

Faith – Part 7

We began in the Kingdom through the doorway of salvation; we began to look at faith. What is it? And then walking by it to the point of contending for it. We are never to forget the components in the word, “therefore” in I Peter 1:13 as we reviewed last time. If we’re not living our lives in the light of this simple equation, the Holiness of God, the sin of man yields the reality of Hell; but with the cross of Christ added yields the reality of Heaven. If we’re not living our lives out of those truths, then the power in which we walk as New Testament Christians will be diminished. And our light will glow dimly as opposed to brightly. With every moment of your life, including even as you sit here today, you’re functioning with a constant stream of choices presented to you; and that choice is always the same choice. God could not make it any simpler. That is to say God is, God is love, love is relational, relational is choice, if one choice is God, any other choice is ungod or ungodly. Understanding that choice we’re to approach this again drawing from the Word in I Peter 1:13 to contend for the faith by keeping sober. Sober being a combination of at least these ingredients of awakening ourselves, remaining clear minded, always standing on the foundation of what is the origin, the definition of truth, with a serious attitude toward this; because there is nothing in life more serious than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Humor is wonderful so long as humor is not distracting you from the serious issues at hand.

So last time we came through I Peter 1:13 – therefore gird your minds for action; keeping sober in spirit; fix your hope completely on the grace brought you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. It ends with Jesus Christ and it begins with Jesus Christ. The Holiness of God begins in Genesis 1:1 and we’re taught in the New Testament that the member of the Trinity Who performed that creation is Jesus Christ. So the Holiness of God is setting the foundation for you to stand on the Rock presented to us in the New Testament which is Christ. So let’s draw from a few Scriptures to remind ourselves who this Jesus is. The Son of God, God Himself, the second member of the Trinity (as He’s called); Colossians 1:15 – the image of the invisible God; Colossians 2:9 – the fullness of Deity in bodily form; II Corinthians 4:4 – the image of God; Colossians 1:19 – for it was the Father’s good pleasure for all of the fullness to dwell in Him; and Hebrews 1:1-3 (teaching us several things) – God has spoken to us in these latter days (in which we’re presently living) in His Son. This is My beloved Son, listen to Him. The Holy Spirit comes to bear witness of Jesus, so it’s all summed up in Jesus, Who is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact representation of His nature. So Jesus (listen to these things), the Son of God is the radiance, the expression, the manifestation, the revelation, the visible, the outshining expression of the glory of God. But if you’re not living in the light of this God being other than out of Genesis 1:1, this Jesus that I’ve just described to you from the New Testament will shrink. So we have to always, each moment, walk in the light of the Holiness of God in order to receive and function in the power of the New Testament Scriptures which describe Jesus. He is the exact representation of the nature of God. We ask why was it done this way? Well we know where to rest; because it was the Father’s good pleasure to do it this way. We don’t need any other explanation. We rest in that—why? Because we’re resting in the Holiness of this God of Genesis 1:1. So we rejoice in it; we praise Him for it and we thank Him for it. We seek understanding; but we never have to understand in order to stand in faith in this Holy God of Genesis 1:1.

But today, remember, we’re continuing to learn to walk by faith (meaning in accordance with it, in a manner consistent with it) and we do that by contending for it. So we need to make a few

observations. Virtually every word in that one verse of Scripture, I Peter 1:13, represents a choice. The choice is always the same. We'll either walk in accordance with God or in accordance with something deviating from God which is to say ungod. It's one or the other. And with each choice, we are making a profession of what our faith is in; because at every moment, every thought that a human being has is walking by faith in one or the other. So if we choose God, we are professing more faith in God than we are professing faith in ungod. We're walking in accordance with God and being God determined rather than ungod which is to be self determined, thinking that we can determine what truth is independent of God and what He has said. But if we choose ungod, then we are professing more faith in ungod (that which is opposed to God) than we are expressing faith in God of Genesis 1:1. On another level, Galatians 5:6 – faith works through love. So we're therefore with each choice expressing what we love; because, remember, love is a passion for oneness. So you choose that which you have a greater passion to be one with. Therefore if we have a passion to be one with God, to be God determined, we will choose God. But if our passion is to integrate oneness with ungod (which is opposed to God), then we will choose ungod. Therefore each choice that you make, however simple it seem to you, is the revelation of what you have faith in; it's the revelation of what you're walking in accordance with; and it's the revelation of what you love the most.

We need to be reminded too, it is either/or. Recall Luke 11:23 – He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters. There's no middle ground. At every moment with every thought, we're building the next event in our lives to either gather for the glory of God or scatter from God, by not being faithful to walk in accordance with the God that we claim to profess. So everything at every moment in your lives is a choice; the choice is always the same choice; the choice is between God and ungod—that is to say being God determined or determined by something else; and if you're not God determined at its root, anything contrary to God is always self determination; because you're thinking that you, by yourself, can determine that which is better to be adhered to than God Himself can recommend to you. What we choose reveals what we have faith in. What we choose reveals what we are walking in accordance with. What we choose reveals what we love the most. What we choose reveals whether we at that moment are choosing to gather for Him or scatter from Him. What we choose reveals whether we're regarding God as the judge or ourselves as the better judge than God is so that we can, therefore, judge God. What we choose reveals whether we're worshipping Him or rebelling against Him by self worship by walking in self determination. What we choose reveals whether we are coming into agreement with God or disagreeing with Him; that reveals whether we consider His thoughts higher than our thoughts or at that moment with that choice, are considering our thoughts higher than His thoughts. Can you imagine? What we choose reveals what we're regarding at that moment as the standard of truth. That's why Scripture says capture every thought. Because we function in the false, in the deception that there is sometimes for God, sometimes against God; but a vast neutral ground in the middle where it's neither. But He tells us to capture every thought; because that's why we're defaulting to the kingdom of Satan instead of walking in the fullness of the power of the Kingdom of God; because we think the neutral ground is existent and huge. But that simply is not the case.

We need to also notice that we will make each choice depending on how we have chosen to make prior choices. So let's walk part way through this verse, I Peter 1:13, just to point that out. Remember; therefore, gird your minds for action, keeping sober in spirit and so on. If we do not function in the light of therefore, we will not gird. If you don't take the first step in that verse, you're not going to take the second step. So if we do walk in the light of therefore, but choose

not to gird (prepare our minds) we will not take action. If we walk in the light of therefore and do gird, but do not choose action, we will not keep sober. If we walk in the light of therefore, we do gird, we do choose action; but we do not keep sober, we will not choose in spirit, keeping sober in spirit. If we walk in the light of therefore, we do gird, we do choose action, we do keep sober; but we do not choose spirit, but stay in the flesh, then we will not choose the right spirit. In other words, the chain of decisions in this verse must be unbroken in order to function in the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus Christ came to give us: the abundant life. Like begets like; fundamental principle—what you sow, you reap. So the more branch points, such as in this verse in which you choose God rather than ungod, the easier it becomes in the future to continue the process to choose God. And you look at deny self, follow Me, take up your cross, you see. That's really another way of coming at that same principle; because to deny self means to deny self determination and function in being God determined, which is to be Christ determined for us as New Testament Christians. So I'm not introducing a new concept, I'm simply maybe introducing a new explanation of a previously identified and understood concept.

Let's go back to walking by faith (meaning in accordance with). And you've heard this story of the chicken and the egg; which came first? So here's an analogy in the faith realm. If two cars come to a four-way stop sign simultaneously, commonly neither car knows what is to happen next. Both remain stopped. We behave as New Testament Christians, commonly, as if we are at a four-way stop in our walk by faith. God is driving the other car. We think, commonly, that the primary spiritual principle of walking by faith is meaning empowered by. So we remain stopped at the intersection, on our spiritual journey, while waiting for God to give us more faith as we say increase our faith. But God does not move; He stays stopped at the intersection. He doesn't give us more faith and we struggle with understanding why. Well the reason is, we've chosen the chicken and He wants us to choose the egg. We've chosen the chicken of empowered by; He wants us to choose the egg of in accordance with, in a manner consistent with. We think that the way to walk in accordance with is to receive the empowered by. God desires that the pathway to empowered by is to begin to walk in accordance with that which we have already received to be empowered by. In other words, He wants us to walk in accordance with the faith that we have rather than seeing every situation through the eyes of: I need more faith. Numbers 11:23 in the NIV – The Lord answered Moses, is the Lord's arm too short? You see, we see it as God's arms are too short; He stopped short of giving me more faith to empower me. God sees it as, you have stopped short of My arms where more faith is existent because you're refusing to walk in accordance with the faith I've already given you. We see it as God's provision of faith is inadequate; God sees it as you're walking in accordance with the measure of faith that I have provided you is inadequate. We say as the disciples do increase our faith; God says be faithful over what faith I have given you by walking in accordance with it and then I will, of course, give you more. We say by Your grace give us more faith; and God says by My grace I have given you faith, now use that faith by walking in accordance with it in order to access more of My grace. Because that's what humility would do, because humility would be God determined and constantly choose to walk in accordance with the faith that you've already been given.

So if we go back to I Peter 1:13, that is remember, with the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We would tend to say bring grace to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. And God would say it is good that you ask Me for it and I will do so. When? You live in the light of the fullness of therefore. You gird your minds for action. You keep sober in spirit. And you fix your hope completely; because there is the first two thirds of the verse. When you do these things, then you have begun to contend for the faith, you see, for the

revelation of the grace brought to you in Jesus Christ. So we are to contend for the faith; not to take a passive approach that if I just sit here and wait for God to give me more faith, then I will access the abundant life. We engage in the process. Jude verse 3 – I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith. Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. Simple example: The word for, contend for the faith, can have three meanings. For example, a simple phrase like we raced for the boat can have three meanings. It can mean that you raced to see who would get to the boat first; it could mean that you raced with the idea that the winner would get the boat; and it could mean that you raced on behalf of the boat as its crew just as our Olympic runners race for the United States. So in that same way, contending for the faith can have three different meanings. We contend to have more of it, to get more of it, Lord increase our faith. We contend to live in accordance with it, with what we already have. And we contend on behalf of it as its representatives; because we are told we're earthen vessels, living epistles, ambassadors for Christ. Now when we contend for it, with all those in mind, what happens? Faith grows. Can faith grow? Yes, Scripture tells us it can. I Thessalonians 1:3 in the King James Version – Because your faith groweth exceedingly. II Corinthians 10:15 – As your faith grows. So nothing of what I'm saying is negating the fact that faith can grow; what I'm saying is there are two aspects to it. That we, of course, pray increase our faith; but as we're doing so, we never become pacifists in thinking that we don't have a task to do to function in the Kingdom of God. Because God always has a task for us to do to engage with Him in the function of His Kingdom; and our part is to walk by faith in accordance with the faith that He's already given us.

Next poster. This poster is one that you've seen before; it's just to remind us about increase our faith. How does faith grow? Well, recall the definition of faith; Hebrews 11:1 – Faith is the assurance of things hoped for. So if we start with nothing, then we have no faith; because we have nothing in which to have faith in. Then we receive some knowledge. Well if we have only knowledge, then we may begin to hope about that knowledge; but that hope at that point is still the hope of the world—that is to say I hope it doesn't rain on the picnic. It's a vague thing, not an optimistic expectation. It's a desire that something positive happens; but your expectation is based on assessment of probabilities. But that is not Biblical hope. Biblical hope is optimistic expectation based on the promises of God and those promises flow out of the Holy Being of Genesis 1:1 and will be fulfilled. So it's not just an optimistic vague desire based on probability; it's an optimistic expectation based on the Holiness of God that we've talked about from Genesis 1:1 on, you see. That's the difference in Biblical hope.

So when you start with some knowledge, you begin to hope; but that's the hope of the world, that's the based on probability analysis. But then you have some knowledge; but you have no assurance that that knowledge is true. But then you receive assurance, see, and that's the faith that comes from God by His grace. We receive that assurance that the knowledge on which you have been basing your earthly probability analysis hope, now changes. Now it goes from a vague desire based on probability to go to something assured that you stand on because it's flowing out of the power of the God of Genesis 1:1. You will stake your life on it. Now we have knowledge and assurance about that knowledge. The next step, of course, is to acquire even more knowledge in which to begin to place hope. And then you say increase my faith and God gives you the assurance that that recently acquired knowledge is, in fact, true and based on His sovereignty and you can bank your life on it. Now you have increased faith. And you see that the whole sequence is to continue the process. So how do we get faith to grow? Oh, we seek more knowledge out of the Word of God. We pray for more faith, increase our faith. We

receive more assurance as a gift from God; but we do it while simultaneously every moment of the process walking in accordance with the faith that we already have. That's to enter that crescendo of delight with your God, remember. When Moses said if You delight in me, show me Your ways that I may know Your ways that You may delight in me—the crescendo of delight. So when we're choosing by girding our minds for action, keeping sober in spirit to fix our hope completely on the grace brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, our faith will grow. But if we're choosing to ignore every component of that verse, then the question for us to ask: if we are not being faithful over the little thing He has given us, should we expect Him to give us more of that which we are choosing to ignore as we walk through our lives, you see? We're always in the situation of the man in Mark 9:24 – I believe, help my unbelief. We always as human beings are a component of each. I believe, help my unbelief. So of course we need faith to increase.

Now God lavishes grace; part of that lavishing grace is to increase our faith. But He also gives us a constant stream of commandments in the Bible. Be faithful over the faith that you have in order to access more of that which you are functioning in. Ephesians 1:7-8 – According to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us. So God is not refusing to lavish grace, including increasing our faith; but what God wants us to do is to reciprocate the relationship with Him and take an active approach to contend for the faith to choose God rather than ungod each step along the way in a manner consistent with the faith that He's already given us. So understand this principle of faith. There's no such thing as an isolated faith failure. Remember, every man at every moment of his life is walking by faith. Ultimately at the root of his thought life, there's something at that moment that he's expressing faith in in order to make the choice the way that he's making it. But with every faith failure there is coupled with it a simultaneous faith success. Take the fear of death as an example. I use that commonly. The question, as always, is faith in what? At any moment. Your flesh gives you plenty of reasons to have faith in death. We see people die. We see bodies decompose. We see bodies burn. We see bodies blown apart in battle. So there are plenty of fleshy, worldly, natural circumstances to increase your faith in death. But your God also gives you plenty of reasons to have faith in Him as the source of life over death. So you cannot fear death as an isolated faith failure. Either there will be success of faith in death or there will be success of faith in God. So at every moment, there is a faith success. If you see faith in God as failing because you have fear of death, the other side of that is you're simultaneously seeing faith in death in your thought life succeeding. Because in every situation, there is a coupling of a faith success and a faith failure. So when you see faith in God failing, you need to recall certain things. I John 4:8 – God is love. I Corinthians 13:8 – Love never fails. So God is love and love never fails. Galatians 2:20 – the spirit of Christ is within you; and this Christ according to Hebrews 2:3 is the exact representation of the nature of God. And II Peter 1:4 says we're to be partakers of the divine nature.

So God is; He is love; Love never fails; Christ is in us Who is the exact representation of the nature of God which is love and now we're to partake of the divine nature. You see, love never fails. In every situation there is a love success. We choose that which we love the most. So your next choice is going to reveal what you love the most. God's love never fails; but often we simply refuse to partake of the divine nature by calling to mind what it means to be God determined, you see. God's faith also doesn't fail. We have that faith in us because we have the Spirit of Christ in us and the Spirit of Christ is the exact representation of the nature of God. So what we see as a faith failure (meaning not empowered by), is in reality a faith failure, meaning

we chose at that moment not to live in accordance with the Spirit of Christ Who's within us. We didn't contend for it.

So next time we'll pick it up and begin to look at how to contend for the faith to come to the end of our faith which is to come into the revelations and walking in the fullness of them that Christ walked by total faith when He went to the cross. Christ's faith has no limits; because remember, He endured the agony of the cross including the forsakenness by the Father and yet never did one thing contrary to the will of the Father. Is that not the ultimate faith in God, enduring the wrath of God the Father while He was on that cross, the fullness of the wrath of God, the fullness of the cup of wrath poured out on Him? And yet never deviated one moment from being God determined, walking by faith in God while forsaken by God while receiving the fullness of wrath of His God. He always kept His faith in that God. There's no test beyond that one. That's the faith of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Christ is within you; including the faith of Christ is within you. And we'll begin to explore that concept next time when we pick it up. But in the meantime, let's begin to walk in accordance with the faith that we have while simultaneously praying increase our faith and then coming to the end of our faith which is to come in the revelation that the Spirit of Christ Himself is in you with that same faith for us to access. But we only access it when we contend for it. So thank you for listening.