

# Faith - the Saving Kind

by Paris Reidhead

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*Paris Reidhead's sermon emphasizes the necessity of heart faith as the saving kind that transforms lives through Christ.*

**Duration:** 29:05

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 3:3, Romans 10:8-10, Ephesians 2:2-3

**Topics:** "Faith"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which took place two thousand years ago. He emphasizes the need for individuals to personally connect with Jesus and believe that he is God who came to die for them. The sermon also discusses the process of awakening, where the Spirit of God brings individuals out of spiritual darkness into the light of salvation. The speaker highlights the importance of saving faith, which allows believers to embrace Jesus and experience the forgiveness of sins and a personal relationship with God.

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## Transcript

In 1973, Marjorie and I were invited to the presidential prayer breakfast, and we went to the luncheon meeting, and seated at a table all alone was one of the overseas visitors. We made our way to that table and sat down next to this gentleman from Africa. We exchanged names and cards, Dr. Washington Okumu from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and we have been fast friends since that time.

He has been laboring in Vienna, he's been working throughout the world as an official of UNIDO, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and he is here, and we're honored and so pleased to have him as guest with us today. Dr. Okumu, we're delighted to have you with us. Thank you for coming.

Now, did you get one? Did you take two? Take three? Take four? I got 500. I want them out. I want them just left in the box.

I'm sending 200 of them up to Michigan. I'm going to be there last Sunday in March, I think, for a few days. I leave this weekend.

I'll have to be away next Sunday. I'll be with international students in Colorado Springs for the National Workers Conference, all of the staff, staff conference from all over the country, from ISI. I hope you know

ISI.

It's going to be a very big part of the life of this church and fellowship in the months and years to come, working with international students. I believe it's one of the great ministries that God makes available to us, and I've been associated one way or another with ISI since 1972 or earlier. In fact, earlier, sometime earlier, because the founder of ISI used to minister for us in New York at the Tabernacle.

And I will be with them from Saturday night through the following Saturday morning, and then going from Denver to Minneapolis to minister at Souls Harbor for their 20th anniversary celebration, or their annual anniversary celebration. And dear Dr. Gordon Peterson, the founder, has gone to be with the Lord, and they felt that I resembled him in both build and in spirit more than anyone else they knew, so they've invited me to share in this service. And I'll be there and joining you again on the 17th.

So by that time, I hope you will have distributed these, read them, and have them. It is true that we've been talking about steps, phases in the process of God bringing men out of death into life. And so far, we have seen three.

Awakening, that work of the Spirit of God, causing the one who's been blinded by the God of this world to have a bit of light pierce through that hood of darkness that covers the mind. And that is a for the first phase. Until there's awakening, there isn't anything else that can happen.

They have to be awake. Ever try to talk to someone when they were sound asleep? Well, that's the way it is when you're talking to sinners that haven't been awakened by the Spirit of God. They're sound asleep in the sleep of death.

They don't, they hear you, they're polite, but they don't comprehend. So what you need is a class of scriptures that the Spirit of God can use to affect that. You need to be sensitive to whether or not the person whom you're witnessing is awake or isn't.

That's the first phase. Pray that they'll be awake. And then being awakened by the Spirit of God, it's not enough, that's sensitivity.

Now they should understand the problem. Why do they have this feeling of fear, this sense of bondage? Well, it's because the choices they've made in the past have brought them under the control of the God of this world. They walk according to the course of this world, according to the Prince and the power of the air, the same spirit that now works in the children of disobedience as was read for us by the Johns from that very important passage of scripture.

Well, they need to understand that. They need conviction. And when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will convict.

But we're to preach the Word, and the Word includes the law of God, which is the revelation of the holiness of God, which is the mirror by which men discover the sinfulness of their own hearts. So conviction is the second phase of the divine operation. And the third phase we saw was the repentance.

Sin is revealed as a choice to please oneself, and repentance is a change from, I'm going to do what I want to do, to, Lord, what will thou have me to do? Repentance. Paul taught repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Mr. Pastor McIntyre has mentioned the fact that it could all occur in five minutes, and I totally agree.

It can all occur in less than five minutes, in a moment. But it all has to occur, whether in a split second of revelation, or whether it occurs over a prolonged period of time. And the evidence of the genuineness of its occurring is the fact, well, we'll be seeing that going on.

But the fact is, from our point of view, if someone has in an instant, in a moment, in five minutes, that revelation that they've been born of God, we rejoice. This is not a process to help you establish the time factors in your spiritual biography. You understand that? I'm not the least interested in that, purely academic.

It has no value or significance to you to know on which moment you were awakened, and what moment awakening became conviction, and when repentance. That's immaterial, irrelevant, beside the point. The only thing we're interested in is that it has happened, not when.

And we're also interested in knowing what needs to happen with the unconverted, because we need to know how to be laborers together with him. We are to be effectual and fruitful and useful to the Holy Spirit. We're to be, as it were, as the surgical nurses to the surgeon.

So we are to be in our use of the scripture with the hearts of men. Now we're talking about faith. Did you notice, when I quoted Paul, as he reported what he did at Ephesus, he said, I was with them from house to house, night and day, teaching repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Significance in the order in which he put it. Why? Well, could they not have had faith prior to repentance? Yes, yes, of course they could. No problem with that.

But what kind of faith? In my peregrinations, during these more than a few years that I've been privileged to serve the Lord, going around over the mission field in this country, I've discovered there are assorted kinds and varieties of faith. Oh, not as many as Mr. Hines have. I wouldn't say 57 varieties.

How would you, would you settle for four? I've identified four. There may be more that you could add. I'd be pleased to know if you have others that should be included.

I have found that there are many people in our churches and out who have what I call head faith. Head faith. By that I mean an intellectual assent to the truth of the scripture.

R. G. Lee, the very famous pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, was speaking to the South Carolina Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Spartanburg in the year 19 and 15. Let's see, would that be right? Yes. Spring of 15.

And he made a statement. Before that evening was over, I'd had two that had been in attendance who called me and said, he sounds like he's been with you somewhere along the line. I said, I've never met the man.

You can't blame him, me for him or him for me. We just never had anything to do with each other. Never had that privilege.

This is a statement Dr. R. G. Lee made. He said, I've been 40 years in the Southern Baptist Convention. And during that time, I have come to the conclusion that probably no more than one out of ten of the members of our churches know anything about the new birth, experientially that is.

And the preachers, oh, he said, I see you're surprised. Now, if I'm in error, and I may very well be, it's because I put it too high. They're probably far fewer than 10 percent.

You see, said he, most of them have nothing more than an intellectual assent to what is written about Christ to the plan of salvation. Now, is there anything wrong with an intellectual agreement with what is written? No, nothing at all wrong with it. Is it good? Yes, it's good.

Is it enough? Hardly. It's not bad. It's not enough.

An intellectual, well, doesn't the person who savingly believe on Christ intellectually agree that what's in the scripture is true? Yes. Well, why are they not the same? No, they're not the same. You see, one can intellectually agree that what is written in this book is true and any particular verse in it is true, but it's true in the book, not necessarily automatically true in them.

For instance, here's a single pastor, never been married, and he firmly believes in the marriage ceremony. He's convinced it works. He's satisfied it's legal.

He knows it's true, but that doesn't make him married. You can't equate his intellectual assent with the manual, with the experience of marriage. And you can't equate what the scripture says about how to be with the fact that one is born of God.

Intellectual assent to what is written. Now, the second kind of faith that I have found as I've been wandering about here and there is what I call a dead faith. I found it with my Muslim friends in Sudan years ago.

Oh, that was faith. Faith in the inspiration and the authority of the Quran. I remember when a very famous American preacher came to Sudan and the missionary said to one of the local intellectual Africans who was a Muslim, I'd like to have you talk with Dr. So-and-so and explain to him your faith.

And can I convert him? He said, well, if you're able, why sure. So they had dinner together and they got into an argument. They went into the field director's study and they could hear these voices raised and lowered, sort of, flow.

And after a while, this Muslim opened the door and came out and he said, well, Mr. Borlas, there's not a thing I can do with Dr. So-and-so. He doesn't even believe in the inspiration of the Quran. Now, this man believed in the authority of the Quran, this Muslim.

He also believed in all of the rituals, such as circumcision, such as tithing, not just 10% of income, but 2% of possessions every year, which in some cases could be substantially more than income. And he believed in fasting one month of the year from sunup to sundown, not even swallowing spittle. He believed in praying five times a day and the shortest prayer would be five to seven minutes.

Oh, he could hurry through it, but he wouldn't think of doing that and others longer. He believed also in the pilgrimage, in the Hajj, in going to Mecca. And I'd seen some people from Nigeria that had been 30 years on the pilgrimage because they'd walked across Africa, earning their way as they'd gone.

They'd gone to Mecca. They'd been there. They'd come back to the sedan and our cook, Muhammad Saeed, who was going back, there was a truck driving from Khartoum, clear across to Fort Lamy, and then to Kano in Nigeria.

And Saeed was going and he came to the door, window, knocked on the window, and he saw my wife and I, he said, well, sat to sit, and, you know, but I'm leaving, the truck is going, and goodbye, you've been my friends. And I remember saying to him, Saeed, you've been to Mecca. Yes, I've been to Mecca twice.

From here, it was easy. I've been there twice. I'm a Hajj now.

But you've been away 40 years. Yes, 40 years. Have you fasted? Oh, yes.

I fasted every Ramadan, every, every period, every Ramadan, every month of fasting. Have you prayed five times a day? You know that. Have you tithed? Yes, I give to the poor and to the mosque.

Do you have peace? Do you know that if you die, you'd go to heaven? No. Do you have God in your heart? No. What do you have? I hope that after 40 years, maybe I'll be helped when I die.

Muhammad Saeed had a dead faith, a dead faith, ritual, taboo, doctrine, everything but reality. Now, there's a third kind of faith I found, and that's devil's faith, a devil's faith. You remember what was said? It says, you believe? What do you more than the demons, the devils? They believe, and they tremble.

They tremble. Faith, indeed. What was the faith of the devils? That they were going to be judged.

Are thou come to judge us before the time? Let us alone till the time is set. You're not here to judge us before then, are you? They believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. They believed and knew that he was appointed to judge them, and that his judgment would be fierce and swift and certain and irrevocable.

They knew that, and they trembled, but they remained devils. And there are people who have heard about the glories of heaven and have emotionally responded to that, and the horrors of hell, and they've emotionally responded to that, and they would seek the first and eschew the second, but they remained as they were. I've found people that have a head faith, an intellectual ascent to what's written, and a dead faith, an appropriation of a ritual taboo practice without reality, and a devil's faith, an emotional response to the truth.

You say, well, the kind is there. In Romans, the tenth chapter and the ninth verse, we're told about that other kind. But what saith it in verse eight? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is the word of faith, which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart.

Oh, there it is. Heart, faith, all the difference in the world. Is there intellectual ascent in that? Yes.

Is there an appropriation of teaching doctrine, taboo ritual? Yes. Is there an emotional response? Yes. But what makes it the saving kind of faith? Because it's from the heart, the seat of the total personality, where the person dwells, where the person lives.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. And my son, about eight years or nine years of age, the little philosopher in our family said, but daddy, the heart is a muscle in your chest that squeezes blood through your body.

How can you believe with a muscle? And I said, that's a marvelous question. Indeed, the heart. But I was with people in the Sudan who used to say, they didn't believe that the seat of emotions was in the heart, they believed it was in the stomach.

My stomach tells me. My stomach is that different gland, different muscle, but they still were attributing it to an organ in the body as the seat of personality. What does it mean? It says the heart man believeth.

Totality of his own being. What do you mean, totality of his being? Man is a creature who thinks and feels and wills the mental capacity, the emotional capacity, and the volitional capacity. He thinks, he feels, he wills.

You can't be saved by thinking no more than you can be married by thinking. You can sit down in your chair with your feet on a hassock, close your eyes, young bachelor, and dream your way to a home. Mentally, you can see the girl, you can ask her to marry if she accepts.

Mentally, you can go together to the preacher and the preacher agrees to the service. Mentally, you can send out the invitations, the friends bring presents and their own presents as well. Mentally, you can stand there and picture yourself in front of the preacher and she says, I do and he says, I do and he says, I now pronounce you man and wife and you haven't left the easy chair.

Mentally, you've been through it all, but you're not married because you can't be married in your mind. Can't be married without one either. It's just not enough.

The mental process of marriage does not constitute marriage. Well, what about the emotional? I want to be married. That doesn't constitute marriage.

What about the will? That doesn't constitute marriage. It's only when you have the mental and the emotional and the volitional blended together that it becomes a totality experience. That's what we call believing with the heart.

When with the mind one understands, with emotions one responds, with the volition one commits. Saving faith, therefore, is not just an exercise of the intellect, of the emotions, or of the will alone, but the totality of it. When the whole person says, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, the total person.

So what does it mean to believe savingly on Christ? It means that one who has been awakened, however long it took, convicted, however long it took, repentant, however long it took, now has faith. I know not how, saying we a few moments ago, this saving faith to me he does impart. You see, one can exercise intellectual faith without the Holy Ghost.

But think for a moment, saving faith, what is it? Here's a little keyhole in the door of history, just a little keyhole. And you look through that keyhole two thousand years into the dim distant past, and you see a hill outside of a mean little oriental city, and you see two sticks raised and a man on that stick, a Jewish man who was condemned as a criminal and sentenced to death. And somehow or other, peering through that little keyhole, you have to take the arms of your heart and reach two thousand years into the past, and lay hold of that man, and believe that he is God who came to die for you, and he was raised from the dead.

Do you think that the mere intellect of any man is enough to enable him to make such an exercise? No, it doesn't make sense. I know not how, this saving faith to me, he did impart, because somehow that keyhole is no longer a keyhole, it's a door. And somehow he's not two thousand years away, he's here, dying for me in my place, in my stead, my death, satisfying the law in my behalf.

And I received him, not through the spread of two thousand years of time, but as a sinner who ought to have died, and for whom he died in my place instead. That's a miracle. We've sung it, haven't we? It took a miracle to put the stars in space.

It was a miracle that put the world in place, but when he saved my soul, cleansed and made me whole. It was a miracle of love and grace. Saving faith, it's that faith that enables us to savingly embrace the Son of God, and it results in imparted life, knowledge of sins forgiven, and the ability to call Almighty God, Abba, Father.

Four kinds of faith, the head faith, the dead faith, devil's faith, and heart faith. And it's our desire, through the ministry of Trinity Alliance Church, and through everyone who's part of it, that we should be the means by which men should, and women, and boys, and girls should come out of death into life through heart faith, saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, that we might become skilled laborers and handlers of the Word of God, to the glory of Christ and the salvation of souls.

Shall we pray, Father? Speak, we pray Thee, to our hearts today. Oh, we care not, Lord, for all the academics of time and place in our past, in our spiritual biographies. We're only concerned about reality, that I can look into the face of Almighty God and cry, Abba, Father.

I know not just about whom I believe, but I know whom I believe. And I'm persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day. And should there be, Lord, so many as one here who doesn't have that heart faith, Lord, let it be understood that it's so marvelous to find out the worst about ourselves while there's still time enough to do something about it.

The very discovery is the wooing of Thy Spirit for us to truly exercise that heart faith, for He who will can. For it's thus that Thou hast said, Whosoever will make hum, Thou wilt enable them to savingly receive Thy Son. We ask Thee, therefore, Father, to bless the Word to our hearts today.

We ask it with thanksgiving in Jesus' name. Amen.

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