

Real Faith

by Richard Owen Roberts

Richard Owen Roberts' sermon emphasizes the transformative power of real faith in Jesus Christ and the importance of living it out in community and service.

Duration: 2:07:57

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:5

Topics: "Christian Character", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of cultivating authentic faith by adding qualities such as moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and Christian love. It highlights the need for believers to diligently practice these qualities to avoid stumbling and to ensure an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Welcome to this after-lunch lecture. Let's stand up and praise the Lord with the song number 1199. I know that my Lord lives.

1199. I know that my Lord lives. 1199.

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I know that my Lord lives. 1199. I know that my Lord lives.

12. I know that my Lord lives. I know that my Lord lives.

1991 new song In song and words he was full of us, He like water that we could touch, Gave it to me, gave it to God, gave it to him, Yet there I'll be, yet there I'll be. In song and words he was full of us, He like water that we could touch, Gave it to me, gave it to God, gave it to him, Yet there I'll be, yet there I'll be. In song and words he was full of us, He like water that we could touch, Gave it to me, gave it to God, gave it to him, Yet there I'll be, yet there I'll be.

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Lord, our God in this evening fill us with joy because we can be in this place and nowhere else, Lord. We thank you for this special privilege because you granted us to be your children, Lord. We thank you that we listened to your word, Lord, and this word of yours, the right of life, has worked faith in our lives.

Blessed be your name for this thing. Lord, we thank you for calling us to service and we are here tonight to listen to your command. To be present in your house, to bring you your praises, Lord.

To listen to your word and to wish from the bottom of our hearts, Lord, to be transformed in the likeness of the Lord Jesus. Lord, please fill us with the presence of your Holy Spirit this evening. Lord, cleanse our lives of anything that could be sin, Lord, and that could prevent your work from this evening.

Lord, please dress your servants this evening with special power, Lord. May your word be fruitful in our lives. Lord, transform us more and more in the likeness of the Lord Jesus.

We wish from the bottom of our hearts this. In the name of the Lord Jesus and for his glory we ask you all these things. Amen.

Amen. Please read with me the Holy Scriptures in Psalm 24. Amen.

Amen. This is how we will be raised. We have this guarantee that we will meet him, the one who raised us, the one who saved us from death, and the one who made radical transformations in our lives and brought us out of death to life.

Glory be to his name for this. It is a joyous occasion. You know what holiday it is today, right? It is a traditional Sunday in Christianity.

We celebrate Sunday of Atonement, right? On this Sunday we remember a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ who had doubts, had disbelief, and yet there was a day in his life when he met the Lord and had a special proclamation, which the Apostle John mentions, My Lord and my God. I think it is a joyous day for us to remember that there was a point in our lives when we recognized our Lord as Lord and God in our lives. Glory be to his name.

I would like us to live with this memory we have that the Lord is not only God, in control of all things, not only such a powerful God who does all possible things, but he is also our Lord. And we have a duty to listen to him, we have a duty to serve him. And tonight this is what we want to do.

We want to do this work together with the whole Church, and at the same time individually. So if there are some of us who want to do this work individually, you are welcome to do it tonight, as you anticipated this

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Do not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath for dessert, and it is mine to avenge His Lord. I will appease His Lord.

Amen. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Dear friends, do not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath for dessert, and it is mine to avenge His Lord.

I will appease His Lord. On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap coal on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Dear friends, do not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath for dessert, and it is mine to avenge His Lord.

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I will appease His Lord. Very good. Thank you.

On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him.

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Who else? Very good. Thank you. Is there anyone else in the room? In the balcony? Next time, with the help of the Lord, we will repeat the whole chapter 12 in Roman.

Chapter 12. Next, we will listen to Sister Thea Serbu with a poem about the glory of the Lord, after which the choir will give glory to the Lord again, and then Brother Daniel will have a poem. Smiling, you told them that they were forgiven.

The dogs beat rhythmically, the melody is sinister, and the dogs are eternally entwined in the holy wood. And the beast, and the weed that you drank, will be now the curse that leads to the grave. Jesus, your body is dying on the cross like St. Thea, when it is pale, it collapses under the cold stream of water.

The woman is crying and laughing at the hollow of the cross, and the sun is setting like a cold tapestry. You left us, Jesus. Will you come closer to us? Will you cry again in your empty voice? Oh no, you are risen again, Son of God.

And on the third day, like the living sun in the morning, you showed yourself the power, the light. You rose, you broke the hell, and you set life free. And today in heaven it is sung, Christ is risen.

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And on the third day, like the living sun in the morning, Lahutza has a poem called Christ is Risen. Here are four verses from this poem. Bring the greatest stone, the tomb, to cover it.

Call the most agile soldiers and the night guards, line up. And Dimitri Enanu says so. Throw only the stained clothes, because the soul is enlightened.

Light the adorned torches, sing Christ is Risen. Apotheosis. While the old paths of light are empty, through the valleys of the fallen skies, gather all the sins of the world, great and small, known and unknown.

Yes. There is a page. I told my brother that something happened to my paper here and... It was erased.

Erased. What can I say? Let's jump on this page. Yes.

Condemn the hard infamy, without the right to appeal, with the injustice that flows like water. But wait three days, wait until the dawn of the third day comes, when, with the power of supposing all things, it will arise. You will not be able to stop it from its ascension, like a sun, nor will you hurry with your prayers.

Declare it with your hearts, and proclaim its name from the lips of your prayers. You will remember it, you will pervert its words and deeds, and you will forget its history. After it, the wonders will be revealed one by one.

It has risen, with the face of sacrificial love, under the one assaulted with unimaginable hostility, the one choked with barbarism, killed with ineffable hatred, the one caught in the clutches of the disease of death, with sin, the one in the most difficult and perverse struggle, in its ascension, denounced by the priests of false religiosity, by the pharisees of hypocrisy, as well as by the powerful of corrupt power. It will return, although the czars oppose it, all the dictators infected with madness, and the magistrates of social engineering, and the prelates with high ranks, and the proletarians. It alone will truly rule, with love and justice, in the world freed from sin, with the redeemed.

Therefore, gather the people of the earth, to praise Him, prepare the knees of all the intelligent beings, to bow, enter His gates with praise, all the hearts to adore Him, all the lips to glorify Him, raise His names, sing His praises, bring the many crowns, and together with the angels of heaven and earth, as the emperor of immortality, crown Him. Amen. I entered with the help of the Lord in a week, and we wish to celebrate it, and to finish it, just as I entered it with the Lord.

You know the regular services of the Church. I will not announce them again. I ask all those who are involved in services, in rehearsals, and so on, to be present at these rehearsals, every time, Thursday

evening for the orchestra, Friday evening for the choir of the youth.

Especially on Saturday, the children will have rehearsals, from the choir of the children, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Classes 5 to 9. Then, from 6 p.m., the choir of the scribes, from the choir of the scribes, will have rehearsals. Remember that on Saturday, from 6 p.m., you will have rehearsals. On Sunday, in the morning, we will have the regular services, from 9 p.m. For the Sunday school, for those who enrolled, in the catechism course, to go directly to room 233, and we will start the catechism course.

You can still enroll, if there is someone who wants to follow the catechism course, considering the preparation for the baptism, to testify in the baptism, the salvation that he received from the Lord Jesus, this can still be done. Then, in the evening service, next Sunday, we will have a guest, a brother, who was once a pre-Orthodox priest, now, however, he met the Lord Jesus, he repented, his name is Floria Cristian Daniel, and with the help of the Lord, he will preach the Gospel next Sunday, in the evening, who will testify the return of the Lord to the Lord. In this evening, after the end of the service, the fathers are invited to the church's dining room, to discuss, to plan, when we will organize the Father and Son, Father and Daughter table.

If we have guests among us, we are glad to meet you. If someone wants to greet us, Brother Daniel wants to make two announcements. I was talking to a brother at the beginning, and he said, how often do I pay attention to the announcements? I said, probably 80% and 20% I don't pay attention to them, or it could be the other way around.

I would like to know if young people pay attention to the announcements, children, and others, do you all pay attention to the announcements? They are important, because these announcements concern everyone in the church, children, young people, parents. Thank you for publishing this bulletin, the work of young people, Mr. Sebie Cunteze, and we always suggest to be a little more attentive. For example, Sister Irina Serban, Brother Adrian Serban, she is 16 years old, not 15.

Mr. Sebie Cunteze. This morning, I made an announcement that we will have in our family on the 28th, yesterday, in two weeks, Christ and Ruth. We are glad for them.

I said that my wish is that everyone who attends this church should participate with us in our joy. We understand that some of you are on vacation, or some other things that are objectively oppressive, but we are waiting for you all. If you are here in this church, and if you want to participate in this evening's celebration, Ruth will be at the door and she will invite you, if you haven't received her yet, for your whole family.

If you have relatives in Romania who visit you, they are also invited. If you have friends you know with whom you want to come, just tell us the number and we will welcome everyone who wants to participate in this celebration. This morning, I announced something related to the orchestra and the young people.

I said that I reduced the activities from 4 days to 2 days. Last Tuesday evening, I had rehearsals for the orchestra. Thursday evening, I had the divine service.

Friday evening, I had the young people's study and on Saturday, body rehearsal for the young people. I understood the objection of the parents that they cannot come so many times with their children. I understood.

I did everything I could to concentrate these activities and to come less often. I reduced them to 2. The following are the activities. Please pay attention.

Thursday evening, from 7 to 8, we have the divine service. After 8 o'clock, body rehearsal for the orchestra begins. At the orchestra, we allow everyone who knows how to play to sing.

That's why they learned how to sing. They didn't learn when they get to college not to come to the orchestra. This is an activity of our church that connects together the little ones and the adults.

If you are adults and you are at college, you have a duty to the little ones to feel good because they sing with you. Give them this satisfaction. Don't withdraw by dismissing the little ones.

Jesus says, whoever gives a glass of water to a little one will not lose his reward. If you know how to encourage them to sing in the orchestra, being here with them Thursday evening, you will receive a reward from the Lord. So, Thursday evening we are waiting for you everyone who knows how to play an instrument, mandolin, mandolin, guitar, to be here.

Friday evening, the activities are as follows. We put together the body rehearsal and the studio, so that everything can be, not to be divided and to object that there are too many rehearsals or activities. From 7 to 8, there is a body rehearsal.

And if you are under 30 years old and unmarried, you belong there. The body comes from 7 to 8. They will be there and they will take the presence. And then from 8 to 9 or from 8 and a quarter to 9 and a quarter, there will be the studio.

And we ask those who prepare here the things for the studio and for their worship to do it before 7. Then at 7, I want this room to be empty and all the young people to be there in the body rehearsal room. And when the body rehearsal is over, they will come here and participate at the studio. I see some of them at the body rehearsal and then they go home.

I don't know if the parents know. Check if your children were at the body rehearsal and if they stayed from the beginning to the end. Some of them stay here while the body rehearsal is there and I ask them why they stay here, in the market.

And they say that they came late. And what if they came late? They go there and the body rehearsal is there. I always find an excuse to not participate sometimes.

Check with your children. Brothers and sisters, we all say that we live in the past, in the present times, when our children are the target of the worst attacks. The Bible says so, that we are pressured.

You should know that there is a great siege against us, against our families and our children. We, as far as we are concerned, we do everything we can to assist you, to raise your children in the fear of God's wrath, to be won for His Kingdom. But we cannot do what is our duty as parents.

To send them or bring them if they don't have a driving license. That's why we are waiting for these times to get better. Thursday evening orchestra, Friday evening body rehearsal and studio.

I thank all the parents who understand this and who make an effort. One day these children will thank you. My children came to me and said, Dad, we thank you.

We thank you because you put us in a school like this one, where we grew up, we thank you for disciplining us when we were young. One of them says, I know now why you put me to apologize in front of the high school teacher even if I thought I was right. I know and I will do the same with my children.

I can tell you something. If you stand up and raise your children not as they want, but as the Bible asks one day they will return and they will thank you. Now maybe they don't like to come to young people or rehearsals.

In a few years they will thank you. Now, the announcement made with the former priest, brother Gloria Cristian Daniel is the next one, not only to know that he is coming, but to contact your friends. Do you have friends who don't know the Lord? Tell them that a priest is coming who will give a testimony here at the church and invite them to come to the house of the Lord because in this way they can be opened to come and hear a testimony in which God works and saves people.

Thank you and God bless you all. Amen. 1160.

From the dark tomb. 1160. 1160.

1160. 1160. 1160.

1160. 1160. 1160.

1160. 1160. Lui Hristos, Lui Hristos, Care din pacatea spune.

Valsarile ciripesc, Forte florile floresc, In floresc, In floresc, Pastele se bnturesc. In floresc, In floresc, Pastele se bnturesc. S cantm coatea lor, Ani Hristos a vntat.

A-nviat, A-nviat, Via ve nic ne-a dat. A-nviat, A-nviat, Via ve nic ne-a dat. Inc un anun, dac dori s v imbun t i i via a de rug ciune, am g sit ni te gnduri s pt mna trecut i le-am tradus i le-am pus aici pe o foaie de hrtie, lua i-o la ie ire i cnd v ruga i consulta i i foaia aceasta, s-ar putea s ne ajute n slujirea pe care o avem de a ne ruga unii pentru alii.

Ne bucurm c n seara aceasta avem un frate deosebit n mijlocul nostru, l-a prezentat foarte frumos fratele Florin diminea a, el va citea acum un capitol din 2 Petru capitolul 1 i apoi va proceda la vestirea cuvntului. Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, may grace and mercy be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, seeing that his divine power has granted to everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence. For by these he has granted to us his precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

For this very reason also, applying all diligence in your faith, supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, Christian love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about his calling and choosing you. For as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble. For in this way, the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

This is the word of God. Pay careful attention to it. And woe to you if you do not.

This portion focuses on the issue of faith. Now, what I'm observing in my travels about the United States is that a very large portion of those people who say they have faith have worthless faith, have wasted faith, have faith that does not save. In truth, the vast majority of people who think they have faith don't even know what faith is.

And it's no wonder the churches of America are in decline. It's no wonder we have such desperate need of revival. If we have satisfied ourselves as having a faith that is no faith at all.

In a very wonderful way, the apostle Peter helps us to discern what true faith is. What I'm going to say tonight can be divided into three very simple sections. The source of saving faith.

The appearance of saving faith. And the conduct of saving faith. Now, it is especially helpful to realize that it is none other than the apostle Peter who has written this passage under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Because Peter was one of those who had worthless faith. One of those who had a faith that was wasted. One of those who had missed the truth altogether.

When Christ spoke to Peter just before his crucifixion, and warned him that he was going to deny him, Peter assured Christ there wasn't any possibility whatsoever of his doing so. He made it clear, every one of the rest of these guys can fail you, but I'm the one you can really count on. And Christ said to him, Peter, when you are converted, strengthen the brethren.

Now I know that a lot of people don't wish to face the reality of those words. When thou art converted. They like to think that Peter was indeed a man in the grip of saving faith, but with a personal weakness.

But I want to remind you of that passage found in the Gospel of Mark at chapter 8. Some of you will remember the passage. Christ asked the question, who are people saying that I am? And a variety of answers were offered. Well, some say that you're Elijah.

Some say that you are that prophet. But Peter spoke up very boldly, and he said very accurately, thou art the Christ. Saving faith is not merely having the facts in your possession.

Peter knew perfectly well that Christ was truly the Messiah. But you may remember that when Jesus moved the subject in Mark 8 to his own suffering and death, Peter immediately stepped in and rebuked him. Now I'd like you to get a hold of this thought.

How does a person say that Christ is the Messiah, the chosen one of God, and then turn right around and tell him what he can say and what he cannot say? Isn't there something absurd about giving instructions to God? But Peter didn't hesitate to do that, and thus Christ called the larger group in closer, and he began to speak to them about what it really meant to be a disciple of his. If anybody would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. If anybody seeks to gain his life, he will lose it.

If anybody loses his life for my sake, and the Gospels the same, shall save it. Then Christ asked some penetrating questions. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? Now the simple sad truth is the reason Peter denied Christ with vehement curses was because he was afraid for his own life.

When he saw Christ arrested, he immediately realized that if he was recognized as one of Christ's close disciples, he might very well be arrested himself. And so he denied Christ with curses. Do you follow what I've said? If you seek to save your life, you will lose it.

If you lose your life for Christ's sake, and the Gospels, you will save it. We've got to face the question honestly. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Now most of us are not ambitious enough to seek to gain the whole world.

But what if one were successful? What if one actually owned more land and more building and more timber and more mines and more gold and silver than anybody else ever lived in all of history? Could a person who acquired incredibly great wealth make a bargain with God at the end and say to God, Well, I didn't act very wisely. I was indeed very foolish. But I'm ready to admit that I was foolish.

I'm ready to admit that it was wrong to focus on gaining the world and in the process losing my soul. But I'm willing to make a bargain with you, God. You give me back my soul that I have lost and I will give you everything that I have gained.

That's the question Christ is posing in Mark 8. Can a person who has made a very foolish mistake by hanging on to their life and losing their soul in the end strike a bargain with God? Well, we know perfectly well that they cannot. We know that Christ was denied by Peter with vehement curses. And we know that when Christ following his resurrection from the dead confronted Peter on the lake shore and asked him, Peter, do you love me? We know that Peter did not respond to Christ with the word that Christ used.

Christ said, Do you agape me? Peter said, I filios you. When the question was asked a second time, Peter, do you agape me? The second time, Peter answered the same as the first. I have brotherly affection.

I filios you. The third time, Christ dropped from agape love to brotherly love. And he said, Peter, is that the best you can say? You filios me.

And now, in genuine honesty, Peter says, that's the best I can say. And it's then, in the midst of his brokenness, his shame, his sorrow, it's then that the gospel takes hold of him. And soon thereafter, he is a transformed man.

This passage, verses 1 to 11, I repeat, tell us what the source of saving faith is. Show us what saving faith looks like. And then, teaches us wonderfully how those people with saving faith must conduct themselves.

Now, let me take the introduction just a bit further before we return directly to the text. Some of you are acquainted with the book of Hebrews. You may love it, even as I do.

You may remember, at least in part, the 11th chapter of the book of Hebrews. The chapter that focuses upon the subject of faith. Let me just speak briefly of that chapter and set in front of you a simple way to remember what true faith really is.

When I finish the introduction, I shall then go back to three points. The source, the appearance, and the conduct. But now, I'm setting in front of you a simple picture of what true faith is.

Take the word faith itself. In the English, it has five letters. F, A, I, T, and H. Let's assign a biblical meaning to each of those five letters.

Do you remember how Hebrews 11 starts? Now, faith provides the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. In a very wonderful way, a person who has saving faith has the facts in focus. You see, the problem with many people in the church is they don't have the facts in focus.

Let me repeat again the first verse of Hebrews 11. Now, faith gives substance to the things hoped for. It provides the evidence of things not seen.

When a person has faith, that which they hoped for, that which remains unseen takes on greater value and power than the things that they can see and taste and feel and touch. Most of us are aware that right now there are two kingdoms. The kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. The kingdom that is temporal and passing and the kingdom that is eternal and will not ever fade away. The kingdom of death.

The kingdom of life. When a person has true faith, the kingdom of God becomes more consequential to them than the kingdom of this world. Their decisions are radically affected by the kingdom of life.

They are able to resist the kingdom of darkness. They will not waste their life giving themselves over to that which is passing. They focus upon that which is eternal.

A vast percentage of those who think they have faith do not have these facts in focus. The way they live every day proves that they are much more affected by the here and the now than they are by the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Every one of us owes it to our own soul to be sure that we have the facts in focus.

That the things that we can taste and touch and smell and hear are not nearly as consequential as the things that are unseen and hoped for. F. Facts in focus. A. Active obedient.

You see in much of the church today faith is not active but passive. There are multitudes who honestly think they are Christians because they accept the fact that there is a God. They accept the fact that God has an only begotten Son.

That this only begotten Son came to earth and performed mighty miracles and taught as no man ever taught. They are sure that the Son of God was crucified, buried and that He rose again. They are absolute in their mind that Christ reigns forever and ever and ever.

Multitudes last Sunday were rejoicing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But it was for them action that affected every life. It isn't something that impacts them from moment to moment.

It's just a system of belief. It's an agreement with essential truth. Now if you happen to think that agreeing with truth is faith, let me point out to you a very plain biblical statement.

The devils believe. Now who is here? Who would like to stand with me and say now all of Satan's devils will be in heaven? No, no, no, we're not that movement. We know better than that.

We are not only told that the devil believes, we're also told that he trembles. In other words, what he believes has a greater impact upon him than some people I've met who have never trembled over God's truth. Faith is not knowledge of facts.

Faith is coming into active obedience to the Lord. And we have wonderful illustrations of this in Hebrews chapter 11. Noah was instructed by God to build an ark.

What did he do? Oh, he went off in a corner and he said that's ridiculous. That's preposterous. I'm a old man.

I don't really have anybody with me. I have nobody I can count on. How could I possibly build a boat of that size? No, the Lord said build the ark and he got busy building it.

And his neighbors came around and they said to him, Noah, don't you realize what an idiot you are? Don't you see how absurd it is to be building a boat on dry land? And so he took out his handkerchief and wiped his brow and sat down and said, oh well, it was a foolish notion. I give up. No.

No, it didn't matter that everybody he knew was taunting him, telling him how ridiculous it was, trying to make him feel absurd. No. He had faith.

God gave an order and he pressed on and he completed his task. 120 years of building without help or encouragement except that which came from God himself. Every character mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11 was told something to do and they did it.

Faith is active obedience. I faith is intimacy with God. It's not merely knowing about a God but it's being intimately related to God.

Walking with him in Hebrews 11 it makes it clear. Enoch walked with God for 300 years and God took him and he was not because God took him. Now, most of us would like an explanation of what really happened to Enoch but the Bible doesn't provide one.

Therefore, we simply don't know what really happened. A preacher one time was asked by a young girl what happened and the preacher gave an explanation certainly not Biblical but interesting. I can imagine one of these young girls over here asking, what really happened to Enoch? There he was on earth walking with God for 300 years and then suddenly he disappeared from God.

Well, the girl asked the preacher and he said, well, we don't really know but maybe God and Enoch were on a long walk and late in the day God said to Enoch, we're closer to my home than to yours. Come home with me. We don't know but what we do know is that for 300 years he had an unbroken fellowship with God.

Some of us would do well to have three days in a row when we didn't match it up. Imagine 300 years. Intimacy with God.

Every person who has true faith is brought into an intimate relationship with God. F, facts in focus. A, active obedience.

I, intimacy with God. T, tenacious valor. I'll not embarrass these young ladies.

Maybe I should ask the choir. Do you know what tenacity is? Well, don't worry. This is not an English lesson.

It's a wonderful word but what it means is to lay hold of something. So I step down here and I lay hold of this chair. I'm not going to let go of this chair.

I say, I raise this chair up. I'm taking this chair home. Now you know perfectly well I wouldn't get away with it.

Somebody would see that when I went out the door I didn't have the chair with me. But a person who has tenacity is a person who lays hold of God and will not let go. And I added the term valor, tenacious valor, because it costs something to follow Christ.

And in Hebrews 11 we have an incredible section that describes those persons who pay an awful price for their hanging on to God. And of course they had at the same time the confidence God had a better hold on them than they had on God. It describes those who lived in caves.

It describes those who were beheaded. It speaks of those who were sawn asunder. There is a price to be paid but a person of faith lays hold of God and God lays hold of them and they won't let go.

Amen. Age. Hope.

The 11th chapter of Hebrews ends in the glorious picture of those from the old covenant who we are told all gained acceptance with God through faith. But not one of them had received the promise. Oh, they received promises but not the promise.

The promise of Christ, the Messiah, the Savior, and the Lord. And every person who has faith is full of hope and expectation. It doesn't matter how dark it gets in this world.

It doesn't matter how difficult the journey that we're on. We know that we are in the grip of the victor. The one who does win.

Now, come with me to 2nd Peter chapter 1. And with those thoughts in our minds, let us lay hold of the truth that's presented here. Verse 1. I am Simon Peter, a bond servant, and apostle of Jesus Christ to those who have received a faith. I told you I was going to speak about the source of saving faith.

To those who have received a faith. Doesn't speak of those who found a faith. Doesn't speak of those who worked up a faith.

Doesn't speak of those who inherited a faith. Speaks of those who received a faith. Faith is a gift of God.

There are, in fact, two incredibly wonderful gifts that God generously gives. He gives the gift of repentance. And he gives the gift of faith.

Take a break. How was that? Sounds different, doesn't it? Better. Praise the Lord.

Thank you, sir. Now, you've had a little break, and we come back now to these two wonderful gifts that God himself generously gives. The gift of repentance and the gift of faith.

These two gifts go together. You cannot separate them. It's inconceivable that a person could walk in faith without walking in repentance.

I mean, even a child can understand this. While I'm walking in this direction, I cannot be walking in that direction. In order to go in that direction, I'm going to have to turn around.

That's what repentance is. When we turn our backs on sin and self, and we follow the Lord Jesus Christ. So when we turn from our way and go his way, then in faith, we press onward as I've described it out of Hebrews chapter 11.

So, the first point is a simple one. Doesn't need a large explanation. Saving faith is received.

It's a gift from God. And it's given to us through his word. Now some people like to think that if everybody in the world could see a miracle, everybody in the world would believe.

But there's no biblical basis for that. We have in the gospel of John multitudes of people who saw miracles and did not believe. No, we are told very plainly.

Faith comes by hearing. And hearing by the word of God. The reason some of us give the whole of our lives to preaching and preaching the word of God is because we know that God gives faith as his word is proclaimed.

The second point, the appearance of saving faith. It's a gift of God. But what does saving faith look like? Well, Peter helps us very clearly in verse 1. It's a faith of the same kind as ours.

True faith given by God, received by mere men, women and youth always looks the same. You can tell whether your faith is genuine or not by asking does your faith look like what Peter got? Does it look like what Paul got? Does it look like what Stephen got? Does it look like what Martin Luther got? Does it look like what George Whitefield had? All true faith appears just like that which saved Peter and Paul and multitudes of others. Now, not what Peter had before he was converted, but what Peter had after the resurrection, after he had come to the end of himself, after in brokenness and shame and sorrow he yielded his all to Jesus Christ.

Now, those are my first two points and you would think, well, other than the introduction, it's going to be a very short sermon. But I don't find that points have to be equal in length. So, if you made that assumption, I assure you it was erroneous.

Because the rest of the passage is helping us now with how do those who have true faith behave? How do they conduct themselves? Now, take your Bible, please, if you don't have one, shame on you and don't come next week without it. Do you mind my saying that, Pastor? No, say it again. Say it again.

Alright, I will. Don't come without your Bible. How are you going to master it if you leave it in the closet? Now, look.

Let me read this again. Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Now, for this very reason also, applying all diligence in your faith, supply. Now, let me pause. There are seven things that are to be added to faith.

Let's get this straight now. This is not the multiple choice. This is not the situation choir where you can say, well, there are seven things mentioned.

I find three of them appealing and four of them not so appealing, so I'll work on the three I like and leave the others go. No, no. These are seven things that must be added.

There's no way to exempt any of them. Every one of them is mandatory. Let me give you the seven and then show you how important it is.

Applying all diligence in your faith, supply. Number one, moral excellence. Number two, to moral excellence add knowledge.

And to your knowledge, number three, add self-control. And in your self-control, add perseverance. And in your perseverance, add godliness.

And in your godliness, add brotherly kindness. And in your brotherly kindness, add Christian love. Seven qualities, all of which must be added to saving faith.

Now, lest somebody miss the point, notice what follows. Verse eight, if these qualities are yours and are increasing, now get that. Not only must they be yours, but they must be on the increase day in, day out, year after year, decade after decade, more and more of these qualities.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful. Now let me break in and say that's the problem most professed Christians have. They're useless.

They're unfruitful. They go all the way through life and they've nothing to show. You want to live that way? You want to stand before your eternal maker and when he asks you, where is the fruit? Oh, well you have to understand, Lord, I had a very busy life.

I didn't really have any opportunity to bear fruit. If these qualities are yours and are increasing, they guarantee that you'll never be fruitless and you'll never be useless. But he who lacks these qualities, verse 9, he who lacks these qualities is, and here we do have two choices, if you lack these qualities, if these qualities are not on the increase in you, then there are two possible reasons.

One, you're blind. Or two, you're short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sin. Now let's deal with that right now.

Do you have these seven qualities? Are they on the increase in you? If not, one of two reasons must be this. Either you're blind. Now what does the Bible teach us about blind men? They don't know God.

So you can have a form of religion like Peter had before his conversion. You can be a very outspoken proponent of certain religious factors and still be blind. The person who has sight is busy adding these qualities to their life and these qualities are increasing.

So the options, you're blind. You've been deceived. You thought you knew God, but the evidence proves that you didn't.

If you're unfruitful, if you're not useful, then you're blind. Or short-sighted. And the short-sighted is explained here in verse 9. Short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sin.

If you've been purified from your former sins, there was a reason God did that. He purified you from your former sins. He forgave all your iniquity in order that you might be useful and fruitful.

If you're not useful and not fruitful, you've got to face the reality. Either you're blind, therefore lost. Or you're short-sighted.

You've backslidden. You've forgotten the real reason God gave grace to you. The real reason he gave you faith.

The real reason he intended you to walk with him. Make your choice now. If you're useless, if you're fruitless, determine which of the two reasons and hurry up and repent.

Because you were not given faith to be useless and fruitless. But now let's come back to the quality. As I said, seven in number.

Verse 5. Now for this very reason also. Applying all diligence in your faith. Supply moral excellence.

Moral excellence. Now that's not a term most people use. Sir, is that a term you regularly use? Probably not.

He's not quick to reply. I dare to say most people haven't given it any serious thought. There's another way of expressing that.

It's moral earnestness. Earnestness! So that people, when they meet you, are persuaded if ever in my life I met a genuine Christian, there he is. There is just something about the integrity of his life, the moral earnestness of his life that is persuasive that Christ truly dwells in him.

A number of years ago we heard news that one of the churches where we live in the city of Wheaton had gotten a new pastor. And I'd heard a number of good things about him and thought, well I'd like to go hear this man when I have a chance. So I spoke to my dear wife Maggie about it and she mentioned it to our daughter and the three of us went on a given Sunday to hear this preacher.

When we left our daughter and I were walking toward the car and I turned to her and I said and what did you think of that? She said, Dad, I've heard you use a term I don't know that I know what it means. I've heard you use the term moral earnestness. I don't think that man had it.

Well I almost fell over because that's exactly what I was thinking. I was saying to myself what if he'd had a little accident on the way to the service? What if he hadn't gotten to preach that sermon? Would it have mattered? Did he act as if he were burning with the message that it was so urgent that he couldn't help himself but deliver it with every ounce of energy he possessed? No, it was so casual and off the cuff sounding that you couldn't help but wonder what's he really doing here? What is his purpose? Let's ask that question of ourselves. What am I doing here? What is my purpose? Am I one of those who has added to faith moral earnestness so that I am set ablaze for God with the very truth I claim to believe? If not, what a wonderful opportunity tonight presents to repent and to get right with God.

Because if you go through life without moral earnestness, there's no way you're going to add these other qualities. You see, these qualities are arranged in a proper order. You've got to have moral earnestness

before you can have knowledge.

Now, this is not knowledge in the general sense. But knowledge in the sense of discernment. The ability to discern what really matters.

The ability to focus upon that which has eternal consequences. Going back to what I said about Hebrews 11. That knowledge that comes as a result of faith that brings facts into focus.

Have you added that kind of knowledge? Can you honestly say, my life is governed by such an understanding of eternity, of the plan and the purpose of God, of the kingdom of God, that everything outfades into inconsequential matter in comparison with my dedication to God and his kingdom? Well, when you've got moral excellence, and God has helped you to add knowledge, then we're told that the third thing that must be added is self-control. Self-control. And if you give any thought to this passage, you will quickly see why there is the order of these terms as they appear.

When you have moral earnestness, and your whole life is orientated toward fulfilling the will and purpose of God, and then you have sought and received a spirit of knowledge, of discernment, and you are focused on that which is of an eternal nature, then you have to have self-control. Otherwise, what God has taught you might be lost. You might be carried away with some ambition.

You might be carried away with some appetite. You might be turned out of the channel by some part of your disposition that is not under God's control. The absolute urgency of self-control in every aspect of our lives.

Now, I don't suppose there is anybody in the room that is a hundred percent, but the issue is not, are you a hundred percent? Are these qualities present and on the increase? That's the concern. Look at the fourth thing, that which must be added to self-control. That is perseverance.

Perseverance. I've had an awful lot of experience. If you don't mind my saying so, I'm old.

There's no denying. Older than you, sir, I'm confident. Eighty, if you will.

And I've been preaching for 67 years. Now look, I'm talking about perseverance. I've known a lot of people who seemed to be morally earnest.

Who seemed to seek knowledge and add it to their faith. Who seemed to be exercising at least a measure of self-control. But when I look around for them now, I can't find them.

I know they're not dead. But I know they didn't have perseverance. They started out right, but somehow along the way maybe they got tired.

Maybe they let something else grab their attention. In order to be useful and fruitful, you've got to persevere. The crop may not appear for several years in your life.

But for every one of us without exception, there should be greater fruitfulness and greater usefulness in our old age than when we're young. If we are persevering, we are persevering to the end. Now you can't be a typical American Christian and persevere.

Because American Christianity has to play with things. Has to toy around. It is discontent with seriousness.

But look at what is then mentioned as added to perseverance. Godliness. Godliness so that the whole of your life is touched by the power and the presence of God in your life.

People don't look at you and say, I thought he was a Christian. How could he possibly do that? No. Godliness that just flows out of your life so that everyone watching knows there is a person who has saving faith.

There is a person who is diligently adding to their saving faith. They've got perseverance. You might say about somebody, I've known that person for 51 years.

And they are more fervent now than when I first knew them. And they are truly more godly. Every time I see them, I am impressed by the increase of godliness in their life.

So when you've added those five, then you're in a position to add number six, brotherly kindness. That's the word Peter was using at the lakeside when Christ said, Peter, do you agape me? Peter's response was, I have brotherly kindness toward you. Oh, it's wonderful for me when I realize that with all the stumbling Peter did at first, he finally got it right.

And isn't it encouraging to know that someone right here tonight could have stumbled for years and then, by the grace of God, get it right. Brotherly kindness, that which we show to a wayward world. That which we share with one another in the church and to brotherly kindness genuine agape love.

Sacrificial love. Love that says the other person is more important than I am. His convenience is worth more than my convenience.

I must give myself to serving him. Well, you get the picture. The appearance of faith like that of the apostles.

The source of faith, the same source as every believer in all of history. The conduct of faith diligently adding day after day these seven qualities. And when they're all present, then increasing the level of them.

But notice now how this wonderful passage draws to a conclusion. Verse 10. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about his calling and choosing you.

For as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble. Wow. Imagine Enoch 300 years without stumbling.

Noah 120 years without stumbling. I doubt that any of us is going to live to 120. But wouldn't it be marvelous however long you live? Young people, I'm speaking to you as well as your grandparents.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if all the rest of your life you never stumbled? You always did just exactly what God wants year after year. And notice now what is added to this statement. As long as you practice these things, you'll never stumble.

But be the more diligent to make certain about his calling and choosing you. In other words, if you're not busy about these seven qualities, if they're not in your life, if you're not adding to them, then you better ask this question. Did God really call me? Or did I call myself? If you call yourself, you don't feel any obligation to do what God says.

But when you know that's God who called you, then you'll get busy obeying the Lord. But now look at the final verse. For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

May I ask you to use your memory or your imagination if necessary. I want you to think of the most godly person you ever knew in all your life. Maybe it was your grandfather or perhaps an aunt or uncle.

But think about the most godly person you've ever known. I'm thinking now about a very godly man whose life immensely impacted my own. But now, thinking about a truly godly person, imagine that suddenly across heaven there flashes the message, He's coming! He's coming! He's coming! He's coming! He's coming! And all the angels and all the saints before us are asking, Who? Who? Who? Who? And then you realize why the very person I focused upon, He's coming! God has called him home! He's on his way to glory! He's on his deathbed a few more moments and he will exit his life and be received into the glory.

Now when he gets to the gates of heaven, will he have to sneak in or will he have an abundant entrance? You say, what might an abundant entrance look like? Well, when the word goes through heaven, He's coming. And the person you've thought of is the one that is making it home. Suddenly the shout goes out, Let every angelic choir get in practice and ready! Let every orchestra in heaven, let every band make ready! Because when this person comes, he is to have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If you had a choice between sneaking in unnoticed and an abundant entrance, which would you choose? Well now, it would depend. If by an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Christ should receive incredible praise and glory, then surely every believing person will choose the abundant entrance. Now let's simply face this fact.

Is Christ selfish? Does He give just barely enough grace to save? Does He wish us all just to get there by the skin of our teeth? Or does He desire that every one of us have an abundant entrance into His eternal kingdom? Ah, clearly our Savior longs that each of us should have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And that is assured when these qualities are ours and are on the increase. What faith do I have? Is this faith useful to me? Is it useful to me or does it just lie to me that I believe that I am wrong? May God have mercy on us all and on each one of us to take this moment to seek the light of the Word of God.

Let us now rise up and bring our thanks to the Lord for the Word of the Truth that was given to us this evening and for the possibility of searching for us in the light of this Word. May we also believe in the hand of the Lord to help us live the faith as it is presented, the true living faith, the saving faith. May Brother Florin Vance lead us with a prayer after this prayer.

Lord, we thank You that this evening You exposed Your Word and searched for us. Lord, we thank You that You want to direct us on Your path and help us see ourselves as You see us. Lord, we thank You for the saving faith.

It is Your gift and Lord, we thank You from the bottom of our hearts that You were generous with us. Lord, help us to cultivate by fully listening to You all these qualities, all these virtues that are associated with authentic faith. Lord, help us to meditate on this message and to look carefully into our soul and Lord, we want to put aside anything that interferes with the development of these traits.

And Lord, help us to grow in our resemblance to You and to rejoice on the day when You will call us home as an entry from Belsug into Your Kingdom. Lord, we want to glorify Your name and to honor Your will in our lives with total subordination. Lord, help us to do this.

Lord, help us to have that authentic love for You, for people, for brothers, for Your Church. Lord, help us to be faithful and not to be lazy and ungrateful. Lord, help us to stay focused on Your Kingdom and its cause.

Lord, help us to be primordial and to consume ourselves in this life above any other concern. Lord, we thank You for this time of research. Lord, help us to value it in true repentance.

Lord, we thank You for Your servant. Lord, I ask You to strengthen him and to use him with power. Lord, let the message You transmit through him to reach the hearts where repentance and sanctification and salvation are born.

Lord, we thank You for all Your faithful servants. We want to listen to You and the new life that Christ brought us through the Resurrection. Lord, let us live it in Belsug and in the days that lie ahead.

Strengthen us, from You comes power, will and action. Lord, we reaffirm our total dependence on You. Lord, we believe in You.

Lord, we expect You to generate that power and motivation that we need. Lord, let Your Holy Spirit live and rest in our souls. In Your glory and in the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray and thank You.

Amen. And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father from Heaven and the sharing of the Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us. Amen.

Please be seated. Amen.

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