

Belief is a choice that we make. You can hear the gospel message and choose not to believe. Rogers says, "Unbelief never comes out of the head but out of the heart." Hebrews 3:12 says "*See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.*"

Be *saturated* with the Scriptures. Remember that faith comes from hearing from God.

Be *dedicated* to the Savior. Remember that faith is no better than its object. It's not so much a great faith in God as it is in a great God.

Be *separated* from sin. Unconfessed sin is a faith killer. Don't be disobedient and expect faith. Read Romans 10:21 again. If you are having difficulty with faith, try repentance.

Be *activated* by the Spirit. Remember that old song, "Trust and Obey"? Remember we are to obey the gospel. Real faith is belief with legs on it. Get started!