

# (Basics) 8. Faith

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the vital role of faith in receiving God's forgiveness and blessings.*

**Duration:** 13:06

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:27-29, Mark 10:52, Mark 11:22, John 3:16, Acts 3:19, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 1:3

**Topics:** "Faith And Prayer", "Salvation By Faith"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of faith in receiving God's blessings. He explains that God is not concerned with the specific words or formula we use in prayer, but rather with the sincerity and longing of our hearts. The preacher cites John 6:37, where Jesus promises to never reject those who come to Him. He also highlights the story of the blind men in Matthew 9, who received their sight because of their bold confession of faith in Jesus' ability to heal them. The key message is that when we choose to believe and have faith, we can receive the blessings and salvation that God desires to give us.

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## Transcript

The Bible says that all things are possible if you can believe. Repentance means a turning towards God. The second thing which is like a twin with repentance for receiving God's forgiveness and salvation is faith.

The Bible speaks a lot about faith. Jesus Christ, when he came to earth, encouraged people to have faith in God. In fact, that was one of his primary themes of all of his ministry.

Have faith in God. We cannot receive God's forgiveness if we don't believe. We don't have to do works in order to earn forgiveness.

Forgiveness is far too expensive for us to be able to earn it with works or money or any amount of pilgrimages or any such thing. God gives us his forgiveness freely. Why freely? Because it is so valuable, so expensive that we can never pay for it with any number of good works.

Faith is not such a complicated thing. It just means reaching out our hand and receiving what God is offering us. The Bible says in Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 8, we are saved by grace through faith.

These are two important words that we find coming in the New Testament, grace and faith. And the meaning is very simple. Grace, we can say, is God's hand reaching out to give us his help, his blessings, his forgiveness and strength for every task we can ever face in life.

That is God's grace. What is faith? Faith is our hand reaching up to take that help and those blessings from God's hand. Now if I were to give you a Bible and you have to receive it, you need to stretch out your hand and take it.

That is faith. When God in grace offers us something, I reach out my hand and take it. I told you in an earlier study that God will not force anything down our throats.

He will not force us to accept something which we don't want to receive. Because he has given us freedom of choice. He doesn't want mindless robots who just do what he's programmed them to do.

He wants us to make a choice. And when I choose to believe, I have made a choice. I say, Lord, I believe that Christ died for my sins and rose up from the dead and I receive him as my Lord.

The Bible says much about the power there is in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other name on earth through which we can get salvation, through which we can get forgiveness. And you can receive that if you just stretch out your hand.

In other words, if you say to the Lord, Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. I want to turn from my sins. I believe you died for me and I receive you right now into my life.

That's a simple prayer. It will take you less than a minute to pray. But if you pray in sincerity, you can be a child of God in a moment.

This is not a magic formula. You see, God is not looking for particular words. You see, just like a father.

When he listens to his child, he is not seeing whether the child repeats a particular formula or says things in correct language. He is not even bothered about the child's grammar. He listens to the child's words as an expression of the longings of that child's heart.

And in the same way, when you speak to God, God listens to your heart more than to your words. And Jesus has said these words in John chapter 6 and verse 37. The one who comes to me, I will never reject.

It doesn't matter who you are. Christ did not die only for Christians. He died for the sins of the whole world.

The Bible puts all human beings in one category, whatever their religion may be. We are all sinners. There is no difference between one and the other.

We are all born with the same nature. We are all born far away from God. And the Bible offers forgiveness to everyone equally, saying Christ died for all of your sins.

So faith is the means by which we stretch out our hand and take all that God has promised for us in Christ. There is a verse in Ephesians chapter 1 which says, God has blessed us, verse 3, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Now why is it that some Christians tend to grow spiritually more than others? The reason is faith.

We can say that God's blessings are like a banquet feast that's been laid out on the table. But if you go for a buffet lunch or dinner in a restaurant, the food is there, but nobody is going to put it on your plate. You have to go to the table and take whatever you like.

So if you take a little, that's your choice. Somebody else fills up his plate with everything on the table, with every dish. You could have done the same, but you didn't do it.

This is how it is with many Christians. They don't take everything that God offers them. That's why they remain poor.

Faith means to see the things that God has given us and to take them. Think of this promise which we just read in Ephesians 1, verse 3, that in Christ God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. That means every single thing that we need for our spirit, beginning with forgiveness, and forgiveness of sins, remember, is only the beginning.

All that we've been saying in our past studies is only to lay a foundation for a wonderful superstructure that we're going to build on this in the days to come. It's the foundation, the clearing of our past evil record, the removal of our guilt, the paying of our debt, the settling the old accounts, and it begins with repentance and faith. A turning to God, a setting matters right in relation to the things that we've done wrong in the past and receiving God's forgiveness freely.

Reaching out our hand saying, Lord, you have blessed me with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, I want to receive it. See, this is a principle that we find throughout scripture. We read once in the Gospels that two blind men came to Jesus, Matthew chapter 9. And as those two blind men came to him, they asked Jesus to heal their blind eyes.

They knew that Jesus had power to open their blind eyes and they came and asked him to do it. Now Jesus was willing to do it for them. They were also longing to receive it.

But Jesus still asked them one more question. He said, do you believe that I'm able to do this for you? See, this is a principle in all of God's dealings with us. That he asks us a question.

You ask him for something, you ask him for forgiveness, let's say. That's the first thing we ask for. And the Lord says, do you believe I'll forgive you? And if you say, well Lord, I'm not so sure.

Then you're not going to get it. See, like these blind men we read of in Matthew 9, verse 27 to 29. We read that they came, they asked for their eyes to be opened.

And Jesus said, do you believe that I'm able to do this for you? Now just supposing one of them had responded saying, well I'm not so sure Lord. I'm not sure whether you'll do it. Do you know what would have happened? They'd have gone away with their eyes still blind.

He would have remained unchanged. Now see the situation there. He wanted his eyes to be opened.

Jesus wanted to open his eyes. But he still didn't get it. What was missing? Faith.

That's all. So sometimes, you may come to God with a great desire for something. God may also have a great desire to give it to you.

And you'd say, well, if I have a desire and God has a desire, then I get it. No you don't. Because there's one more question you have to answer.

Do you believe God will do it for you? That's the question we read in Matthew 9, verse 28. But they did not say, we're not sure. They said, yes Lord.

That was a bold confession. Matthew 9, verse 28. Yes Lord, we believe you're able to do this.

And what did Jesus do? He touched their eyes and he said, Be it done for you according to your faith. Notice that. Not according to your desire.

Not even according to my desire. But according to your faith. You know, listen to this my friend.

If you could receive everything you desired, you would have got a lot of things by now from God. And if you could receive everything God desired, again, you would have got many many things from God by now. Why haven't you got them? God desires to give it to you.

You desire to receive it. And you still haven't got it. What's the reason? Because when God says, do you believe I'll give it to you? You say, I'm not so sure.

And then the Lord says, be it done for you, not according to your desire, not according to my desire, but according to your faith. And that's what's made the difference. You see, the rain is falling outside.

And you take a little cup outside. Another person takes a bucket. Another person takes a big drum.

Who's going to get the maximum water when they come back in to the house? The one who's got the big drum. But you can't say that God gave him more or God was partial to him. No, you went out with a little cup.

That's all you got. Another person went out with a drum. He got much more.

It's like that. Faith is like that. God's blessings are there for everyone.

He's blessed us with every single spiritual blessing in heavenly places. But you're all not going to receive the same amount. That depends on your faith.

When you say, Lord, I believe you're trustworthy. You know, faith honors God. That's why it's so important.

Faith honors God. It means, Lord, I believe what you've said is true. You believe that what God has said in his word is true.

Now, I want you to pray right now. Will you close your eyes and say these words? Will you say, Lord Jesus, I believe you died for me. Right now, you're going to forgive my sins.

And if there's any other need in your life, say that to God just now. And say, Lord, I believe you'll give me even that. I believe.

Amen.

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