

# **BUILDING FOR ETERNITY**

## **2. Faith – To Live By**



### **INTRODUCTION**

Have you noticed that the higher a building, the more time is spent laying the foundations. Huge machines are used to drive steel piles into the ground. The basic truths of the Christian faith are like that. Each truth must be firmly established in your life if it is going to stand for eternity. Do you remember the story Jesus told about the wise and foolish builders? He was showing us that it is not enough to just know about the truth, we must obey it to ensure those foundations are well laid. We have already looked at the first pillar, repentance, so let's continue with the second, which is closely linked to it.

### **FAITH**

Previously we learned that repentance was the first message Jesus preached, and faith is linked to it.

Mark 1:15 'Repent and believe the good news.'

Romans 10:9 'If you believe in your heart ... you shall be saved.'

Hebrews 6:1 'The foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God.'

The way we become a believer is by repenting of our sin and putting our faith in Jesus Christ. Once we have done this we don't need to keep doing it again and again. We are now saved! However this is the beginning of learning to live and walk by faith.

Romans 1:17 'A righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written, "The righteous will live by faith."

The reason faith is so important is that we can only please God when we have faith. We see that in Hebrews 11:6. This is why we need to understand what faith is and how faith can develop in our lives.

*(Below are some questions you could discuss in the group. If your group is too large, then divide into several groups and appoint leaders. Allow 10-15 minutes to go through the questions, then meet together again and share your answers, before completing the study or during the rest of the study.)*

- a.) What do you think faith is? How would you describe it?
- b.) What areas do you need to learn to live by faith in your life?
- c.) How can we develop faith in our lives?

### **1. What is faith?**

#### **a. Faith is believing what we cannot see**

Hebrews 11:1 'Faith is being certain of what we do not see.'

Faith is believing in spiritual things we cannot see with our natural eyes. We need faith to come to God because we cannot see him. Hebrews 11:6. Also we need faith to believe and obey the truths in God's Word. The world says, 'look after yourself and don't let anyone push you around', but Jesus says, 'Whoever lays down his life will gain it.' It requires faith to believe and follow Jesus rather than the values of the world, as we often cannot see the benefit of our actions.

#### **b. Faith is acting on what God says**

Hebrews 11:7-8, 17 What can we learn from the examples of these great men of faith?

- They all heard God speaking to them.
- They didn't know what would happen when they obeyed God.
- Despite everything, they obeyed God.

James 2:17 'faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.'

- If faith is real, then it will be seen by our actions, otherwise it is only head knowledge!

## **2. What place should faith have in our life now?**

Colossians 2:6-7 'Just as you trusted Christ to save you, so trust him now for each days problems.'

Just as we have been saved by faith, we need to continue to walk by faith each day. What are the areas where you need to trust God and live by faith more in your life? Is it for your financial needs, or your future, or trusting him instead of worrying about everything?

Jesus described faith being like a mustard seed. The mustard seed is so small and yet it grows into a great tree. This is what God wants to do in our lives. Just as the Holy Spirit planted faith in our hearts, he wants it to grow and grow inside of us. How can this faith develop? Let's answer that question now.

## **3. How can faith develop in my life?**

### **a. Feed on God's Word**

Romans 10:14-17

How do we feed on God's Word?

- Listen to the preaching of God's Word
- Read and meditate on God's Word yourself.

### **b. Speak the Word of God**

Romans 10:9 'That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.'

- Faith is linked to our confession.
- What we speak shows what we really believe! If we are always speaking negative words then we are not believing God's Word, however when we confess what he says, our faith will grow.

### **c. Act on God's Word**

In the verses we read earlier we saw the example of Abraham and Noah. Both men heard God speak and did what he asked. There are many others examples in the Bible. Can you think of some?

### **d. Ask for faith**

Ephesians 2:8-9 'For it is by grace you have been saved –and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no-one can boast.'

Faith is a gift from God, so why not ask the Holy Spirit to develop faith in your life? Remember though that you still need to feed on God's Word as this is what the Holy Spirit uses to cause it to grow!

## **Conclusion**

One of the important foundations of our Christian life is faith. We can only enter the Kingdom of Heaven when we repent and come to God in faith. God has forgiven us and made us his children, but the seed of faith within us needs to grow. When the storms come we will stand. In fact the Bible says that faith endures forever.