

## Gustin Ostrander - Faith

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Well friends, we'd have to commence and cut short. However, I think we could spend a few minutes very positively in considering faith. Now, in Hebrews 11:1 2 we read, and I'm quoting from the Penton translation, Patton says, faith is the standing ground of the hopeful, the conviction of unseen facts and our fathers true Weymouth, another good translator, renders it a little different. He says, now faith is a well grounded assurance of the reality of things which we do not see. For by the saints of old one, God's approved.

If faith is a standing ground of the hopeful, the thought would be that if we have hope, we must have a basis for our hope, and that basis is our faith. Hope itself is a combination of desire and expectation. If we expect something, we must have a reason for that expectation, and that expectation is based upon our faith. So faith is the standing ground of the hopeful.

It is also the conviction of unseen facts. For instance, we have never seen God, but we are convinced that God really does exist.

We have never seen the world brought back to perfection yet. But by faith in God's Word and the teachings of God's Word, we believe that it will be brought back, and according to Weymouth, it's a well grounded assurance of the reality of things which we do not see.

Now the word faith that it is used in the scriptures, used in two ways, it is often used to represent the teachings and promises of God's Word. Whenever you speak of such expressions as established in the faith, that's established in the true teachings and promises of God's Word, and then there is also our confidence in those teachings, the teachings and promises themselves, and also our confidence in those teachings. It's used in both ways.

Now in Romans 10:17 the apostle tells us that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. That would be literally true back there, but at the present time I don't think we would state it that way. Back when Paul wrote that there were very few who could read. If they had a group back there like we have here today, only a few of them could read and those who could read would read and the others would hear. So you see, their faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Now today, if we were going to state that principle, we would say that faith comes from a study and understanding of God's Word, the same thought applied to present day conditions, and so I part from God's Word we do not have any ground for faith. Oh, there are many things apart from God's Word. Many who have Prepared works, concordances, dictionaries, scripture studies, all of these things would help us to understand God's Word. But nevertheless, it is God's Word in which we trust and have our faith and our confidence.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy, says, fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life whereunto thou art also called, and has professed a good profession before many witnesses. Now, to fight the good fight of faith, I think the thought here would be to fight to maintain the true teachings of God's Word. Now, Jude expresses a thought which we might think is similar, but I believe it's the other thought there.

In the third verse, he it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Barry definitely uses the

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expression the faith which is once delivered to the saints, that is the teachings once delivered to the saints.

Our Lord, as recorded by Luke 18:8, stated the truth that he put it in a question. When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? We know when our Lord returned that he he did not find the true teachings. The natural immortality of the soul is being taught, which is not the truth. The human soul or human being is not immortal.

Hell fire is being taught, and we know that there is no hell fire. Hell in the Bible is translated in the Old Testament from a Hebrew word which is translated grave exactly as many times as hell, and in the New Testament, a Greek word which corresponds and is translated grave very often, and so when we take those into consideration, we see that the teachings were not in accordance with the truth.

Now, where do you see hell fire in the Bible? They say, well, that's pretty strong hell fire. Well, friends, that term comes from a Greek word, gehenna, and that was the name of the valley out of Jerusalem where they burned the refuse of the city like our modern incinerators. Instead of being incinerated, it would be an open fire.

And they take all of their refuse out there and burn it up. So when Jesus spoke about, if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off rather than be cast into Gehenna. He meant, if your right hand offends thee, or if you are doing things which you know are contrary to God's law, exercise a control over that so that it will not cause you to be destroyed. Because Gehenna is a picture of destruction. Everything put in there was destroyed.

And so as long as these erroneous teachings were being taught, Jesus did not find the truth being taught, and how could one have faith and confidence in the truth if it wasn't being taught? We don't want to be misunderstood. Make an overstatement there. I believe that every true Christian all down through the age, even at that time that Jesus referred to every true Christian, had a sufficient amount of truth, even though it is mixed or there, to make his calling and election sure if he made a consequence of Christ.

Now, in Corinthians 16, 13, 14, watch ye stand fast in the faith, that is, stand fast in the true teachings of God's word. Quit ye like men. Be strong at any ends. Let all your things be done with charity or love. Now this word charity here is a poor translation of the Greek.

Evidently, when the King James is translated, or the authorized as we call it, was translated, the word charity had a different meaning from what we have for today. Remember, First Corinthians 13, there the word charity is used. But if you read that chapter, you can see that charity, the way we use the word today, doesn't fit. It is something which goes far beyond the way we use charity, and Strong defines that word as love and the sense of affection and benevolence, which is far more than charity as we use it today.

The way we use charity today, we think of somebody that is sick or they're in trouble because we feel sorry for them. We do something to others. But the true thought has a thought of affection. We do something for others because we love them and we want to do something for them, not because we feel sorry for them, but because we love them, and so when he says, let all things be done with charity, it means let all things be done with love.

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Even when you're contending earnestly for the true teachings of God's word, don't do it in a way to discourage others. Don't take that attitude. I'm right and you're wrong, and if you don't believe like I do, I watch out. Don't take that attitude.

But let us defend these teachings of God's word for the desire to be helpful to others, to help them see what these true teachings are, because we love them.

And then in 1 Timothy 2:13, hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard in me in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. Now why should Paul say, hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard from me. Is he better than the other apostles? Wasn't the other apostles teaching the truth? Well, friends, I think when we look at the facts, we can see why Paul would speak that way.

Timothy had been converted by Paul, he had been brought into the truth by Paul, and then he traveled with Paul a great deal, and the probability is that he saw very little of the other apostles. So he would be influenced chiefly, almost entirely by the teachings of the Apostle Paul. Therefore it would be perfectly necessary to say, hold fast the form of sound words which you heard to me, a whole facet of teachings and doctrines that you've heard from me, and how are you beholden in faith, that is, in confidence and also in love.

In other words, when Paul would send Timothy to a place or leave him in a place after he left to look after the classes, there had to be necessary for Timothy and the holding forth the truth to that fast, to do it with a confidence in those teachings himself, and also with a spirit of love for those whom you are serving. You know, friends, our elders in our various classes, if they are proper elders, they have a love for the class they are serving.

Sometimes we may have to say things that are sharp. Sometimes we may have to say things that are. But if they do it in the spirit of love, brains take it as a kindness rather than the other. It was only a short time ago that I received a rebuke, and I edited through a letter and I answered about the first thing I said, well, I.

I know about how Peter felt when Paul had to rebuke him. So that's the attitude we should take. Remember, on one occasion Paul rebuked Peter for the course that he was taking, that Paul didn't think it was quite right, and evidently Peter took it in the right way. So when our rebuke, let us say, if it's done in the spirit of love, let us take it in that way and appreciate even though it might.

First Hebrews 10:22. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Here he's speaking about our confidence. He's not speaking so much about the teachings and about our confidence in the teachings. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, full assurance of confidence, having a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience.

You know, if our conscience bothers us, if we think we're doing something that's not pleasing to God, our conscience bothers us. How can we come in full assurance of faith if our conscience bothers us? And so John writes, or rather Paul writes, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies works with pure water. Now, if Paul isn't Here speaking about taking a bath every day, or every week, or every month, or every year, or anything like that, what he is speaking of, he's using a symbolic statement there. The word of God is spoken of as water of fruit.

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And so let the influence of the word of God clean up our life, helping us to overcome the bad qualities of our character.

Romans 4, 3, 16. What saith the scripture? Abraham believed God and is counted unto him for righteousness.

Therefore it is a faith that it might be by grace to the end. 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.

Now, Abraham believed God and is counted to him for righteousness.

Paul also says that Abraham is the father of us all. That is, he's our father in faith. Well, didn't Noah had just as much faith as Abraham? I think he did. Enoch had faith in Abraham, Abel had faith in Abraham.

Undoubtedly many others had faith equal to Abraham's. So why does Paul pick Abraham out and use the expression to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all? Well, you know, God made a special promise to Abraham. That promise was, in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed, and thee and in thy seed shall all the famine of the dead be blessed.

And the apostle Paul tells us that Christ is that seed, and it's through Christ that the whole world is going to be blessed, and then he says, if ye be Christ's, that is, if you are following the footsteps of Christ, walking in his steps, as we say today, or if we are baptized with him or immersed into his form of death. In other words, if we are walking in footsteps in honor of him and serving him, then we are the spiritual seed of Abraham, and being associated with Christ was part of that seed.

So you see why the apostle Paul would pick out Abraham. Because he's the father of the very things that he hoped for. In other words, that promise Abraham in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed is a summing up of the whole plan of God in a very few words, and we believe in them, and if we have consecrated in living up to our consecration, we will be a part of that seed.

So you see, our faith is in the same thing and the same promise of Abraham's love, and that's why Paul refers to him and not to any of us as our father according to faith.

First Timothy 6, 20 and then 21 Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust. Avoid profane and vain bearings and oppositions of science falsely so called Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, and I believe it follows with us today the same thing to us. Keep that which is committed to thy trust, the truth, the true faith and our opportunity of using it, that is committed to Timothy. Timothy had the truth.

He is associated with Paul and Paul's work, and so that service was committed to Timothy.

And the keep that which is committed to thy trust. These truths belong to God, but they were committed to Timothy, and so these truths of God's word that we have today belong to God, but they're given to us to use. Now let us use them faithfully and avoid profane and vain bearings and the opposition of science falsely so called. A great deal of our science is contrary to God's word.

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Now the science as they call it, it's not a science, but they call it that of evolution that's contrary to the teachings of God's word, and there are many other things that we have that we call science or philosophy that are contrary to God's word. Now of course they say arithmetic is a science of numbers. Well, that's a good science, we don't throw that out, and medicine, that's a good science, we don't throw that out.

And many other things that we call science are good. But there are some science so called which are not good. Now Fenton renders it fake philosophy, the diagnostic, on the other hand, render it falsely named knowledge. In other words, they claim it to be knowledge, but it isn't, and so we're to avoid that.

Now in the 21st century, 21st verse, we read that some professions have erred concerning the faith. That is, they have accepted these wrong teachings, these wrong doctrines. You know, friends, our Lord in his prayer, you find this recorded in the 17th chapter, the 17th verse of John. There he prayed on the night before his crucifixion. It paid for his disciples.

And he says, I pray not for these only, but for those who will believe through their word. Now we believe through the teachings of the apostles, their writings and their teachings, and therefore Jesus is praying to you and I on the night before his crucifixion.

In that prayer he said, sanctify them, choose right, Thy word is true. In other words, it is God's truth which leads us to consecration. It is God's truth that shows us how to carry out our consecration. It is only by God's truth that we can do Those things that are pleasing to God. Error never sanctifies.

Sanctify means to satisfactor. God's service and error does not set anyone apart to God. Service, no matter how honest and conscientious they may be. Take Saul of Tarsus. When he was going around persecuting the Christians.

And when he had Stephen put to death, oh, he was honest in his conviction. But he was misled, he was deceived, and he wasn't serving God, although he thought he was. But when on the way to Damascus, he had that vision and he realized that Christ really was the Son of God, and then he saw the life and teachings of Christ. He realized that the true teaching was one of love, not one of hatred and cruelty and persecution.

It changed its whole life. What changed it? The fruit error didn't sanctify him. Error didn't set him apart to God's service, but the truth did, and the apostle Paul realized what love really meant.

You read the 13th chapter of First Corinthians where Paul starts out. In those first three verses, he said, though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not loved, will troteth me nothing. Only he says, charity. But that word means, and the original word in the Greek means love in the sense of affection and benevolence, a love for others and a desire to help them and do them good.

He says, unless he had that, he would become of a sounding brass, unthinking symbol, no matter how much oratory he might have, and he goes on from that and makes it even stronger. He says, yea, though I give my body to be burned and have not this love that will profit me nothing.

In other words, if he sacrificed everything that he had, even to his life, unless he had this love, this affection for others and a desire to help them, he would not be fit to be associated with Christ and the kingdom.

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Then Romans 1:16, 17. Paul says, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth to the church Jew first and also to the Greek. Now, what is this Gospel of Christ? Paul says, I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Well, the Gospel of Christ is a teaching regarding Christ.

In other words, to understand the Gospel of Christ, you have to go back to the Garden of Eden. We have to see man Adam fall into sin and sentenced to death, and the whole race dying as a result of it. We have to see Christ offering himself as a ransom or a corresponding price. The word ransom is used twice in The New Testament in that connection, and the Greek definition is a Christ to correspond.

In other words, a perfect man, Adam, and lost his life through disobedience, and it took a perfect life, the life of Christ Jesus, in order to redeem Adam.

And then we come down from that, down to the end of the age, and you see the world of mankind brought back into harmony with God. Now there's the Gospel of Christ. The Father is our ransom, and the rest of Paul says, I'm not ashamed of that, and I'm not ashamed of it. But you know, when I was a Methodist and I look back at what I used to believe as a good Methodist, I ought to be ashamed that I ever believed anything like that.

Here we have a wonderful, loving God, our God that loves us so much that he gave his only begotten Son that we might have life.

I thought that he's a regular demon who made it be fires of torture.

And the one that believes in and once gets the truth, they become ashamed of what they used to believe, don't we? So Paul says he's not ashamed of the Gospel because it's the power of God, of salvation for everyone that believeth, and then in the 17th verse, he says there, embedded in the Gospel of Christ, for therein is a righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. Now, how is the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel of Christ? Well, when we go back into the Garden of Eden and we see that the whole race of mankind lost their life because Adam sinned, we say, was it just.

Was it righteousness on God's part to condemn everybody to death because Adam sinned? Well, we naturally say no unless we give a careful thought. But when we realized that the reason Adam sinned was because he did not know what sin really meant, oh, he knew it. Theoretically, he knew that if he sinned, he'd die. But do you think that if Adam could have looked down for 6,000 years and seen all of the suffering, all of the wars and murders and everything else that has taken place because of his sin, because he would have sinned?

I don't.

So through this experience, God is teaching the human race by experience, and we believe that the angelic forces are observing this and are learning by observation just what it means to disobey God, and so that is a topic, it would seem to me, that when they do have the opportunity to come back into harmony with the Heavenly Father, that they will be glad to do so, at least we hope so that the majority of them will come back to harmony with God and coming back into harmony with God, they have never sinned because they know what it means. So then it was Lord's righteous after all, because it is not. This is good.

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And then some might say, well, would it be right to sound God's part to ask the Locust, the one that had been with God all from the very beginning, that it all is on it? And surgery asked him to come down here and suffer as a human being, Adam and his race might be saved. Was it righteous? Well, again, we'd be trying to say no if we didn't know the fact.

But when we realize that it is in God's plan and his purpose to have a new creation, a creation that would have God's own nature, immortality, a nature which God himself cannot destroy when once he restored it upon anyone, and he would naturally want Theologus to have that. But he knew it was wise to thoroughly test everyone that he ever gives that to.

If you and I of that class, we're going to be thoroughly tested to prove that we are worthy of it, that we will never go against God and his laws, even if he gives us the Lord God, and so we see that the locusts are raised to a higher nature as a reward for being a ransom sacrifice. So he really gained God. So it was not unrighteous, was it? And so it all parts of God's plan, no matter what feature we look at when it's rightly understood, it is a manifestation of God's love.

And I'm going to close by reading Acts 20:32 without comment, and now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance amongst all them which are sanctified.