

What is faith (Apologies for the sound quality)

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[0 : 00] Come back and I'll show you to Acts chapter 16. There's some familiar words defined there. Verse 31, Acts 16. And verse 31.

There in this sitting room, you can unlock that incident. As Paul and Silas are singing hymns and things that God has given them, the earthquake that shakes the city and the kitchen doors are opened.

I'm a jailer that's about Tullum's death, which is the fact that all these charges are fled. But Paul sure has been punished for not to be any pawns himself. And he comes and calls them, before Paul's palace and asks, they're sturdy.

What must I do to be saved? And they said, verse 31, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house, that is a house full of the people in the house.

You and your temple believe in Jesus Christ. May be saved. Now last week we began a short series of studies looking at the question, how can I know that I'm a Christian?

[1 : 18] How can I know when I become a Christian? How can I know if I am a Christian? Because it's not actually that it is normal for people who are Christians, who really are Christians, to know that they're Christians.

It's not so normal for people who are Christians to know that they're not. But certainly if you are a Christian, it is normal for you to be absolutely sure that you are a Christian. And last week we saw that one sign of being a Christian that shows that you really are a Christian, is that you have repented.

True repentance is a sign of true Christianity. If you have repented, that is you have a new desire for God in your heart, and when you go to the sins, they are not one sign that you are a Christian. This morning I want to think of another sign, and it's a sign of faith. Faith is something that any Christian has. John's Gospel is perhaps the clear state.

Faith is the least to prove that. John says that in chapter 1 verse 12, that to all who will speak Christ, to those who believe in him, God gave him the power to become the children of God.

[2 : 43] For those who believe in Christ, the children of God. John p. 16 asks, and then it's the well known verse, God so loved the world, He gave us one and only Son, but who so that believe in him, cannot perish, but have everlasting life.

Believe in Christ, you have everlasting life. At the end of John's Gospel, it says that he's written, the whole Gospel, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

Believing in Jesus, may you have life in his name. Believing in Jesus, and it says children of God. And that's why as the early church went out, and began to preach about Jesus, one of the things that it was doing, was calling people to believe.

We were looking a couple of weeks ago, on Sunday evening at Cornelius, Acts chapter 10, caught Peter going to Cornelius' house, and he says to Cornelius and his household, everyone who believes in Jesus, receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

Believing in Jesus, means that you've received forgiveness for your sins. And here, at Acts chapter 11, again, Paul, said to the jailer, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you'll be saved.

[4 : 15] You'll have your sins forgiven, and you'll be in a right relationship with God. Believe you, and you're a Christian. To know whether or not you're a Christian, you look at your faith.

Last thing we saw, you look at your equality of your requirements, is it true repentance? Have you truly turned to sin to God? But today, you look at faith, and you truly believe, in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is a sign of the Christian. We might think to ourselves, but surely that's something that none of us hear is any following us.

Because we're here, and we're here because, well, we may have our doubts, we may have questions, but basically we do believe. We believe in Jesus, and that's why we're here.

And because we believe in, we believe in Jesus Christ, and we don't have any more Christian. But, we can't just assume, that our believing is of the right form, and the right kind.

[5 : 21] It's because we were able to say, that's the, cry where the child's gone in, we believe. The biblical heart is something that's very sober, and very, um, solemn, that the New Testament teaching us.

And what the biblical sense, is that, the devil believes, and he believes, far more fully, and clearly, than anything, in that sense.

For example, in the gospels, some people were possessed of demons, you quite often see them crying out, through the demons, you are, the Son of God, to Jesus, or, you are, the Holy One of God, that you can believe in.

In Matthew chapter 8, verse 29, the demons, like the women, the demon possessed of law, I'm not going to read about in that chapter, cry out to Jesus, when he comes in torture, before the appointed time.

They believe that Jesus was the judge of the world, and that he would appoint them, their own nation, and be poor. And here in verse 17, the skull was possessed of a demon.

[6 : 43] Listen to what the demon says about, and Paul and Silas, these men, are the servants of the Most High God, which shows the way of salvation. The devil believes in Jesus.

The devil believes Jesus is all the same. He believes Jesus is the Son of God, he believes Jesus is the Son of the Most High God, he believes that Jesus will judge the world, he believes that Jesus is the way of salvation, and yet only in him that is salvation.

He writes in James, he says, the devil believes on us, but he trembles. So he's obviously not God, he kind of is.

He's going to make him a Christian, because for one thing, the devil certainly isn't a Christian. He's got faith, but it hasn't made him a Christian.

So there must be something more, or something different about the faith, that makes us Christians.

What kind of faith will assure me of you, that we are Christians?

[7 : 56] Well I think that truth faith has four parts to it. Truth faith has four parts, and I'm going to use an illustration to try and get this across.

It has knowledge, it has conviction, it has trust, and it also has confession. Four things.

I want you to imagine that you're stronger, on a large island, a very large, but rotten island. Where you are on the island at this point, it's very close to the main line.

The main line seems to be very fertile, it's plenty to eat over there, but where you are on this large island, there's nothing. You're very close to the main line, but you can't cross, because the sea is between you, and the main line, and you can't swim, and you've got nothing else to take your cross. And you'll get hungry, because there's nothing to eat on the island. Now while you sit and contemplate, how you're going to get food, and how you can cross over, to the main line, where you see the barisque, a man comes into view, on the main line, just opposite where you are, and because it's not far, you're within a disturbing distance, and you can't cross.

[9 : 23] He sizes up your situation, and recognizes that you're hungry, and he shouts across to you, but if you go way down to the south of the island, which is quite a long distance away, again the island comes close to the main line, but at that point there's a bridge, and you can cross that bridge, to the other side, further to the bridge, and through.

That illustrates the first part of faith, which is knowledge. You now know how to get food. You now know how to get safely over, to the main land for the three days.

You've got knowledge. That's the first part of faith. You cannot become a preacher without knowledge. You have to know at least something. You have to know. Paul tells Timothy, for example, that Timothy, from his agency, he knew the Holy Scripture.

He knew the Bible, especially the Old Testament. He knew the Holy Scripture, and Paul says, these are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

They give you the knowledge, that's Paul. They themselves are not salvation. The knowledge itself is not salvation, but it's able to make you wise, so that you can be saved.

[10:46] So that you know that it's through faith in Jesus Christ. So the first thing is knowledge. And that's an essential foundation for faith. You cannot have faith without first having knowledge.

You need to know what you're going to believe in. You need to know what you're going to believe in. You need to know what you're going to believe in. You need to know what you're going to believe in. I think that we probably all have that knowledge.

But there's something more. And it's conviction. Conviction. Come back to a realization. You're convinced. That's what the man is shaded over to is the truth.

And so you begin to make your journey, weak though you are, south to the south end of the island, to find that bridge that he's talking about, and to find faith.

Conviction. You're convinced that what you've heard, that the knowledge you've gained is the truth. And so you begin to use that knowledge to see what that knowledge says is there and is available.

[11:52] Now I think that corresponds to the second element of faith. The conviction, the conviction, which makes us seek salvation through Jesus Christ.

Because many, many people have knowledge, but they're not convinced it's the Supreme. They're not convinced that they need to do anything about it. And so alone with the knowledge, they're certainly not Christians.

Maybe they have more knowledge than many people who are Christians. But they don't do anything with the knowledge. But it's when you're convinced that what you've heard, and what you know about Jesus, meets your needs, that you seek him.

You seek to meet him. And you see that in the Gospel stories all the time. People were convinced that Jesus could heal him, for example. And so they laid off on long and painful and mythical journeys to you too.

They had conviction that Jesus was the one who could actually heal him. And they went to be able to find him. We can be the same. If we're convinced that Jesus is the Saviour, and that he is able to save us and bring us to God, we're convinced that's what we need.

[13:04] We never seek him. We seek to find him. For ourselves. And we're going to find him. Well, we find him through the use of the Scriptures, through the use of prayer, through coming along to church, through fellowship with Christians.

All these places are places where we can find Jesus Christ. But we've got to come see him.

Because if we come and open the Bible and just read what a sort of ritual said, or because that's what we always do, then we're not seeking.

We've got to come seeking. Come and say, Lord, I want to really meet Jesus here. To meet Jesus in this Bible. To meet Jesus when I pray for you.

To meet Jesus when I come along through the worship services. to meet Jesus when other Christians that we hear, speak it to. We feel we've got to meet him.

That's the part of truth, the conviction that leads us to seek him. To seek and meet him for ourselves. But there's something else as well.

[14:22] And that is trust. Back to the illustration again, as we travel south, we come eventually to that bridge. The bridge from the Badan Island, where there's nothing to be, across to the main one, where its first island it is.

There is a village. But the bridge doesn't look very safe. It's just across an arrow channel.

But we can't stay. And if the bridge collapses, then we fall in and we drown. However, we trust the bridge. We cross over the bridge.

And there, we find free to satisfy. We have to trust that bridge. Or we still be on the island.

We have to trust it. Even though, as we looked at it, it didn't seem to be very secure. When we actually were on it, we found that it was very secure indeed. And that's something of what faith has as well.

[15:31] Because true faith, seeking Christ, sees him, as he is, and is prepared simply to rest upon him. To rest in him alone.

To let him take full weight of our sins, of our lives, and all that we can carry and bear to him.

Everything. All that he comes upon him, all that he inside, is everything that he gives to him.

To let him just take everything, and to carry it. safely, to God. We are prepared, to do that. We find peace in doing that.

We find peace, we will completely convince, that he's enough. And so, we trust him. We are satisfied with him alone.

We find that we can entrust ourselves to him, and we do it. And then we sit ahead, and we meet him, we see him, and we hunt ourselves over again.

[16:30] We trust him. He is all sufficient for us. He is a savior for our sins, and the savior to carry us safely, to God.

We trust in Jesus. Everything else that we might have trusted, is the only wish, so that he himself, can do for us, what nothing else can do.

We trust in Jesus. So you won't think that, that is it. And that is what makes us Christians. And indeed, that does, make us Christians.

But there is something further, that it really proves, that what has happened, is real for us. It's real, in our experience, it's been a real thing. We haven't just, used words, or just spoken about something, but we really have actually experienced, that Jesus did his peace, because we trusted him.

And that is, confession. Now that corresponds, in our illustration, to perhaps later on, in our own travels, we are on the mainland, and we come, to that point on the mainland, which is opposite, where we first ourselves, sat on the island, wondering how on earth, we were going to get over, to the third-time mainland.

[17:56] And so, we are at that point, on the mainland, now we are fed, and we are satisfied, and we see someone else, on the island, opposite us.

Someone else, has somehow also, come to be stranded, on our island, and we recognize, their condition. What do we do? We have found, that the bridge is big, and we find, where we can be satisfied, and we shout over, to them as well, how to find that bridge, and that when it is, they'll get peace, and satisfaction.

We confess to them, we profess, and we tell them, what we ourselves, have found in the truth. And that itself, is really something, that every Christian, is truly Christian, does.

Romans 10, verse 9, if you confess, with your life, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart, God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

The two parts, we believe, but we also must confess, this poem. It's very important, that true faith, is shown, by the fact, that we are willing, to share it with others.

[19:14] True faith, is never a private market. True faith, is never something, that is for us, to keep to ourselves. If you have true faith, it's shown, because, you want to tell it to others.

You find that peace, and you want to share it with others. And you don't mind that, perhaps, that others may not, want to hear it.

You don't feel ashamed, that you are speaking about Jesus, and others maybe don't want to hear it. Your faith, is willing, to tell others, about Jesus.

Because, that faith, is true Christianity. These are the four things, that we can, we can all look into our own lives, and just say, well, do you have these four things?

Because if we have, then this is another way, by which we can just be assured, in ourselves, I am a Christian. And by having that, knowledge of Jesus, that is right, in the conviction, I must seek him, and that is, later on, to me meeting him, and trusting him, and just trusting him, for my, my salvation, so that I have peace.

[20:29] And I tell others about it, I can be absolutely assured, that I am a Christian. that what I call my faith, because everyone speaks about their faith, that it's my faith, my faith, is real faith.

If that is what my faith does for me, if that is what my faith has, it's real faith. I mean, you may find that there are many things in your life, that you don't think, tolly out with what you believe, a Christian should be like, that there are doubts, and fears, and anxieties, and sin, and still don't need your life.

But you have this faith. We'll be assured in that. This faith points you out as a true Christian, and rejoice in that. One example of that, I think it's very clearly found, in what Paul says, of an old man, shortly before he is going to die, and go to be with Jesus.

2 Timothy 1 verse 12, very familiar verse, Paul confesses this, and it is a confession, I am not ashamed of you, because I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day, at the age of death, the day of the Lord, the day when Jesus retired.

Paul says, I have no, I have no problem about this. I am willing to tell a good about it. I know who I believe, that's the first thing, I am convinced he is able to do what he says, that he is able to do.

[22 : 18] I have entrusted myself to him, even against a day of judgment, and he confesses that to others. Here's a faith that's got all the points of truth in.

It's a faith that makes Paul so absolutely convinced about his position, as a Christian believer, that he is willing literally to jump into eternity, to jump through death, confident, and at peace, that he is going to be with Jesus, and that Jesus is going to bring to God.

He believes, and he has this true faith, and it is enough for him. He is willing to say, that is something that really shows, that this faith that we're talking about here, is a faith that is real, that is true Christian faith.

It's a faith that is willing to state every second, on what we believe. Because many people do say, I've got faith, and they speak about my faith, and the faith that I have, and so on.

And it's great to have faith. Whatever faith that in Jesus we have, if it's right, even if it's not taking us all away, it's at least going to help us, because it's a faith in what is true.

[23 : 54] We must have minimized whatever people say, if people say that we show no signs of a true Christian, still that perhaps in illness, I believe Jesus has helped me, or something.

We must have minimized that. Because if we put our faith in what is true, even if it's just in one area, if our lives are just for one thing, then the truth of that will help us.

But that doesn't make us Christians. Because true faith is willing to state everything, on what we believe. A few years ago, I was involved in taking a funeral.

I was taken by a minister, who just came into the area, for the purpose of doing the funeral. And I started speaking to him, and I felt that he didn't share my own faith, he didn't share my own understanding of the gospel.

I was taken by a minister. At that funeral, the family had chosen the hymns that would be sung at the funeral. And the minister that came, he expressed surprise to me, and also to Jan and Warden, who was taken apart, expressed surprise to me, at their choice of hymns.

[25 : 14] He didn't say much of it. Here's how some of the, one of the hymns they've chosen went. I was taken by a man. Not in my innocence I trust, I bow before thee in the dust.

And through my Saviour's blood alone, I look for mercy at thy throne. The hour of my departure's come, I hear the voice that calls me home.

Now, O my God, let trouble cease, now let thy servant die in peace. Afterwards, I was speaking to Jan, the young warden about the service, and about the hymn.

But the minister, conduct the service, didn't think that he was appropriate. This is what Jan said, and it's always stuck with me. He said, I don't know why that minister thought the hymn a strange choice.

Jan said, I could happily die without him on my lips. Not in my innocence I trust, I bow before thee in the dust.

[26 : 28] And through my Saviour's blood alone, I look for mercy at thy throne. I could happily die without him on my lips. I see that's true faith.

It's willing to stake everything on what we believe. That's what marks out the truth, a faith that knows, that's convinced, that trusts, that confesses to others.

Willing to stake all, willing to cross the bridge in eternity, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. God bless you. Now let's examine ourselves, each one of us.

And let's look and see if we have this faith. If what we have is so much security, there's so much peace to our life, that we are willing to stake everything on what we believe.

in our faith. Because, that faith in Christ alone, not in our innocence we trust, but we bow before him in the dust. And through his blood alone, we look for mercy at his throne.

[27 : 39] If that is our faith, and we are willing to stake our own, then we are truly Christian believers. Let's pray together.

Lord, we give thanks to you, for the signs of faith, that are there for all of us, to see in our own lives. But we thank you Jesus, most of all, that you are worthy of our trust.

Sometimes Lord, we look with the dimness, and ignorance of our minds, at you, and feel perhaps that you're not. It's not easy to trust you, or that perhaps you're not going to be able, to carry the things that you trust in.

But we thank you that when we actually trust, we find you so able, so completely, and so wonderfully able, to carry us safely through life, and to be with the Father.

But Lord Jesus, we wonder why we never trusted long before. Jesus, we worship you now, and pray that each of us will place our trust firmly in the Lord. Amen.
[28 : 53] Amen. Amen.