

How Can a Modern Man or Woman Have Faith

by Peter Brandon

Faith is not just about believing in God intellectually, but about trusting and surrendering to Him personally.

Duration: 44:51

Scripture: John 3:14

Topics: "Personal Relationship with God", "Faith"

Description

Peter Brandon addresses the question of how modern individuals can have faith, emphasizing that faith is essential for everyday life and is not diminished by advancements in technology and science. He explains that true faith must be personal and cannot be inherited, and he illustrates this by discussing the nature of faith as a heart matter rather than mere intellectual assent. Brandon reassures listeners that God is deeply interested in each individual, having demonstrated this through the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who offers salvation to all who believe. He encourages the congregation to move beyond head knowledge to a heartfelt trust in Christ, which leads to true faith and eternal life.

Transcript

Now there are two readings tonight, one from John 3 starting from verse 14 and the other from Romans 11. John 3 reading from verse 14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Now would you please turn to Hebrews 11.

This is the great faith chapter. Hebrews 11 and we'll read from verse 1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of the things which do appear. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaker. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him.

For before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek heaven. Now God will bless to us the reading of the Bible.

During many of our cottage meetings in the heart of London we have discovered that lots of people who are unchurched have this problem. They believe in God. In fact, a recent poll showed that although only 10% of the people of Britain go to a place of worship, 75% of the nation still believes in the existence of God, and 65% believes in Jesus Christ.

So you can see Britain is still a country that believes in the object fact of God. But one person said this to me, and I believe that she was speaking on behalf of many others. How can you expect modern people who live in a modern world of technology and science to really have faith? Don't you think that science and the computer and the technical age in which we live has really eradicated faith? And the answer is no, and I'm going to give you my reason.

A child would not walk without the principle of faith. It would be impossible for parents to release their children to go to school if they did not believe that they were going to return. When children sit an examination, and this applies to students as well, if they did not have confidence they would fail.

When two young people get married, and if it's a good marriage, they must, must have confidence in each other. Without that, the marriage would not function. And even when businessmen go about to sell their wares, they must have faith in the product that they're selling.

Yes? And even in the realm of science, if an astronaut did not have faith in his capsule and rocket, that he was going to get to his destination and then return, he would never venture into the realm of the unknown. You see, faith is one of the main ingredients of living. And without faith, the French philosopher said, the world would cease to rotate on its axis.

Now you think of that paradox. But tonight, I want to share with you, not natural faith, but I want to share with you the faith of the Bible. And first of all, I want to show you from the scripture that this faith must be personal.

We cannot have faith for our children. Our children cannot have faith for their parents. We cannot pass our faith on by process.

Faith is the most individual thing under the sun. And that's why the scripture says, he that believes, or she that believes. It's a very personal matter.

Now of course, the moment I say that, we're up against a problem. Someone will say, well Mr. Brandon, do you realise there are 4,000 million people in the world? And there's only one God. How can one God be

interested in 4,000 million of us all at once? You see, quite frankly, there are many millions in Australia.

There are millions in China. And they all pray. And how can he answer all their prayers? You see, I believe in God, but I cannot believe in a God of individualism.

Now where does that argument fall down? The person who put that argument to me was saying something like this. I can be interested in a hundred people and no more. How can God be interested in 4,000 million of us all at once? Well the answer is simple.

Because he is 4,000 million times bigger than what we are. Quite frankly, there are 4,000 million stars and more multiplied in the universe. We are told that there are even 100,000 suns bigger than our sun in the Milky Way.

And that's only one galaxy of stars. And there are literally hundreds of galaxies of stars. And every star has its own orbit.

And if the Creator is not interested in the orbit of every star, there's going to be an almighty collision, but there will not, because of the Creator's ordering. Ah, but someone will say, Mr. Brandon, that a human being is small, a star is vast, is that so? Perhaps we might be little in substance, but a star doesn't think, a star doesn't create, a star doesn't make up poems, a star doesn't build. You see there's something about man that's small and there's something about man that's vast.

Now why? He has been made in the image and in the likeness of God. And there is something about man that's little, but there's something about his personality that's vast. That's why Jesus said, what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? But then comes the big question.

How do we know in a nitty gritty way or to use another expression, how do we know right down to earth that God is interested in us? Now if you can leave tonight, my dear friends, knowing that God is interested in you, you will never, never be the same again, for you can't. God, infinite God, interested in you. If that's so, it's the most wonderful thing under the sun.

Now how can we prove it? God was so concerned that we should know this fact, he became involved. Involved, yes. Came into our world with a body.

A body just like ours, only exempt from sin. And with that body he brought God and perfect man right close, so that the human race could see what God was like and what the human race was like. On one occasion Thomas said to the Lord Jesus, please show us the Father and it will satisfy us.

The Lord Jesus said to him, Thomas, everyone that has seen me has seen the Father. And when Paul was propounding the great truth of Christianity, his heart was swollen in praise and he said this, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh. Therefore if I want to know what God is fully like, I look at Jesus Christ and when I see Jesus Christ, I see the whole story of the glory of God fully revealed.

Now let's ask some questions. Was the Lord Jesus Christ in milling crowds? Was he interested in them? We find him often speaking to the thousands. Was he interested in group societies like families? We often find him in families.

Was he interested in individuals like us? Exactly. How do I know? Listen to these facts. He walked 40 miles on foot through a burning hot wilderness to speak to one woman who was a howler.

And he went there to Samaria to do that. He walked 19 miles on foot to speak to a man in Jericho who was despised by everyone, a tax gatherer. When he was doing his dying on the cross, when he was about to approach that moment where he was going to be made sin for us, he actually took the trouble to say to a malice actor who was crucified with him, today you shall be with me in paradise.

When he went back to heaven and more glory was given to him even than before he left heaven, he looked upon our little earth and he saw an African, a man from Ethiopia. And that man was seeking for God with every fibre that the Almighty gave him. He thought that he would find God in the confines of the temple.

And God took a man by the name of Philip and he put him right down in a burning desert called Gaza in order to meet that man. And when that man crossed his path in his chariot, the spirit said this, go near and join yourself to that chariot. And Philip ran.

And he pointed that man to Christ. Now what was the result? God was showing once and for all that he is interested in individuals. Now friends, this is a fact.

God would send a simple preacher like me, seven times all around the world, for one soul. One soul. And there might be someone here tonight and you may be thinking no one cares about you.

Perhaps you may be thinking on certain occasions you would even like to take your life. But God's interested in you. And he wants you tonight.

And that's why I'm here. You see, he is the seeker. And he's going to seek for everyone tonight in order that they might be found.

May someone say tonight, I'm going to search for him too. For the scripture says, they that search for me with their whole heart shall find me. Now what about the nature of faith? Now as I pointed out, 75% of the people believe in the existence of God in Britain.

Think about it. 10% only go to church. 75% would believe in the existence of God.

But how do they believe? I'm quite sure of this, if we had a cup of tea together and we were chatting over that cup of tea and I said to you, do you believe in God? Having a look now at my congregation, I believe 99% would say, yes of course I do. Then if I got a little nearer to the bone and I said, do you believe in Jesus Christ? I believe most of you would say emphatically I do. And you would be wise to say that.

Then perhaps if I made another step further and said to you, do you believe that he came into this world to be the saviour of the world and that he died upon the cross for our sins? I think many of you would say yes, I've always believed that. And that's splendid information to have. Then perhaps if I said something like this to you, do you believe that God raised him from the dead and he is alive and has power to save men and women from their sins? I believe most of you would say yes.

I don't fully understand it but I believe it. So then that makes you a believer. Now here's the shock.

No, that's just believing with the head. I once read through James and in the first second chapter I got a little afraid, in fact I got a little offended. And this is what he said.

You believe in God you do well. The devils believe and tremble. Do you know what that means? If I could see a demon standing on my right side, thank God I can't but if I could, and I said to that evil being, do you

believe in God? He would say yes.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ? He would say yes. Do you believe that he's the son of God? He would say yes. We confess it.

Do you believe that God raised him from the dead? We all believe that and tremble. You see they just believe intellectually. Now notice the difference.

In Romans 10 verse 9 Paul makes an outstanding statement and I'm going to quote it carefully because it's absolutely vital to show you the difference between an intellectual faith that comes from your head and a heart faith that comes right from within. He says this, if you shall confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead you will be saved. Now did you note believe in the heart? Now what's the difference? A young man not far from us wanted to be a paratrooper and so he joined the army and he had to go to school at Vista and he had to learn all about ornate and things like that and then after three months of serious studying he had to sit an examination and he was the best pupil.

In fact he got special marks that was quite unique but this didn't make him a paratrooper. It gave him all the information about gravity, gave him all the information of what the parachute would do but that didn't make him a paratrooper. Then with 40 others with their packs on their back they had to go into a Hastings aircraft and just outside of Vista one by one had to jump and when it was his turn to jump he couldn't.

He had the knowledge in his head, the pack on his back but to step out and trust it he couldn't. He went up three times and they failed him. On the fourth occasion when he went up foolishly he argued with the sergeant instructor and he told him in good old-fashioned army language that if he didn't jump it didn't matter what he knew he'd never be a paratrooper.

Because he was a good pupil they allowed him to go up for the last time just to win the play and this is what he recorded. I saw the green light and my name was called and I went forward. The door automatically slid back and I saw there the toy town world swinging underneath me.

I turned round and then I jumped. Nervously he said I counted 10 and I pulled the string and when I saw the red parachute opening being a Christian he said oh praise the Lord. You can imagine how glad he was and then all the knowledge that was in his head became experimental.

It worked. Why? He stepped out in complete confidence on the knowledge that his instructor had given to him. Beloved friends please let this thing end.

It's good to believe in God. It's good to believe in Christ. It's good to know that he died for your sins.

It's good to know that he was raised from the dead. Ah he's there. But he will never become real until you step out and trust him.

Wouldn't it be lovely right now instead of waiting until the service ended someone just switched off from the preacher and just where you were sitting now you trusted the Lord Jesus. When it's that heart-faith the Saviour will respond immediately. You see whenever the Lord Jesus found that heart-faith he always responded to it in scripture and that's what it means.

Without faith it's that heart-faith it's impossible to please God. Now I can imagine someone listening and saying something like this. That's all right for you being a preacher but I'm a mum with four children.

I'm a father that has to pay the mortgage. I have to face men all around me. How can I get this faith? I shall never forget speaking on the subject.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. When an old lady interrupted me and she said this. Mr. Brandon if I could get that faith I would give the world.

And then she did this. A frowning face she hit her hand with distress. She says but I can't get it.

All right for you. You were born with a religious spoon in your mouth. Well I can assure you I wasn't.

If I told you about my boyhood you may be a little surprised. But all boys all girls are born in sin. Not with halos at the back of their head.

And if you know of a man that wears a halo be sure of this he wears it on the skin. None of us can wear halos correctly. And my dear friends you see we do not get faith by scratching around inside.

May I say this to you. The more I look into my flesh life the more evil it becomes. So we'll never get faith by scratching around inside looking for it.

How will we get faith? Now here's the scripture. He that believes on the sun. You see you get faith by fixing your attention on the sun.

And the more you know about him the greater your faith will be. Let me illustrate because we must get to this point it's back. In London a lot of the old people were scared of doctors and the operating table.

And I know why my mother was always afraid of an operating table. We used to have an aunt a lovely soul called Aunt Elizabeth. And when she came to my mother she always spoke about her up.

And it was so vivid I could write a book on what she saw when the doctor was operating on her. And it caused a sense of fear in my mother. Well there were many like that.

But there was one old lady that was really ill. But she wouldn't go to the doctor. She had no faith in the medicine men.

But the pain was so great that she went to see this particular doctor. He wrote a prescription that she might see a very brilliant surgeon at heart in London. And all the time she was on the six five three trolley bus.

And we're going back a little. She was saying to her husband George. And I'm going to use the real Cockney language.

Don't forget George they never get me on the slab. The slab was the operating table. That's the Cockney expression for it.

And all the time she was going to the hospital she was really nagging her husband skinny. That's why he could never put any flesh on his bones because of his health. Eventually he got there and there were 14 seeing the surgeon.

And it was quite agonizing really for him. As every bell went she quietly said George they never get me on the slab. And he was glad when the bell went for the 14th time and she had to see the surgeon.

First of all she met him. Then he examined her. Then he sent her for x-rays.

Then there were blood tests. And then there was a cardiogram and all kinds of things like that. And she was gone for almost two hours.

And when eventually she came back to her George she was radiant. And this is what she said. Don't worry George I'm going to have the operation on Thursday and it's going to be alright.

You mustn't worry. Now what caused the transformation? She met the surgeon and the surgeon instilled faith. When you get to know Christ you'll get to know faith.

Can I tell you about him? There was only one man in history among the millions and trillions that lived upon this earth who never sinned. Only one. Think of it.

Every single man that came into this world by birth. Every single person that's gone out by death all failed. Every single one that won.

There was only one glorious man that God looked upon and he looked at him and as he looked upon him he watched him meticulously. And he actually said this. This is my beloved son in whom I find all my delight.

And that was Jesus Christ. There was only one man that ever lived who could claim to be the son of God. And note this.

Demonstrate it. And therefore when you see the marvellous miracles of Christ. When you hear the penetrating words of the Lord Jesus.

And as you watch the holy movements of Christ. If you're watching with anointing eyes you will say this is Christ the son of the living God. But there's something more.

There was only one man that had the ability to die for the sins of the world. Only one. You see a perfect man, just a perfect man could not bear the sin of the world.

He wouldn't be great enough. There was only one person that could deal with the sin of the world and that was God. And that's why Jesus Christ must first of all be a perfect man and at the same time perfect God.

All in one glorious body. And there was only one man that had the authority to deal with the sins of the world and that was Jesus Christ. And may I say this carefully.

He did it. Ladies and gentlemen. He did it.

And when he went to that cross and bore our sins at the conclusion of all his sufferings. He put his head back in the place of victory and he said with triumph it is finished. And bowed his head and died.

But there's something more. There was only one man who lived, who died. Whom God raised from the dead never to die again.

Isn't that marvelous. You see when you go through your museums you will notice the day people were born and the day that they will die and you would see a bust or a statue. But you will never see that of Christ.

Do you know why? There's a day in which he was born. There was a day in which he died. There was a day in which he was buried.

But there was a day hallelujah when God raised him from the dead. And that is why Christianity is different from all the oriental religions and I'm going to speak on that subject one night. And there is seated upon the throne of God, the son of man, the son of God in mighty power and is there with the ability to save.

But there's something more. Very shortly that same Christ who has been in heaven for nearly two thousand years is going to come again. Now you'll forgive me if I get a bit excited when I say this.

The very war that we're seeing in the gulf is an indication that Jesus Christ is going to come very shortly. And in the next few months you will see my dear friends everything ganging up against Israel. And that's a sure sign that very shortly Jesus Christ is going to break his silence and is going to come.

And when he comes to the earth he's not going to come as the despised Nazarene. He's going to come as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And all I want to say this with reverence and praise.

I do not want to say this mechanically but from my heart. Jesus Christ is the greatest man in the universe. He's altogether lovely.

And that's what the scripture says. He that believeth on the son. You see the more you know of Jesus Christ the more it will stimulate your faith.

Take for instance the faith that people have in men. You will put faith in a solicitor and a barrister and he can fail. You will put faith in a doctor and he can make a mistake.

You can actually put faith in a surgeon and he can blunder. There's only one man in the universe that's infallible. Isn't that wonderful.

And that's Jesus Christ. And therefore the scripture says this. He that believes in the son.

So you can see it's not having faith in yourself. Not having faith in your religion. All those props, their friends must be broken.

It's getting your faith exclusively in the son. Now I can almost hear someone saying and with this I'll close. But Mr Brennan, how do I know if I've got that heart faith? Is it vital to have heart faith? Yes.

Why? Because the scripture says he that believes on the son hath everlasting life and he that believes not the son shall not see life but the wrath of God abides on him. You see Jesus Christ is the only saviour. If you were drowning in some water and I threw you a life belt it's absolutely vital for you to grab it.

If you don't you will sink. And Christ is the only saviour. There's no other.

And if you don't trust him with that heart faith the scripture says we're lost. So then how can we tell if we've got this heart faith? Now I must be very careful. I realise now I'm walking on a tightrope.

I must be careful now not to stumble. But it's so easy for you to have a mechanical faith and not to have this heart faith. You can be weird in Christianity.

You can know all the answers to the theological problems but have you got real heart faith? Well you say how can we tell? Quite easily. We test everything with the cross. The cross is the centre of Christianity.

And when a person goes to the cross by faith, not in actuality, by faith, and you quietly say this Christ died for my sins, it will give you the biggest shock that you've ever had in your life. I've had it. Every Christian's had it.

A young man in the north of London was given a fast sports car before he reached the age of reasoning and really adult responsibility. He was warned over and over again that he would have a fatal accident. He was careering down one of the feed roads to the M1, a major road in Britain, and he felt a bump on his wing and he thought it was a bird.

He came home roughly about half past nine at night and was met by a policeman. And the policeman very gently said to him, is this your number? He said yes. Were you driving on this road at such a time? Yes.

Didn't you feel a bump on your car? Yes, he said. I hit a bird. He said you didn't.

You hit a three year old girl. And he was shattered. And unfortunately he went to the funeral.

And he saw 120 people around that sacred little hole absolutely smashed and broken. And when he saw that white box going down into that sacred burial place, he knew the blood of that child was on him. And his mind snapped.

And he will never drive again. With that in mind, come to Calvary. And you see hanging on that cross the most beautiful man that ever lived.

And you hear him say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And then you ask the question, Lord Jesus, why? And when the answer comes, you get a shock. For my lies? Yes. For my lust? Yes.

For my irritation? Yes. For my bad temper? Yes. For my private sins? Yes.

For my evil nature? Yes. Bearing my judgment? Yes. Oh dear.

I never knew sin was so simple. And that always brings brokenness. Dear friends, when that came to me as a revelation in a tent meeting, I was only a child.

But I was completely broken. But he doesn't leave you there. Imagine the mother and father coming to that boy afterwards, if that were possible and saying, we want you to come to dinner with us tomorrow.

And he goes. And they say, we forgive you. And would you believe it? They present him a lovely present.

You say that's impossible. Yes, but not with the Lord. When you look at Calvary and you see that crucified form, and when you see him there dying for your sins, amidst all the tears of repentance, you will say this, Lord, forgive my crudeness.

Are you loving me beyond words, and coming to me in the reality of Calvary to show that you want me? And when the answer is yes, you will say this, he loved me and gave himself for me. And when you believe, you get the biggest shock, and you turn your back upon sin, and you say dramatically, I want

nothing more to do with it. It caused the agonising death of the Lord Jesus.

And when you see that infinite love, of course you know he wants you. He died for you. The scripture says, herein is love.

Not that we love God, but that God loved us and sent his Son to be a mercy seat for our sins. And therefore I can say this to you, there's not one tinge of hypocrisy in the love of God. If I want to see utter reality, I look at the cross, and there I see God's love for every individual.

And we can all say when we believe, he loved me and gave himself for me. Now can I ask a question? Would you bear it? Have you been broken? Have you wept at Calvary? Have you been surprised by the love of God? Then my dear friends, if you have, you're a believer. But if you've missed out, it's still just in the head, not in the heart.

But then I must take my last simple step. I could almost hear someone saying tonight, but Peter, I have been broken, that's splendid. I have knelt down before the Lord many times and asked him to forgive me.

But I have nagging doubts. Oh yes, can you tell me more? I want this heart, and although I've been broken, and although I know the assurance that I've got this heart, with both our boys, these enormous lorries, Philip went to the driving lessons at school, and he got all these badges, our younger boy, but I still couldn't. And would you believe it, he used to try psychology on me.

See that badge there? It's cycling proficiency. I can't tell. I haven't got a bike, you see.

Oh, I felt dreadful. But when he was 12 and a half, he cut out all the psychological nonsense, and he came to me and said, and I just said one word, yes. And he leapt in the air, clapped his hands and said, got it, got it.

All he got was a promise, but he believed my word. Oh, it thrilled me to think my boy would believe my word just like that. Then I heard him going to his dear mother saying, got it mum, got the bike.

And then he came back a little timid and said, could it be a door and two greens? I said yes. Oh, got that too. And there he was, depending upon my promise and rejoicing in it.

Can I quote the scripture to you? He that believes on the son has everlasting life. Why not take that step aside and trust him? Do you know, I believe if I'm in the spirit, and I believe I may be, I believe there's someone here now, right? I believe there's someone here and you know that you're a sinner, like we all are. You believe that Christ died for your sins.

You've asked the Lord to forgive you. And then you've asked again. You've never taken that step of trusting him to do it, and then relying on his word.

May you do it right now. As we go into prayer, bow your head and say, Lord, I know my faith is weak, but thou art very strong. Lord Jesus, I'm going to trust you to save me and forgive me.

And I'm going to believe your word. He that believes on the son has everlasting life. The Lord help you to take the step right now at this moment.

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