

The Increase of Faith

by C.H. Spurgeon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of believing in Jesus Christ, citing the authority of God, the testimony of others, and the message of the gospel as reasons to trust in Him.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 11:28, Mark 9:24, John 6:37, John 14:1, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:17, Hebrews 11:6, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Faith", "Submission to God"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon addresses the question of how to obtain an increase of faith, emphasizing that the simplest way to believe is to act on the command to believe in Jesus Christ. He encourages believers to bring their doubts to God in prayer, listen to the testimonies of others, and recognize the authority of God's command to trust in Him. Spurgeon highlights the importance of frequently hearing the gospel and reflecting on the person and work of Jesus to strengthen faith. He concludes by urging individuals to submit to God, as pride and rebellion often hinder belief, and assures that yielding to God will lead to an easier path to faith.

Transcript

HOW CAN WE OBTAIN an increase of faith? This is a very earnest question to many. They say they want to believe, but cannot. A great deal of nonsense is talked upon this subject. Let us be strictly practical in our dealing with it. Common sense is as much needed in religion as anywhere else. "What am I to do in order to believe?" One who was asked the best way to do a certain simple act, replied that the best way to do it was to do it at once. We waste time in discussing methods when the action is simple. The shortest way to believe is to believe. If the Holy Spirit has made you candid, you will believe as soon as truth is set before you. You will believe it because it is true. The gospel command is clear; "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." It is idle to evade this by questions and quibbles. The order is plain; let it be obeyed.

But still, if you have difficulty, take it before God in prayer. Tell the great Father exactly what it is that puzzles you, and beg Him by His Holy Spirit to solve the question. If I cannot believe a statement in a book, I am glad to inquire of the author what he means by it; and if he is a true man his explanation will satisfy me; much more will the divine explanation of the hard points of Scripture satisfy the heart of the true seeker. The Lord is willing to make himself known; go to Him and see if it is not so. Repair at once to your closet, and cry, "O Holy Spirit, lead me into the truth! What I know not, teach Thou me."

Furthermore, if faith seems difficult, it is possible that God the Holy Spirit will enable you to believe if you hear very frequently and earnestly that which you are commanded to believe. We believe many things because we have heard them so often. Do you not find it so in common life, that if you hear a thing fifty times a day, at last you come to believe it? Some men have come to believe very unlikely statements by this process, and therefore I do not wonder that the good Spirit often blesses the method of often hearing the truth, and uses it to work faith concerning that which is to be believed. It is written, "Faith cometh by hearing"; therefore hear often. If I earnestly and attentively hear the gospel, one of these days I shall find myself believing that which I hear, through the blessed operation of the Spirit of God upon my mind. Only mind you hear the gospel, and do not distract your mind with either hearing or reading that which is designed to stagger you.

If that, however, should seem poor advice, I would add next, consider the testimony of others. The Samaritans believed because of what the woman told them concerning Jesus. Many of our beliefs arise out of the testimony of others. I believe that there is such a country as Japan; I never saw it, and yet I believe that there is such a place because others have been there. I believe that I shall die; I have never died, but a great many have done so whom I once knew, and therefore I have a conviction that I shall die also. The testimony of many convinces me of that fact. Listen, then, to those who tell you how they were saved, how they were pardoned, how they were changed in character. If you will look into the matter you will find that somebody just like yourself has been saved. If you have been a thief, you will find that a thief rejoiced to wash away his sin in the fountain of Christ's blood. If unhappily you have been unchaste, you will find that men and women who have fallen in that way have been cleansed and changed. If you are in despair, you have only to get among God's people, and inquire a little, and you will discover that some of the saints have been equally in despair at times and they will be pleased to tell you how the Lord delivered them. As you listen to one after another of those who have tried the word of God, and proved it, the divine Spirit will lead you to believe. Have you not heard of the African who was told by the missionary that water sometimes became so hard that a man could walk on it? He declared that he believed a great many things the missionary had told him; but he would never believe that. When he came to England it came to pass that one frosty day he saw the river frozen, but he would not venture on it. He knew that it was a deep river, and he felt certain that he would be drowned if he ventured upon it. He could not be induced to walk the frozen water till his friend and many others went upon it; then he was persuaded, and trusted himself where others had safely ventured. So, while you see others believe in the Lamb of God, and notice their joy and peace, you will yourself be gently led to believe. The experience of others is one of God's ways of helping us to faith. You have either to believe in Jesus or die; there is no hope for you but in Him.

A better plan is this--note the authority upon which you are commanded to believe, and this will greatly help you to faith. The authority is not mine, or you might well reject it. But you are commanded to believe upon the authority of God himself. He bids you believe in Jesus Christ, and you must not refuse to obey your Maker. The foreman of a certain works had often heard the gospel, but he was troubled with the fear that he might not come to Christ. His good master one day sent a card around to the works--"Come to my house immediately after work." The foreman appeared at his master's door, and the master came out, and said somewhat roughly, "What do you want, John, troubling me at this time? Work is done, what right have you here?" "Sir," said he, "I had a card from you saying that I was to come after work." "Do you mean to say that merely because you had a card from me you are to come up to my house and call me out after business hours?" "Well, Sir," replied the foreman, "I do not understand you, but it seems to me that, as you sent for me, I had a right to come." "Come in, John," said his master, "I have another message that I want to read to you," and he sat down and read these words: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy

laden, and I will give you rest." "Do you think after such a message from Christ that you can be wrong in coming to him?" The poor man saw it all at once, and believed in the Lord Jesus unto eternal life, because he perceived that he had good warrant and authority for believing. So have you, poor soul! You have good authority for coming to Christ, for the Lord himself bids you trust Him.

If that does not breed faith in you, think over what it is that you have to believe--that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered in the place and stead of sinners, and is able to save all who trust Him. Why, this is the most blessed fact that ever men were told to believe; the most suitable, the most comforting, the most divine truth that was ever set before mortal minds. I advise you to think much upon it, and search out the grace and love which it contains. Study the four Evangelists, study Paul's epistles, and then see if the message is not such a credible one that you are forced to believe it.

If that does not do, then think upon the person of Jesus Christ--think of who He is, and what He did, and where He is, and what He is. How can you doubt Him? It is cruelty to distrust the ever truthful Jesus. He has done nothing to deserve distrust; on the contrary, it should be easy to rely upon Him. Why crucify Him anew by unbelief? Is not this crowning Him with thorns again, and spitting upon Him again? What! is He not to be trusted? What worse insult did the soldiers pour upon Him than this? They made Him a martyr; but you make Him a liar--this is worse by far. Do not ask how can I believe? But answer another question--How can you disbelieve?

If none of these things avail, then there is something wrong about you altogether, and my last word is, submit yourself to God! Prejudice or pride is at the bottom of this unbelief. May the Spirit of God take away your enmity and make you yield. You are a rebel, a proud rebel, and that is why you do not believe your God. Give up your rebellion; throw down your weapons; yield at discretion, surrender to your King. I believe that never did a soul throw up its hands in self-despair, and cry, "Lord, I yield," but what faith became easy to it before long. It is because you still have a quarrel with God, and resolve to have your own will and your own way, that therefore you cannot believe. "How can ye believe," said Christ, "that have honor one of another?" Proud self creates unbelief. Submit, O man. Yield to your God, and then shall you sweetly believe in your Saviour. May the Holy Ghost now work secretly but effectually with you, and bring you at this very moment to believe in the Lord Jesus! Amen.

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