

Colossians 3:16

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another
in all wisdom,
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*



Faith

Faith is, without a doubt, a significant term for the Christian. Sadly, the world has defined and used it in many strange and unhelpful ways. For instance, many who are hostile to the church understand it as a kind of naïve optimism, one that disregards common sense or reason. Or, you might hear someone say to a person in a difficult situation: “You just have to have faith!” While such a sentiment surely has good intentions, it begs the question—faith in what? When we look at the Bible, however, we find not only clarity regarding the nature of faith, but we also find encouragement for our journey of faith.

When we consider faith, we have to remember that, while faith includes knowledge, it is in fact more than that. Memorably, James says, “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!” (James 1:19). Beyond mere knowledge, saving faith includes what the Heidelberg Catechism speaks of as “a hearty trust” (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 21). Faith receives and trusts in the Lord in a most personal and sincere manner, realizing that His promises apply, not simply to others, but, remarkably, also to us! Our faith looks outside of ourselves and instead to Jesus Christ and His saving merits for us. Furthermore, it looks to and receives not only the benefits of Christ’s work, *but Christ Jesus Himself*. “But to all *who did receive him*, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (Jn. 1:12). Not only that, but our faith also yields itself to every word of Scripture, believing that Genesis to Revelation contains the divinely-given, error-free, life-giving words of God. In the ups and downs of life, by faith we cling to the promises of God. And in our trials and in our joys, we also cling to the God of the promises, the same God who has declared us His children, and who has promised that, though now we walk by faith and not by sight, one Day we will see His face (Matt 5:8; Rev. 22:4).

Scripture

Genesis 15:6

And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

Habakkuk 2:4

Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Psalms 13:5-6

But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Psalms 57:1

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by.

John 7:38

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, “Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

Acts 16:30-31

Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Romans 3:23-25

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 10:9-11

[B]ecause, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

2 Corinthians 5:6-7

So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Hebrews 11:1-3

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

Song

Psalm 59:16 *But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.*

'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus By Louisa M. R. Stead (1882)

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take him at his word,
Just to rest upon his promise,
Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

Refrain: Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him!
How I've proved him o'er and o'er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
Oh, for grace to trust him more!

Oh, how sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to trust his cleansing blood,
Just in simple faith to plunge me
'Neath the healing, cleansing flood! *Refrain*

Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just from sin and self to cease,
Just from Jesus simply taking
Life and rest, and joy and peace. *Refrain*

I'm so glad I learned to trust him,
Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend;
And I know that he is with me,
Will be with me to the end. *Refrain*

Prayer

Psalm 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

A prayer from Martin Luther

I thank you, my dear God, that I have learned not to begin faith by my own efforts, nor attempt to destroy my sin with my own repentance. I might do this before other people and be acceptable to the world and its judges. But with you, O God, there is an eternal wrath which I cannot satisfy, and before it I would despair. Therefore I thank you that Another has seized and carried my sins and has made atonement for them. With joy I wish to believe this. It seems so very right and comforting to me. But I cannot believe it by myself, and I find no power in me to convince myself. I cannot comprehend it as I ought. Lord, lead me, help me. Give me the power and gift to believe. I plead, as did David: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me." I am unable to create a new and clean heart: It is your work and creation. I cannot create the sun and moon and make them rise and shine brightly in the heavens any more than I can make the heart clean and give myself a right spirit, a strong and firm frame of mind that is unbending and unwavering and that will not doubt or mistrust your Word. Help us daily to increase in faith. Though the world should topple and all conspire against us, and though the devil were to destroy every creature, grant that I may not fall. By your divine help let me remain in the Gospel. Amen.