

What is Faith

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Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Prof Donald Macleod

[0 : 00] I am very thankful for your very warm welcome. It's good to be back and to have a stimulus of your fellowship in studying God's word.

We read at 16 because it brings out two great lessons. It reminds us first of all of the very wide variety of people who are touched by the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see Lydia, a respectable middle class woman of public piety, who hears Paul preach on his heart the Lord opens and becomes a disciple.

We see then the young slave girl, probably a profligate, again touched by the gospel and delivered from the power of evil by the grace of God.

And we see then the jailer, a man of a rough and barbaric past life, brought to a sense of his own spiritual peril, and led by Paul and says to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

[1 : 20] They are all remarkably different human personalities, and yet the gospel is relevant to each of them.

We see secondly that the requirement that God imposes on all of these is the same, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's a remarkable fact that Paul and Silas, knowing nothing of the past of this man, knowing nothing of his inward spiritual condition, not knowing if he is convicted of sin, is prepared, is a seeker, is born again, is elect, yet confront him at once with the imperative, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And this topic before us tonight, what is faith, is important because it encapsulates God's directive to all of us.

It's what God acquires. It's what God acquires.

[3 : 12] It's what God acquires. So what is our answer. Our answer is, believe in the Lord Jesus. But suppose she asks further, what do you mean?

What is it to believe in the Lord Jesus? What is this faith in Christ? Could we guide somebody across that threshold, and introduce them to Christ, by explaining what we mean by this great step of faith?

And so I'm saying that at one level, God requires faith of ourselves. At this other level, God wants me to be able to explain to others what faith is.

And that's my first question then. What is the nature of this grace? What is faith in Jesus Christ? It contains two great basic elements.

First of all, faith means belief or assent. It is an intellectual commitment, a submission of my mind to the truth of the gospel.

[4 : 42] It presupposes that God has given us some knowledge of the truth. We have heard the message. We have heard the report of the word of God.

We have heard that God is, that in Christ, God became incarnate, that Christ is able to save us, that Christ offers to save us, that Christ pleads with us to come to him for salvation, that he died for our sins, that he rose again, that we're justified by faith in his name, by faith in his sacrifice.

That is the message. And faith, at the most basic level, means that we believe that message.

We believe those facts to be true. We believe those propositions. We accept those great doctrines. Our minds are convinced.

Faith will lead to emotions. And faith will lead to decisions. But those emotions, and those decisions, are based on convictions, and those convictions, presuppose knowledge.

[6 : 16] And so, in this sense, faith is rational. It isn't rationalistic, but it is an act of the reason.

It is an act of the mind. We believe the report. We receive this great tradition. This message which speaks of the Lordship, incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God.

And of course, in evangelism, our concern is to propel into the minds of our hearers the convictions which lie at the foundation of our own faith.

To propel into their minds their beliefs, which lie in our own minds. And that's where all faith begins. It presupposes our hearing of the Word of God. Our acceptance of the truth of what we hear. But then, secondly, faith is trust.

[7 : 36] It begins with belief. But it is always more than belief. It is a personal commitment to God in Christ.

That's sometimes being disputed. There was in Scotland a school of theologians called the Sandemanians in the 18th century and they held that faith was simply a matter of the intellect. It simply meant belief of the truth, acceptance of the propositions. Now this was very plausible because these men had a great commitment to the notion of justification by faith alone. They were very suspicious of the preaching of men they quit for the Wesley because in those men's preaching there was so much emotion and there was a call for commitment and a call for decision. and Sandeman and Glass who founded the school they just trusted this emphasis on the emotions and on the will and so they said no faith is simply a matter of the intellect it means believing the absolute message on the top of your mind.

[8 : 59] And the same concern has been found in Chafolason because they refined the teaching that faith equals accepting implicitly whatever the church teaches.

It means saying I believe whatever the church teaches even though I don't know what the church teaches even though my emotions my heart aren't involved still for the church teachers I believe. Now we can of course overreact to that. We can overreact by dismissing altogether the intellectual side of faith and I want to guard very carefully against that because as I keep on saying what lies at the heart of modernism is anti-intellectualism the anti-dogmatic principle the emphasis that religion resides primarily in the emotions and the suggestion that shame is divorced from doctrine and that piety owes little to belief and to propositions.

and so I walk between those two great pedals the pedals of the Sandemanian pedals on the one hand which says that the intellect is everything and the pedals of modernism because it says that the emotions in the mind is nothing and instead one says that faith although it begins with the mind it must go on to become a personal trust in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ the reformers emphasized those two components firmly they spoke of fides on the one hand that is belief and fiducia or trust of the other and only where those two exist in combination is there a real faith real faith is such persuasion of the mind as leads to personal trust in God our

Father and Jesus Christ our Savior now this trust is emphasized firmly in the utas with the heart we believe and because we believe we we come to Christ and we turn to Christ and we look to Christ our faith you see is directional it's dynamic it's mobile it's faith in it's faith into it's faith towards it's faith upon faith is a meaning grace it leaps on God faith is a grace that wraps the soul around its

[12 : 46] Savior not all that far removed from love it is a personal relationship it begins with the belief in the light of all information we have the belief that Christ is trustworthy that is our proposition Christ is trustworthy but my faith moves on from that to the actual commitment and that's wrote very fully in many of the biblical metaphors we trust God as we trust our Father we trust Christ as we trust our physician we trust Christ as a flock trusts a shepherd you see these so often this marvelous picture of huge flock of sheep not being driven by the shepherders in this country but following so submissively and so trustingly this man with whom they have this relationship and that's what faith is it is trust in God our

Father it is trust in Christ the great physician now you take again this medical metaphor because it is helpful we trust our doctors and we say well there's nothing of the mind in that that is non intellectual but if you think for a moment that commitment that trust is based on a proposition we know that this man has been trained that this man has studied that this man is qualified that this man is registered we know that we know that he has certain skills we know he has some experience we know that he has some qualifications these are the propositions and our trust is not divorced from those propositions if we trusted just anybody to perform surgery that faith is misplaced that faith is irrational but because our faith is based on implicit propositions our faith is reasonable our faith is warranted and that's the bond again you see between belief and trust they harm the propositions

Christ is a great high priest and following on from these we have the commitment we look to him and we trust him with our own souls so that's what faith is it consists of those two basic elements

this element of belief and then this element of trust and then we ask ourselves this what is the object of this faith what do we trust in whom do we trust towards what or whom is our faith directed well I select two emphases here first of all our faith is directed towards the Bible as the word of God we believe whatever is brought before us in the

Bible will respond to that as to the word of God so that means at one level that we believe that the Bible is the word of God believe that these words of apostles and prophets these words are the word of God but what I want to stress for the moment is this our confession of faith makes a very important point in defining faith it tells us that in the Bible there is a wide variety of materials and our faith responds to those materials in different ways depending on what kind of material it is now of course the believer in Christ the Christian believes the whole

Bible but in the Bible as I say he meets many different kinds of material to be specific in the Bible we meet commandments we meet threatenings we meet doctrines we meet promises now faith responds to these in different and very specific ways faith responds to commandments with obedience I say I believe in the decalogue and the ten commandments what does that mean it means I obey the ten commandments you are the fusion again you see of the belief and the commitment you believe that they are God's commandments and because you so believe you comply with them so faith responds to imperative to divine imperative with obedience in the [18:57] Bible again one finds threatening to find God saying the slow that sin shall die the way where disciple experiences justice meant we believe not what does faith mean in such a context it means that we tremble we tremble before the threatenings now you can always say you see I know because faith is always joyous faith is always triumphant and ecstatic and delated no faith confronted by a threat by a solemn and somber divine warning is not ecstatic it is tremulous it is afraid it is responding to the bible in terms of the quality of the material that is presented to it it obeys the command it trembles at the threatening again faith meets a doctrine it meets some great truth about the incarnation of christ it learns that christ took my kind of body my kind of soul christ died for my sin christ understands my weaknesses it understands that in the depth of the deity the father is wrapped around the son and they both wrapped around the holy spirit as we saw many many months ago and faith in that relationship responds with belief and with conviction it believes the doctrines so it obeys the commands it trembles at the threatenings it believes the doctrines and it rejoices in the promises because in the bible there are all those great promises promises promises of preservation promises of help of sanctification of glorification and transformation we rejoice in them promises and we believe in a promise let me maybe modify that for a moment and put it this way that faith in the promises of god reflects itself in prayer it has been said you see that every promise in the bible is an invitation to prayer in fact every promise is a command to prayer because if god promises us something god invites us to ask for it indeed god commands us to ask for it remember always that prayer is bounded by the promises of god i can only pray for that which is divinely warranted and what's divinely warranted is what god has promised and so i've said that prayer is bounded by the promises of god and yet one can go on to add that the promises are boundless the unsearchable riches of christ and so therefore prayer too is unbounded and yet

this relationship between the promise and prayer must be retained in violent so we obey the commands we tremble at the threatenings we believe the doctrine we rejoice in the promises we transform and transmute them into prayer so far faith has directed towards the word of god but then again faith has as a second object the person of jesus christ and the work of christ faith directed towards christ and yet again you see i must dab at once that faith here too is manifold it has more than one form of activity and i say that because christ himself is manifold christ is so many sided and because it's obvious many sided faith itself is many sided i mean this faith is modified by the identity of christ by who he is he is the son of god he is very god of very god now when i say that i believe in him that i have faith in him my faith takes its form my faith is modified by the uniqueness of his identity i mean by that it is that at this point faith will show itself as worship you have a proposition i believe that he is divine if i believe that then the fiducia element the commitment element shows itself in worship every knee bows every tongue confesses faith responds to the divine glory of christ by bowing the knee where there is such a bowing of the knee there is faith it may be you see that someone has never been through any great conscious person or spiritual crisis but that person worships jesus now if the person worships jesus that is faith you see and my problem is that so often we have confined faith to one or two narrow aspects we forgotten the bread the many sidedness of christ evoking and eliciting our many sided faith and here faith confronting the

divine glory of messiah responding in worship in wonder love and praise and again you come to this christ considered us mediator what is faith in christ as mediator well you know that as mediator christ has three offices as prophet priest and king under faith will respond differently to each of those aspects there is an activity of faith that is the direct response of the soul to each of the three areas of activity prophet priest and king now I have here again a pastoral concern it has been a fault of reformed churches going back to Luther that we have so often seen faith simply in terms of the priestly activity of Jesus in other words faith in a sacrifice faith in relation to the forgiveness of sins and justification now I shall say once that that is a precious and indispensable element in all faith faith but it is not the only element and it is not the point at which every converted soul has his or her first experience of faith you see it may well be that somebody first meets

Christ not in his priestly office but in his prophetic office or in his kingly office or in his divine claims and prerogatives of course wherever there is real faith there is a grasp of and a loving trust in the sacrifice of Jesus but guilt the sense of guilt is not always the access point of the soul it is not the point where God's grace invariably first touches the soul faith has other responses besides its response to the priestly victim on the cross of Calvary for example faith in Christ as prophet means that we believe whatever he teaches because he teaches it why do I believe tonight in the inerrancy of the

Old Testament I believe it because Jesus Christ said the scriptures cannot be broken that intellectually is my only reason faith means the submission of my mind to Christ faith in Christ as King means that I submit to his commandments and I repose confidence in his protection knowing that he will rule and defend me if I maintain that in the 20th century the human soul is much more preoccupied with insecurity with a question of meaning and it is with a question of guilt in [30 : 34] Luther's day the great problem was guilt to in our day the great problem is meaning does life have meaning is there some purpose is someone in control and I think that it is very important for us in our witness to Jesus Christ to present this sovereignty this kingship and to ask for a faith that is directed in the first instance not towards the sin bearing sacrifice so much as towards the cosmos bearing sovereignty this knowledge that he's got the whole world in his hands so faith in the prophet means my mind submits to him faith in the king means

I obey and I trust him and then faith in Christ as sacrifice means but to to him to his cross to his death to his blood I bring all my sins I bring my good deeds I bring my indefensible deeds because he says come unto me and I will give you rest remember in the old testament if someone sinned he had to bring his sacrifice to the holy place Christ is our holy place at him we confess our sins with our hand on his head we confess our sins to God his father and in the name of what he has done and resting our case entirely and exclusively on what he has done we ask that God would forgive us and cover our past and the sign of faith there you see let me go through again the sign of faith in the prophet is intellectual submission the sign of faith in the king is the absence of worry we don't worry because he's got the whole world in his hands and the sign of faith in the priest is peace of conscience the unshakable persuasion that our sin has made its full answer and found its full remedy and the obedience of our savior and that in God's judgment nothing else is relevant to my spiritual standing but what he has done and suffered faith means there you see that I add nothing to Jesus I have peace of conscience because of Jesus so you see faith acts many sidedly on the word of God depending on the kind of word it is and faith acts towards Christ too many sidedly depending on whether its immediate focus is his divine identity or one of his three offices as prophet priest and king now as a matter again of pastoral concern and experience it may very well be that because of the infinitely varied types of human personality one or other of these elements predominates in one person and another predominates in another it may very well be that in some

Christians the predominant manifestation of faith is worship in others it may be the total absence of worry because God is in control and my protest is against the notion that faith always has the same access point the same kind of origin and the same kind of manifestations what predominates will depend both upon our own temperament and upon our own experience we've seen then the basic elements of faith we've seen something of the objects of faith the third question is what about the warrant of faith now I use that language because it is a technical phraseology for a very important discussion of the question who has the right to believe in other words who has the right to come to

[36 : 14] Christ as prophet priest and king confident of a welcome and of a reception that's been discussed very thoroughly in reformed thought and the answer in general was this that every human being without any exception whatsoever is entitled to come to Christ and take him as his own saviour with no exception I say and that was embellished and clarified in terms of such emphasis as these that the warrant extended to all sinners of mankind lost that the vilest sinner had the right to come to

Jesus even indeed that the impenitent had the right to come to Jesus now psychologically the impenitent would not come to Jesus but as a matter of right they had the right every man is a man every sinner is a sinner the foulest the vilest the most vicious it was put in the strongest possible terms all of these had the right to come and the whole doctrine in reformed thought of the free offer of the gospel was based upon this clear doctrine of the warrant of faith now this itself reflected certain emphases of the word of God as follows for example it was argued that

God commanded every human being to believe there was the warrant of the divine command now that's clear enough isn't it God this is his command meant that you believe and there is no human being you see who is except from that command we have the right you have the right whoever you are we have the right to come to Christ because God commands us to come to Christ we have the right secondly because of God's offer and invitation to each human being to come to Christ look unto me and be saved all the ends of the earth come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest let the wicked forsake his way and let him turn to the

Lord and I will have mercy upon him the offer you see was absolutely universal we saw that in act 16 Paul and Silas they knew nothing of the inward spiritual condition of that jailer but they addressed him as a human being and as a sinner and they said to you believe in the Lord Jesus that was their invitation so there is this warrant based on a universal divine command on a universal divine invitation and on a universal divine promise that if we believe we shall be saved that is God's promise now it is a conditional promise it is conditional upon our believing but the promise is there that whoever we are if we turn to

God and Christ then we shall be saved and God makes that promise categorically to us if you turn he makes the foulest clean God put it again you see these terms there is the warrant a universal warrant arising from the fact that the Bible itself explicitly states that there is no price to be paid this is free and this is utterly gratuitous we receive the water of life freely we take it without money and without price now you know some reform preachers went to very very great lengths to express this this fact they were predestinarians of the deepest dye men like

[41 : 38] Thomas Boston men like John Duncan men like Martin Luther Luther in some ways far more unguarded than Calvin in his use of divine sovereignty and yet used in the most amazing language to express this fact that every human being no matter how sinful had the right to come and take Christ as a saviour John Duncan perhaps put it more succinctly for us of him as Rabbi Duncan he said sin is the handle by which I get Christ I don't read anywhere in God's word that Christ came to save John Duncan he said but I read this he came to save sinners and John Duncan is a sinner and that means he came to save John Duncan Luther argued in the same way one day he turned to the devil and he said to the devil thou sayest

I am a sinner he said to the devil and I will take he said thy known weapon and with it I will slay thee and with thy known sword I will cut thy throat because sin ought to drive us not away from Christ but towards Christ and if you make me a sinner he said to the devil you will give me a warrant to come to Jesus because he came to save sinners just as I am that's what the bible and the fall theology have taught us just as I am waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot but that thy blood may cleanse each spot O Lamb of God I come just as

I am now it may be used in the folk theology there is no theological answer to the question how can it be simultaneously true that only the predestinated are saint and that God commands all men to believe it may be that there is no answer to that dilemma but what is undoubtedly true you see is that both halls of the dilemma are valid and for the moment this is my concern that every human being is warranted to come to Christ now of course that means primarily that I am warranted because the universal always becomes the particular and you know again at a pastoral level this is supremely important in relation to those tempted to spiritual despair and I think particularly of the backslidden of those who once were bright shining

Christians from whose lives the glory is gone and I feel that for them there is no hope in many ways that is the most pathetic class of human beings in the world and the most difficult to reach with the

gospel and yet you've got to try to reach out and say look wherever you stand wherever you are there is this warrant to you to believe let me then close by briefly referring to two or three points of general interest first of all the possibility you see of varying degrees of faith greater faith and lesser faith remember the disciples prayed Lord increase our faith and it is the fact of course that faith varies from person to person and also varies in our own lives from time to time now let's remember at once the great truth it's not great faith that saves us the real faith saves and we praise God for that and yet why should our faith remain little we should feed it the problem there is this that sometimes we try to feed faith on faith giving it a diet of teaching about faith teaching about assurance analysis of the grace itself now look that will never work what feeds faith is a sight of the glory of the word of God and above all a sight of the glory of Christ you see is it not possible but often faith is little faith is malnourished because it is styled of Jesus and this terrifies me the possibility that even remaining firmly within the bounds of orthodoxy we still are Christians styled of Jesus styled of Christ the full range of his glory as human and divine prophet priest and king that's what faith needs you see it means more of Jesus more side of Christ because it feeds on him and that's what we should be aspiring to we should really pressure and value those means of grace and those servants and those discussions and those books that bring the Lord closer to us because there is where our faith grows the most magnificent definition of faith ever penned was the one implicit in the great words of William

Guthrie describing a man who has come to faith in Christ and Guthrie said of that man then he said less will not satisfy and more is not desired as you see faith pleased with Jesus it can't think of any way in which the Lord could be approved the New Testament is full of Christology let our own reading and our own meditation be full of Christology too because then our faith will grow increase our faith it's real faith not great faith that saves and I think again those words of the Lord and the disciples in the storm or the sea of Tiberias what he said to them in their panic praise your faith how pertinent that often is you see sometimes we have the beliefs we have the convictions for example you and I all know these great words that all things work together for good to them that love [49 : 45] God that is one of the most magnificent propositions rather penned by man you know them and you can't thrill to the quotation of those great sentiments yet when you struggle in your way down in a sea with Jonah where is it where is this belief this faith where is your faith the Lord doesn't deny its reality or its existence or its availability but it has not been applied that's the problem and many a day we have convictions and we have faith that is not being applied to our own current situation just one more question which is this the question of whether there will be faith in heaven now I erase it not because of some plurian academic interest but because in many ways it raises the whole question of what faith is now some people say no there won't be faith in heaven because then faith is swallowed up in sight we shall see him as he is faith is the evidence of things not seen it is what gives substance to things hoped for and when we see him as he is we won't need faith now there is a slight problem here the bible uses the idea of faith with a slight ambiguity sometimes it contrasts faith with direct knowledge with sight and certainly one day faith is to be replaced by sight but I come back again you see to my basic definition that faith is trust and I must know then you see will there be trust in heaven will we trust

God in heaven will we trust Jesus in heaven when we see him as the A's will we trust him go back again mercy to those flocks those sheep the bedouin herds of the Judean desert these flocks these sheep they see the shepherd and they follow they trust him and as far as I'm concerned in fact one of the great glories of heaven it's the great prospect it's the consummation of trust then we shall trust to be implicitly very significant in Revelation 7 the New Testament brings in this whole image again of the shepherd the lamb shall feed them and shall lead them to the fountains of the water of life in the original language what the writer says is that the lamb shall be their shepherd and shall lead them and we shall follow because faith is a relationship it is the bond it is the trust between the soul and its savior and that trust that bond is never to be broken on the threshold of glory it's consummated and I believe that we move on to ever higher levels of commitment and intimacy as the millennia go by allowing yourselves to penetrate the being and the life of a savior in some such way as his life penetrates that of

God his father heaven without faith has for me no attraction it has in fact no credibility heaven is the place when doubt in all its forms dissuade the complete thrust there shall as the apocalypse says there shall be no night there here there are nights but there there is no night well I leave it there and if you are precious I try to deliver it from you to you but it is time for questions now and if there are

any questions that you would like to ask please fire ahead where in then is the definition of saving faith could you elaborate on that

I don't know the difference between saving faith and non saving faith very much because to me all real faith is saving faith what would be non saving faith is what's called the faith of devils which is one of the intellect alone belief without trust but where there is trust there is the response of the soul to the truth I think that all such trust in Christ is saving trust there is indeed the possibility of having the faith of devils which is non saving but what could be called historical faith sometimes it's called historical faith but my position would be that if we have the combination of belief and trust but there we have saving faith what denies us to Jesus

Christ something else yes and you said for example in Luther the great problem was guilt and now the meaning of life yes of course the gospel is still the same but for example in evangelism or in preaching would that have consequences well I'm generalizing because there are still many people for guilt is a big problem the sense of their own personal sin is a huge problem but I think the different ages are different characteristics and I think that in our own day the big problem must be the problem of meaning and the temptation we felt is towards despair and modern philosophy I think exemplifies that in terms of its existential bias and so on the leap into rationalism and I think that it's unwise of us to assume that we live in Luther's world and I think that we confide a preaching too much to the actual sin complex as evangelicals and that we ought to focus a good deal more on the anxiety complex the cosmic insecurity of our whole generation but obviously that isn't exclusive it's simply a matter of proportion and balance something else?

[58 : 11] I don't think it's not questions exactly but I wonder if you can see an implication in these two instances in the New Testament first the father of the epileptic boy who says I believe help my my husband believe I just want to be men to say but the other where the disciples asked to increase our pain and he doesn't seem to die from some practice yes well I think that the first episode indicates that there are people who have sincere intellectual difficulties and who yet are desperate to believe but have difficult to reaching security as far as the old personal faith is concerned and they're very much aware of unbelief and they cry to God to help their unbelief so the self-analysis is I think the awareness that there is a measure of faith and propensity towards faith and yet the peril of falling over the precipice into unbelief

I don't know it's easy to make it tidy of it isn't tidy at all probably but there are some people of sceptical disposition and his disposition for whom it is very difficult to maintain intellectual serenity and who may sometimes feel that they're being sucked into some darkness and who will then cry help my unbelief with regard to the second incident the Lord as you said doesn't give direct or specific guidance I didn't major on this emphasis that faith is the gift of God we'd have to do that in a complete study God gives us our faith but I think that God also nurtures and sustains and develops our faith but I don't know that he does it in any one particular way he feeds our faith through the word but he also disciplines our faith through experience and sometimes maybe through withdrawing and through hiding himself and charging our faith to reach him through the darkness on occasion and we know from

Abraham and Job that God does specifically test our faith not in some arbitrary way but in order to ensure its progress and its refinement and at that level the prayer increase our faith may be a perilous prayer because we're asking Lord do to me whatever I need to have my faith increased and that may not be what we either want or expect on occasion yes yes behind the glasses and the next one Professor I found you mentioned that the sense of guilt wasn't the only access point whereby our first encounters Christ I would just like to seek some clarification on that because I've always thought that the first meeting that our guilty son has with

Christ is to a recognition of their own sin and the impending judgment of God upon that when God first confronts a sinner it's with the knowledge of their sin and with the knowledge of his untainty and absolute holiness and they're constrained to see their sin and to either flee as people have said that form your life sinful life well my only problem in John's regard is of the word first I don't think it's always the first experience we have at all of God's moving towards us we can't have other access points maybe for example some overwhelming divine blessing that humbles the soul or there may be some exposure to this other feeling of insecurity which obviously is in a sense sinful since it's fruits and roses but the concern is not for deliverance from the punishment of sin but for some sense of peace and some sense of purpose if we analyze the various biblical conversions not all that many of them in fact emphasize the sin dimension with

Abraham for example or John the Baptist or the apostle Peter and Simon and Philip and so on it seems to be the Lord's own personality that draws them and I'm talking of the access point they do all come to a sense of sin eventually but there are many Christians for whom conviction of sin was something which came fairly late in their development it was not the first point but obviously Christ is a saviour a saviour from sin and that means that for any authentic and developed faith there must be a sense of sin a sense of personal need but the access point is not always in my view this fact the sense of guilt I think in modern literature there is a very conspicuous absence of a sense of guilt but there is a very profound sense of injustice

[64 : 31] I think that in this post holocaust century that many people feel angry with the cosmos and with history and only a very small minority in fact feel guilty in the presence of a holy god now that is not as it should be but that is the way to this I think now I don't know if I'll get this question right but when you were talking about predestination and the shady area between that and acceptance I had a recent conversation I don't know a lot about this but a recent conversation where Calvin and his tulip popped up and he was talking about limited atonement and the conversation went that Christ died for a limited amount of people and I found that hard to accept in comparison with the faith being offered to everyone with the hope that everyone would accept but also realising that there is an elect who will come with the difference between that and a limited atonement meaning that faith offered can then be accepted yes indeed well my reluctance is to undertake the task of reconciling those different emphases

I believe in both my position in fact is that God commands and invites and beseeches all men to believe that is the universal warrant of the gospel the universal warrant of faith but God is committed to actually conferring faith on his own chosen people and it is best resolved possibly in terms of Augustine's famous prayer give what thou dost command and command what thou wilt the position is that really God commands all men to believe that left to themselves not a single human being will believe and that God in his grace confers faith he gives it but for his own reasons he doesn't give it to all human beings he gives it to some so you ask me how to reconcile I say don't ask me about reconciling because I cannot find a biblical text that reconciles and my adjustments are for a philosophical not theological but my current concern is to insist that God commands each one of us here to believe God offers Christ to each one of us here God pleads with each one of us here that is the situation but I also know at the level of experience psychology and theology that unless God gives me what God commands me to have I will never do what God commands me to do so I have lived for years with this simple position that the correct path is not to resolve the antithesis or the dilemma but to hold to each horn cling to each horn firmly that God is God foreordains whatever comes to pass and man is responsible the evidence supports both of these but we do not we cannot at this point in our existence we cannot reconcile those two things how can man be responsible if God foreordains all things I have no answer to that as a theologian at all I simply know that both are true in the same way as I believe in both the threeness and the oneness of God the twoness and the oneness of Christ the twoness and oneness of my own human existence both body and soul how can I be a psychosomatic unity how is that I don't know and I keep on suggesting with all due humility to the physicists and other experts in their malnesty oversimplified fields that in their fields too there are difficulties whether light is particle or light is waves and then they tell me no light is both wave and particle how is light both wave and particle and they do not know the answer to that and I say well you too have problems not simply physicians but physicists too have problems and I thank God for that reconciliation problems I cannot confidently handle except by saying each whole of your dilemma is true there's no time there for you I see two hands I see two hands so we'll have the two hands David first and then Abiy at the back I'd just like to refer to the second last questioner's question again you mentioned in your talk that faith in Christ as saviour and priest was an indispensable element of true faith and you also mentioned in your answer to the second last questioner that any authentic and developed faith would have this element contained in it so then are you suggesting that although there are different access points that if they do not have that element in them at some point in their history the history of faith they are not authentic and or are you also suggesting that they are dispensable elements of faith and another last point that I thought about was surely

[71 : 23] Peter and Paul had an awareness of their sin even at the access point of their faith faith because Paul surely would have realized the hurt that he had been doing to the church of Christ

and Peter would have been aware would he not of his denying Christ well Peter and Paul are different because Paul did have a very deep conviction of sin at the very point of access to Christ because he was a persecutor Peter we have no reference at all to his sense of sin at the point of his faith origin but my point would be David that faith is faith in the whole Christ that is faith in Christ as prophet priest and king and there should be a significant lack of emphasis on the prophet and the king we have emphasized almost always faith in the priest as if that were everything and

I wanted to correct that imbalance if I could now I say that where faith is authentic it must have this three fold movement towards the whole Christ but I don't think that it always begins with the priesthood it may sometimes begin with the prophet or begin with the king and furthermore in some persons the submission to the king the submission to the prophet may be a more potent factor than the submission to the priest in other words the intellectual and the anxiety may predominate over the the piacula of the guilt aspect of things there may be an embryonic faith which for example hasn't yet got to a sense of sin but will get to a sense of sin but

I think that my difficulty has been that we have taken the Luther and maybe the Banyan model of torment over personal guilt as being the standard and I don't think it is the way that everybody is drawn to Christ there are people who are drawn by Christ I think by the sheer beauty of his personality that sometimes happens and others who are drawn to Christ through the torment of intellectual insecurity or the torment of existential insecurity but at last where faith is biblical it must reach out to prophet priest and king that's what I would be concerned to emphasize yes I'm sorry but I didn't really manage to go when we are still going out of the world, then we have been assured in this.

Yes, well I wanted to discuss that because of the pressure of time, faith and assurance. If I can just quickly say that we distinguish two kinds of assurance, assurance of faith and the assurance of sense.

The assurance of faith is present in all faith. That means the belief, for example, that God exists, the belief that God loves the world, that God gave a son to be your saviour.

[75 : 20] All faith includes that kind of assurance. And I think the text that you quote refers to this, the full assurance of faith, that is full confidence in God and in the blood of Christ.

But the assurance of sense in Scottish teaching has been to the effect that there is an assurance that I myself am personally saved.

And I don't think that assurance is always enjoyed by all Christians. And I don't think that's what that particular text refers to.

It refers to the more objective assurance, the full assurance that God is, and that Christ is our saviour. That is indispensable to all authentic faith.

But it may be that I can be a Christian and yet not have the assurance of sense. The assurance that I myself am a Christian. It's a huge issue for me to answer.

[76 : 25] I'm sorry, inadequate in a few couple of minutes because this is a full discussion I've given to it. But we have used the word assurance more, I think, in the free church particularly, as assurance of our own personal salvation.

And that is not the way it's used in that particular text at all. That text refers to faith in the full sale of its confidence, its Godward confidence.

In other words, it's trust in God, not trust in ourselves. Well, I think we'll let you off the loop there.

Yes, I knew yours was a very difficult question, so I was trying to...

No, not at all, not at all. But it can wait. And I think we perhaps do have an evening given over to assurance later on in the series of lectures. So if you haven't been satisfied with the answer, perhaps you'll be able to come back in a month or so's time and ask that or a similar question once again.

I just want to end with one or two words of thanks and then perhaps the Reverend Bill Hughes will close our meeting with prayer, please. And I just want very simply to thank Professor MacLeod for being with us and say that we have so enjoyed beginning our lectures again that we look forward to his being with us in the future, as the Lord wills.

[77 : 50] But I do also want to thank the questioners. I think the chairman is left at the end of a lecture that reaches not just to our minds but to our hearts and to our emotions.

A chairman is left with a difficulty in case the questions will not add but rather subtract from what we have heard.

And I think that as long as we follow the rule that we ask our questions with a genuine desire to increase our knowledge of the truth, then we find, as we have certainly found with all the questions tonight, that indeed our love for Christ and his truth is enlarged.

And so I do want to thank those of you who have asked questions as well as Professor MacLeod himself. Thank you all very much. And I hope that we'll see all of you, I hope, back in a fortnight's time, as the Lord wills, and perhaps you will have brought some more friends with you so that we'll have to draw back those curtains.

I think maybe there were maybe one or two who will perhaps want to ask Professor MacLeod something personally at the end, and I think, as usual, he will be happy to wait just for a little while. [79 : 03] And perhaps I'll ask him just to stay down at the front here for a little while so that those who do want to get away quickly will be able to do so. Now let us stand for prayer, Mr. Hughes.

Our gracious God and our loving Heavenly Father, we do thank thee for who thou art.

We thank thee that thou art a God who has revealed thyself, and we rejoice in this knowledge. And we thank thee that thou hast given unto us the revelation of thyself in the person of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Grant that we may, as we have been exhorted this evening, have greater glimpses of his glory, that we may see in him the altogether love of all, the fairest among ten thousand, and may our hearts be drawn out after him.

We do thank thee for this time to be able to sit under the ministry and the instruction of thy word.

And we ask that thou will grant that thy Holy Spirit will implant these things in our hearts and in our minds, that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

[80 : 23] Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all this night and forevermore. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.