

Do We Have Saving Faith

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn in our Bibles into the passage of Scripture which we read in the letter to the Hebrews chapter 10 and I would like to concentrate on the very last verse but we'll read from verse 36 so that's Hebrews chapter 10 verse 36 or verse 35. Therefore do not throw away your confidence which has a great reward for you need of endurance so that when you've done the will of God you may receive what is promised for yet a little while when the coming one will come and will not delay but my righteous one shall live by faith and if he shrinks back my soul is no pleasure in him but we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed but of those who have faith and preserve their souls but we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. The very existence of this of these verses in Scripture the very existence of them tells us that there is a sort of believing that does not save the soul. What is the importance of this last verse? We are not of those who shrink back and give up but we are of those who have real genuine faith who persevere thereby and thereby preserve our souls. The

Bible itself gives us witnesses of those who one would think were believers and yet weren't. You have the case of Simon the sorcerer and the great evangelistic campaign that was going on in Samaria. You say but the Bible says they believed. Yes but what exactly did they believe? What exactly did Simon the sorcerer believe? He believed what he saw with his eyes. He believed the miracles he saw being performed. He believed there was a supreme being who could give power to Philip and to Peter. He believed what he could see with his eyes but his further life demonstrated he did not truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Savior himself is perhaps the best example. Crowds and crowds, yes, thousands followed him but you remember they gradually drifted away. The more they heard of his message the more they began to leave until finally of course there was only 12 left. Wow, actually no. At the very end only 11. So whatever you do don't get discouraged by dwindling congregations.

Nobody can identify better with dwindling numbers than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And eventually he said to the 12th and will you also go away? And he said if you continue in my word then, then, then are you my disciples indeed. If you continue in my word. It does appear then that there is such a thing as a nominal faith or a nominal believing. And you might rightly ask well how can I tell if my faith is merely nominal or if my faith is real saving faith. Well verse 36 might say it all. You have need of endurance. Can you endure? Can you stick with Christ? Will you stick with him? Verse 38 which we read but my righteous one, or the just in other translations shall live by faith. Now that is not, that's a reference by the way, that's a quotation. Verse 37 and 38 is a quotation from the Old Testament. I think I've mentioned here before that the word faith is only twice in the whole of the Old Testament. The word faith. But as the very next chapter of Hebrews 11 points out, the Old Testament concept of faith pervades it. Now it's a quotation.

This is one of the verses where faith is mentioned in the Old Testament. Habakkuk chapter 2 verse 4. And it is not referring to how one becomes a Christian. Of course we become Christians by exercising faith the first time in Jesus, the first time. Of course that's how you become a Christian but this context is how do Christians live and they continue to live by faith in Jesus. Faith is not a one off act at the beginning of our Christian life.

It's a process that goes on all through our Christian lives. And if you look up the original quotation in Habakkuk 2.4 you'll see it says, the just one, the just shall live by his faith.

[6 : 50] In other words, you see the context is persecution. The context is adverse, adverse providences. The context actually in Habakkuk is unanswered prayer. You remember how Habakkuk starts?

Oh Lord, how long will I cry to you and you will go answer? That's how the book of Habakkuk starts. How long will I cry you won't answer? Do you find out what is the unanswered prayer?

Welcome to the best of company. You're in with Habakkuk. You're in with David. Oh you're right far better with Job. Adverse unanswered prayer. Isn't it wonderful how Habakkuk's end? All the think to he shall not blossom. Although everything goes wrong in life as it were. Never ever again will I distrust God. He begins his message. Don't know what God's doing. At the end he says, oh I'll never doubt God again. He's stuck with God.

Now the prime purpose as the next chapter teaches us and in fact the chapter we have teaches us, the prime purpose of faith is not merely to unite us to Christ for the first time but to help us live it out. Faith is not for dodging problems. I always thought it was. I always used to think well if I've got faith and I see a problem coming to me all I've got to do is pray and if I pray hard enough the problem will disappear. That's not what you find in Hebrews 11. The next chapter you find the faithful, the patriarchs with faith in the Old Testament, they endured problems. They endured troubles. Their faith was making them carry on through trouble, carry on trusting God through trouble, not dodging trouble. Faith for resisting temptation and not becoming immune to it. And you can have no better example than the example of Christ. Remember the temptations. There's only three temptations recorded in the Bible. Is it Matthew 4 and Luke 4? There's only or it'll look eight. Anyway, tempted. He was tempted far more than three times. A

Savior on our behalf, on your behalf if you're a Christian. He was tempted forty days and forty nights. And isn't it significant what we read? The devil left him for a season.

[10 : 19] The devil did not leave him for good. Or as it originally points in, the devil left him until another suitable occasion. The devil's a dirty, dirty fighter. And he waits until you're down. He waits until you're ill. He waits until you're hungry. And then he tempts you when you're at your lowest. And listen. After forty days of temptation, if he came back to tempt the Son of God, who do you think you are that Satan should leave you and never come back? He came back for Christ whom he had no success with. You see, it's his nature.

It's Satan's danger to tempt, harass, persecute. And he can't stop it. Even against the Son of God. So my friend, don't worry about being tempted. Learn to resist it. And the quicker you resist it, the easier. Faith is for learning that. It's for enduring problems, not dodging them. It's for resisting temptation, not becoming immune to them. It's for overcoming sin, not annihilating sin. We will never, ever be free of sin in this earth. But oh, when we awaken glory, when we awaken the other sight, free from temptation, free from all sin. We're asking, we're answering, or trying to answer the question, how can I tell if my faith is nominal or saving well in this chapter itself? Verse 23, if you hold fast your conviction, that's the advice given here. Verse 25, if you don't neglect the meeting together for worship, amark a way to, amark of those who's genuine faith. Verse 35, if you don't throw away your confidence, if you don't give it, I found it hugely encouraging.

I'm not into sport. I'm not into athletic. I'm into sport. I was into bam, and I was into football, but athletics, no. But I found it hugely encouraging, the Christian race.

The Christian race is a real race. Here's the wonderful thing. The object is not actually to be first. The object is not actually to be second or third. Do you know what the object is when the Christian race? Just finish it. Just finish it. Finish the race. Arrive at the finishing post. That's the test. That's how you can tell it's genuine. You carry on, even though you've been crippled, carry on to the finishing post. That's wonderful.

That's wonderful. Finish the Christian race. It's not a sprint. It's a marathon. They're all to finish. All to finish. Now, faith doesn't really save. It's faith in Christ that saves.

[14 : 25] You see, the Buddhist, the Buddhist has tremendous faith. Probably the average Buddhist has an old faith in the Nassan here, but it's faith in Buddha, not faith in Christ. And listen, Buddha can't save. You ask Buddha what to do to be forgiven. That's not a clue.

You ask Buddha about God, you ask him about Christ, and he doesn't know that there is such a thing. Christianity is faith in Christ who claims to have paid God for the sins of believers. Buddha can do nothing about that. He knows nothing about that. He claims if there is God's, then I can do nothing about that. Christ saves. The object of faith saves.

Faith is what links us to Christ. But here's the vitally important thing. It's faith in Christ, of faith on Christ that saves. The only two prepositions in the Bible for saving faith is in or on. Not about. I don't believe there's a person here tonight. I don't think there's a person here tonight who does not believe about Jesus. I don't know you well enough. I know there's a lot of you. Maybe, maybe for all I know, all of you believe in Jesus. I don't know. But there's a huge difference between believing about Jesus and believing in Jesus. As I'm sure I've said before, intelligent atheists, intelligent atheists believe about

Jesus, but not in him. So you say, how can I tell the difference? How do I know I believe in Christ or not just about him? Well, I think the best example we can give is Theresa May.

You all believe about her. She's a prime minister. She's supposed to be leading us into Brexit. That way, do you believe in her as she's leading us into Brexit? Isn't that different from believing about her, negotiating for us? Are you behind her? Are you with her? Do you agree with her? Say him about Christ. Do you trust him? Do you trust him? Do you really trust him? Have you got a relationship with him? Are you for him? Whatever he says. He's truth.

[17 : 29] He said, I am the truth. Do you believe it? Do you believe that? Is he your saviour? Is he our saviour? That's the question. That's the real question. It's not really the wisest of the best question to ask ourselves if we've got this problem of assurance. Am I really born again? Because it's so difficult to decipher. It's a secret mysterious work of God. The question that we've to ask ourselves if we're concerned about being born again is what do you think of Christ? What's your relationship to Jesus? That's something we can measure.

That's something perceptible, recognisable, discernible for lack of better words. Very difficult to be born again. That's a spiritual thing. And really at the end of the day only God knows. As we're perhaps reminded from time to time. The question to ask is what do you think of Christ? When he was dying upon that cross, was he taking away the sin of the world? The sin of believing? Why did he allow himself? Why did he endure that mock trial? Which was nothing but a plot. Wasn't a trial a plot? Why did he allow it?

Why did this insurgency? That man and the little cross, that's not the way normal men die when they're crucified. Truly he was the Son of God. He saw it different. He was taking away the sin of the world. Do you believe that? Is that your hope? Is that why you love him? Is that why you like him? Because he took your sins and took the punishment due to you, due to me, for our sins. Saving faith that preserves the soul is a personal knowledge of Christ. Whereby you can relate your sin-ship to him as a saviour. Isn't it amazing the thief on the cross could? Isn't that amazing? Imagine on a cross racked with pain and agony.

And there's three of you. There's three of you. And you believe the man on the next cross going through the same agony is the Son of God. That he's there for a different reason.

The penitent thief said, we do justice. We deserve what we're getting. But this man, on a middle cross, he's done nothing wrong. He's perfect. He's the Son of God. All what took place in that thief in the last hours of his life. Amazing. Can you identify with that? Can you identify that you love Christ for dying there to take away your sin? I find it amazing. People are prepared to admit that they know they're sinners. And they're prepared to admit Christ is the only saviour. But they don't seem to be able to bring the two things together. Can you do that? Can you, you know you're a sinner. You're prepared to confess that. And if we were to reason with you, you might admit or acknowledge, oh, there's Christ only saviour. But you can't bring the two together and say, I'm a sinner. Christ died for sinners. Why not me? One thing, sure, I'm a qualified sinner. A personal relationship with Jesus. Have you that? That's saving. That's saving. To have actual dealings with him. To transact business with him. Transact business with him. Confess specific sins to him. And say, oh, Lord, I really am upset about what I did this morning or last night.

[23 : 06] Please forgive it. I ought not to have done it. I've no one to blame. But forgive me. Do you know what it is to have actual dealings, business dealings with Jesus? He's the saviour.

Lord, forgive me for last night. Forgive me for this morning or whatever. Actual dealings. You see, I was trying to mention about assurance and doubting this morning. You've got questions to ask if you've got a relationship with Jesus. If you've got a concern for your soul, you've got questions to ask. I remember once I was in Auckland and someone said to me, look, it was at the time of some world international yachting expedition. And he said, I'll take you down the marina and you can see the world's greatest yachts and man, they were beautiful.

Cheapest was about quarter, at least quarter of a million, if not half a million. And it was a particular small one. But oh, it was beautiful. Beautiful. I don't know how many million it cost. It was beautiful. And you asked the question, do you like it? Oh, great.

Oh, it's lovely. Oh, like that. Now, a question, would you like to go across the Atlantic Ocean in it? You've got questions. Hey, wait a minute. How long would it take? No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. It won't hold enough food for me. What about fuel? How do you, how do you, does it hold enough fuel? If you're a sinner convicted of your sin, you're asking questions. Can Christ take me across and through the judgment seat? Will he stand up for me when my sins arise? Will Christ step forward at the greatest size and say, yes, that person committed that sin, but my blood paid for his sin? Let my people go. Yes, they're guilty, but their sins have been paid for by me. I took their guilt. I took their punishment.

I cried out, it is finished. Let my people free. Their sins have been paid for. Can you identify with that? Have you these sort of questions to ask? Transacting business with Jesus. Regenuine love for him. Faith and love are two sides of the one coin, the theologians tell us. Two sides of the one coin. So if you're not sure if you're faith in him, ask this question, do I love him? Do I love him? And if you love him, you're faith in him because you can't have one without the other. Faith, our Bible tells us only believe the Bible.

[26 : 29] And the Bible says faith which works by love. Simple trust in Christ. Dependence. Do you know how to depend? That's the thing. Do you know how to depend? I'm sorry if I've said this before, but I think only once in my life have I ever had to beg. What's begging? I used to think begging is when I was an apprentice. Begging is when you ran out of money on a Thursday I thought and say wait a minute, can you give us a fiver told to one or the other night when I get my pay and I'll pay you back. I had begged someone to give me a fiver. That's not begging. I was borrowing until Friday night and I get my pay back in.

Do you know what begging is? Begging is asking something for nothing. I can't pay you back.

Have you said that to God? Have you said that to Jesus? I can't pay you back. I have nothing.

I can do nothing. Just take me. Just take me over. That's begging. Do you know how to beg? Do you know how to beg? Jesus said, blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven and that one poor in spirit is exactly the same word that the Bible uses in the original.

For a beggar. Do you know how to beg? But it's also a commitment we make to Jesus. To save him face a commitment we make to Christ. You're going to stick with him. I said that earlier.

[28 : 55] There's a story told of Abraham Lincoln. As you know he's the one credited for the abolition of slavery in America. The story is told as far as I know it's true that he went down to the slave market one day and he saw this poor woman trying to be sold. And there was a price above her head but she couldn't be sold. Nobody would buy her as it were as a slave. So Abraham Lincoln apparently went into his wallet, went to the owner and said, How much? He said, Right. I'll pay it. And he paid for the slave. And the owner took off the change and said, There she is. She's yours. So Abraham Lincoln said to her, You're free now. You're free. And she said to him, Free. What do you mean sir? Free. I don't know what you mean. Free. Oh, she says, You're free. She says, Am I free to do what I like?

Yes, she says, You're free to do what you like, to do what you want. And then she said, Am I free to say what I like, say what I want? Yes, she said, You're free to say what you want, do what you want. And then she said, Am I free to go where I want? Yes, she said, You're free to go where you want. Well, she said, I'll go with you. You bought me. I want to stay with you. I want to stay with you. I don't want to go anywhere else but with you. That's saving faith. Do you believe that you're a sinner? Do you believe Christ is a savior? Do you believe Christ offers you salvation tonight, here and now? Do you trust

Him? Are you going to follow Him? Are you going to be with Him? Our last word is saving faith as we've been trying to point out. It begins so quickly but it is a lifestyle. It's proved by the lifestyle afterwards. Are you committed to Jesus? Are you going to go with Jesus?

Whatever He says, whatever He leads you, it's a lifestyle. But you know, it can all begin with a look. It can all begin with a glance, seeing Jesus, who He is. It can all begin with a hope, it would be wonderful to be in Him. It can all begin with a sigh, all to heaven, all to heaven. Do you want Christ? He's before us in the Gospel. Trust Him. Put everything you have behind them and stick with Him. May God, the Holy Spirit, make His word effective to everyone of us. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Our Father in heaven, please take the things of Christ and burn them into our hearts. Unite us to your Son in a living faith, for we pray only in all, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

We will conclude our service of worship by singing from Psalm 34 in the Psalm, no, no, on page 40. In the sing praise, page 40, Psalm 34, verse 5. They look to Him and shine with joy. They are not put to shame. This suffering man cried to the Lord from Him. Deliverance came. And verse 10, young lions may grow weak and faint and hunger for their food. But those who weighed the pumbler Lord will not lack any good. Psalm 34, verses 5 to 10.

[34 : 31] They look to Him and shine with joy. They are not put to shame. This suffering man cried to the Lord from Him. Deliverance came. The angel of the Lord surprised and our Lord said, all those who fit and honor Him, He sets His people free.

Come taste and see the Lord is through. It comes in this way.

Woe be the Lord, you are smooth with me. You will not be oppressed. Young lions may grow weak and faint and hunger for their food. But those who weighed the pumbler Lord will not lack any good. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore.

Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise loved ones.