

Three Important Words: Faith

by Zac Poonen

True faith is a personal relationship with God, where we have received the Holy Spirit and have a deep sense of assurance that God is our Father.

Duration: 1:00:00

Scripture: John 15:4, Romans 8:16, Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 4:13, James 2:18

Topics: "True Faith", "Christian Living"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding true faith, highlighting that faith is not merely intellectual belief but a deep confidence in God as Father, a dependent relationship upon Jesus Christ like a marriage, and the production of works reflecting Christ's character, such as forgiveness. The speaker stresses the need for a genuine transformation in one's life through faith, leading to a secure and fruitful Christian walk.

Transcript

Let's turn to Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 8. We were looking yesterday at this verse and we said there were three important words here. One is the word grace. The other is faith.

And the other is saved. And these are words that believers use very frequently. And many believers have got a wrong understanding of these three important words.

Because they've got their understanding from what they've heard preachers preach and not from the word of God. And I hope those of you who were here yesterday, you understood something of what grace means. Because the devil has prevented people from becoming rich through grace by hiding from them what it means.

So today we want to look at the faith. It's very important for us to understand this because so many people are staking their whole eternal future on this one word. They're standing on their understanding of faith.

And their whole eternal destiny is dependent on understanding this word correctly. And if it's a wrong understanding, then their whole eternal destiny is lost. It's something like taking a medicine, you don't know whether this is the medicine that will bring you life or kill you.

This is the correct medicine. If it's the wrong medicine, it will kill you. If it's the right medicine, it will heal you completely.

Don't you think you'll be very careful to read the instructions, is this the right medicine I'm taking? Many have heard the word, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. God so loved the world that whoever believes in him will not perish. So it's very important to ensure that we have the right type of faith.

So I want to show you from scripture, just like I showed you the meaning of grace yesterday, by the grace of God, I want to make it so clear that by the end of this evening, you will have no doubt in your heart. I know that the eternal destiny of many of you is for a few moments in my hands to be able to explain to you what faith means. I often think of myself as a heart surgeon when I'm preaching.

Even if a heart surgeon has had 50 years experience, when he does a heart surgery on a patient, he does it with great fear, because a life is in his hand. Preaching God's word is something like that. If I by carelessness or some other way give you a wrong impression, you can be eternally lost.

So it's an awesome responsibility that a preacher has, to preach the word of God exactly, not to add anything or subtract anything, especially when explaining the meaning of words like faith. It's so important to get the right understanding of it. So first of all, let me say that faith is not much spoken of in the Old Testament.

It's mostly spoken of in the New Testament. That doesn't mean the Old Testament people didn't have faith. Because if you read Hebrews 11, we read about all these Old Testament people who acted in faith.

Abel, first of all, Hebrews 11, 4, offered a sacrifice by faith. Enoch was taken up to heaven by faith. Like that, you read about Noah, Abraham, Moses, many others.

And many people look at these examples and say that is what faith is. But they don't read the last verse of Hebrews 11. After writing all this, it says in the last verse, But God has provided something better than all this for us.

So your example is not Abel or Enoch or Noah or Abraham. That is the main thing you read from verse 40. Your faith is not to be the faith of Abraham and Abel and Noah.

God has provided us something better, a New Testament faith, which is far better than the faith of these people. Have you understood that? Many people look at these Old Testament examples and try to follow that. Because they never read the last verse.

See, one very bad habit that Christians have is to take individual verses from here and there without reading the whole thing. Supposing you get a 12-page letter from your father. Will you suddenly read one sentence in the middle of page 6 and try to understand something from that? You will never do that with any letter.

You will say, if I want to understand what is written in the middle of page 6, I must read the whole letter, then I will understand it in its context. Otherwise, you take part of a verse and you can go wrong. For example, there is a sentence in the Bible which says, there is no God.

Do you know that? There is a word like that. But it is not the full sentence. The full sentence, Psalm 14 verse 1, the fool has said in his heart, there is no God.

See what a difference it makes when you read the full sentence. That is how so many Christians take half a verse here, one verse there and get a completely wrong understanding. The blood of Jesus cleanses us

from all sins.

That is not what the Bible says. The Bible says in 1 John 1 verse 7, if we walk in the light as God is in the light, then and then only the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sins. I will give you one more example.

I give unto them eternal life and they will never perish. No one can pluck them out of my hand. My father is greater than I and no one can pluck them out of his hand.

And some people base their security on that verse. But that is only half a sentence. Look it up and you will see the full sentence means something else.

John chapter 10, what I quoted is in verse 28 and 29. And in English it begins with the word and. That means it is connected to what is written before.

But many people don't know what is written before. To whom does God give eternal life? To whom does he say they will never perish? To whom does he say no one can pluck them out of my hand? To whom does he say no one can pluck them out of my father's hand? Do you feel it applies to you? If you fulfill the condition in verse 27, then these promises are for you. What is the condition? John 10, 27.

You hear his voice. And in the New Testament, the way Jesus speaks of it, it means obey his voice. That is the meaning of hearing.

It is not with these ears but with the inner ears. Jesus said he who has inner ears let him hear. All of us have got these ears but very few have inner ears.

Those who hear his voice inside and who follow him, to them he gives eternal life. So it is not for everybody. It is not for those who are not following him.

So don't just blindly believe what preachers tell you unless you read it yourself in the scriptures. Take this matter of faith. See what James says in chapter 2, verse 19.

You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe and shudder.

So the Holy Spirit says here through James, some things that you believe, even the devils may believe and it doesn't change the devil and it won't change you. That type of faith will not take those demons to heaven and it won't take you to heaven. What type of faith do you have? You say, I believe that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world.

Every demon in hell believes that. So you are not better than a demon if you believe that. You believe Jesus Christ is the second person of the trinity who came to earth as a man and he is the only way of salvation.

Every demon in hell believes that. It doesn't take them to heaven and it won't take you to heaven. You believe Jesus rose from the dead.

Every demon in hell knows that. It doesn't change them and it won't change you. You believe the Bible is the word of God.

It is the only book which is God's word. Good. Every demon in hell knows that.

In what way is your faith better than the faith of those demons? Can you tell me one thing you believe which the demons don't believe? You believe God is a trinity. Every demon believes that. You know the scriptures.

The demons know the scriptures better than you. If that is all that it takes to become a Christian, then every demon is a Christian. You know some churches have doctrinal statements.

I believe in one God and three persons. I believe Jesus Christ is the son of God. He died and rose again.

He is the only way of salvation. He is coming back. He will judge all people.

People will be resurrected from the dead. Every demon in hell can sign that statement. So if that is the way to become a member of church, any demon can be a member of your church.

What do you mean by faith? It is a very, very important question. Have you made sure those who are preachers here that the people in your church have real faith and not this demon type of faith? So I want to tell you three things. First of all, faith is a confidence.

It is a confidence in God as my father and Jesus Christ as my saviour. It is a confidence, a personal confidence where Jesus Christ has sent his spirit into my heart and assured me that God is now my father. No demon in hell has that.

No demon in hell can say the spirit of God has come in me and now God is my father. That confidence is the first part of faith. As soon as we receive the spirit of Christ into us, the Bible says in Romans chapter 8, immediately the spirit says, first of all let me show you verse 9. If you don't have the spirit of Christ, you don't even belong to him.

Then it is just an intellectual thing. When can I say I belong to him? Not when I have an intellectual faith, but a faith that makes the spirit of Christ come to dwell inside me. That no demon has.

And when the spirit of Christ comes inside me, he cries out from within me. He gives me a cry through my tongue. And that cry is verse 15.

Father is a formal word. Father is a personal word. Like in English we say daddy.

It is a very intimate relationship. And the spirit of God comes within us and says, father. It is not somebody teaching you, ok listen, God is your father.

It is not like that. It is like they teach parrots to speak. You tell a parrot, no say father, father, father, father.

A parrot will say father, father, father. That is not Christianity. That type of instructing a man, say it, say it, say it.

Is that how you came to salvation? This is not talking about that. It is the Holy Spirit showing you inside your heart. Till now you were an orphan.

No you are not an orphan. You have a father in heaven. You have a father who cares for you.

You don't have to wander around the world like an orphan anymore. You don't have to worry about the future. You have a father in heaven who cares for your future.

That is the first mark of faith. A confidence that comes in our heart. An assurance.

God is now my father. There is no such thing as faith in the New Testament without receiving the spirit of Christ. If you say you have faith but you have not received the spirit of Christ, that is not faith.

See what Paul says to the Galatians. He says, I want to ask you a question. Galatians.

I want to ask you only one question. He says in Galatians 3 verse 2. How did you receive the spirit? Did you receive the spirit by keeping the ten commandments and keeping all the works of the law? Or by some study? No. This inner ear you heard by faith it says here.

You heard by faith and the spirit came in. If you merely believed in the mind nothing happened. So I want you to ask yourself this question.

How do you know that God is your father? You say I read it in the Bible. Do you know that for 1400 years Christians did not have a Bible like this? Printing was discovered only around 500 years ago. Before that you could not have a Bible like this in your home.

So how did those early Christians know that God was their father? What about on the day of Pentecost? You know the first book of the New Testament was written perhaps 25 years after the day of Pentecost. For 25 years after the day of Pentecost there was no New Testament. And even those there were just few copies copied by hand.

But how did all the thousands of believers know that God was their father when there was no New Testament? There must be some other way. It was the Holy Spirit. That is what I want to ask you.

Is your knowledge of God the father based on some verse in the Bible? Or is it the Holy Spirit also that has told you that God is your father? We do not despise the word of God. But a lot of people have an intellectual knowledge of scripture where they are not really born again. It was true in my life.

I was brought up in a God fearing home. I never got out of bed a single day without kneeling down and praying the Lord's prayer first. In my entire life my father never took me to a cinema.

There was no television those days. We never sat and listened to worldly radio songs at home. We had preachers coming to our home.

I went to a good Sunday school. Every Sunday to church. Never killed anybody.

Never committed adultery or robbed a bank or any such thing. But 19 years I was not a child of God. I believed everything in the Bible.

Many times I even said Lord Jesus come into my heart. But the preacher told me to say that. But I was not a child of God.

I did not have an inner witness of the spirit saying God is your father. I do not want to bring anybody here under condemnation. I do not want to get anybody discouraged.

But I do not want anybody sitting here deceiving yourself thinking you are a child of God. The spirit of Christ will come into every heart that turns from sin and trusts in Him. He will never come into a heart that does not turn from sin.

In the New Testament repentance and faith are joined together. You cannot have faith, true faith without repentance. And that is the reason why many people do not have true faith.

They have not come turning from their sin. They have not come as sinners. I remember once in a meeting telling a Christian couple who came to the meeting.

I said the reason you are not born again is this. Because you are coming to Jesus as Christians. But you know Jesus never died for Christians.

Did you know that? Jesus did not die for Christians. Whom did He die for? He died for sinners. If you come as a Christian He will say I cannot forgive you.

If you come as a sinner He will forgive you. He will say Lord I am a sinner. I have sinned all my life.

But I want to turn from my sin. And I want you to forgive me. Because you took all my sins when you died on the cross.

And you rose from the dead. Now you want to come and live in me through your spirit. I open my heart to you.

Come and dwell in me. When the spirit of God comes in, one of the first things is I know God is my Father. I cannot give you that assurance.

Only the Holy Spirit can give you that assurance. I would say this. If you don't have that assurance, don't be satisfied till you have it.

Because in every true child of God, the spirit of God comes in and says Abba Father. And it says in Romans 8.16. The Holy Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. So I never go and tell somebody brother you are a child of God.

Did you say Lord Jesus come into my heart? Then you are a child of God. I have never said that to anybody and I will not say it to anybody. Because I cannot give that certificate.

Because I don't know whether he has really turned from his sins. I don't know whether he is saying it with his mouth or whether he is saying it from his heart. So I will not tell any of you.

That is the job of the Holy Spirit. And I don't take his job and do that myself. You have to be absolutely sure my brothers and sisters that this is a matter of life and death.

And don't rest until you are absolutely sure. Don't be satisfied because you raised your hand in a meeting or signed some decision card. There are a lot of people who raised their hand and signed decision cards who are in hell today.

Let the Holy Spirit bear witness that God is your Father. And wonderful things follow from that. If God is my Father, I am not an orphan.

He is my Father in heaven. Who knows every detail of my life? Who cares for me? And this type of faith brings a security in my life. Do you know the security a child has when he has a father and mother? Look at these poor orphans who are in orphanages and see how insecure their life is.

They don't know when some director of the orphanage will get angry and kick them out. But your children don't have that fear. Because they have confidence that you are their father and mother.

What a security there is. Your 7 year old child is not worried about where he will get his food from tomorrow. Or who is going to pay his school fees.

Or where he will get his clothes when he grows up a little more and his clothes don't fit. Do you think your child is worried about it? Why is he not worried? Because he has got a father or a mother. This is the true child of God.

He is not worried about the future. Are you worried about the future? Do you have a father? I like that story I read about the two birds. One bird asks another bird, why are these human beings always so worried and anxious about so many things? And the other bird says, maybe they don't have a heavenly father to care for them like we have.

That is why they are so worried. We birds are not so worried because our father cares for us. God is not their father.

God is not the father of any bird. He is their God. He is their creator.

And he provides for them. How much more if he is your father? This is true faith. Confidence.

My father cares for me. Every one of you can have that confidence. That is the purpose with which Jesus has come and sent the Holy Spirit.

The second meaning of faith is dependence upon the Lord. Like Jesus described in John 15, he used the picture of a tree and branches. In those days everybody saw vineyards frequently so he said I am the vine and you are the branch.

In India we could say he is like the mango tree and I am the branch. So it is a tree and a branch. That is the meaning.

Can you picture a branch in a tree? That branch has got no power or ability to do anything apart from the tree. It is totally dependent on the tree for life. It is totally dependent on the tree to produce fruit.

Even after 30 years of being a branch, if you cut it off, it is dead. 30 years of experience of bearing fruit, no use. It must still depend on the tree.

That is faith. A life long dependence upon Jesus Christ. It is a relaxed type of life.

Do you think a branch is straining and struggling and saying how can I bear some mangoes, I don't know how to do it? No, it is just relaxed. The fruit is automatically born. It doesn't make any strain or struggle or effort.

This is real faith. A dependence upon Jesus Christ. Like in the tree, there is a thing called sap, the liquid that flows into the branch.

That is what keeps the branch fresh. When you cut off the branch, the sap stops flowing. A few weeks later, you find a dry branch there.

But as long as it is in the tree, it is always fresh. That is what faith does. When we have real faith, we are dependent upon Jesus Christ.

And one result is, we are always fresh. I praise the Lord for that. I never have to be like a dry dead branch.

When I see Christians who are dry and dead, I say you don't have faith. I don't know what you believe, but it is not faith. It is a dependence upon the tree.

It is a helpless dependence upon Jesus Christ. And it is a, in a sense, an effortless life. See what Jesus says in John 15 verse 4. Abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

John 15 verse 4. Abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. It is a helpless dependence upon Christ. That is faith.

It is saying, like Jesus said in verse 5, without me you can do nothing. When I have real faith, I say Lord, without you I can do nothing. I lean upon him in helpless dependence.

And his life flows into me, like the sap. I don't have to struggle to make myself fresh. Do you see the branch struggling? It is depending.

But all the channels inside that branch are completely open for the sap to come in. If those channels are blocked, then the branch can get dry even on the tree. So you can see sometimes in a tree one branch is dry.

Then you know it is just a matter of time before it will drop off. But if all the channels inside are open, the sap flows in, it can never be dry. So many dry Christians are giving a bad name to Jesus Christ on the earth.

Their faith is in their head. It is not a heart faith. There is a big difference between head faith and heart faith.

Head faith is believing certain things. The earth is round. The earth goes around the sun.

This is all head faith. And you can believe in the Bible like that. 2 plus 2 is 4. Like that many things we can believe.

Heart faith is a dependence. We can take another example of this dependence. It is like a woman at the wedding ceremony saying to the man, yes I trust you.

And that means she is giving herself completely to him. That is faith. She is trusting him completely for the rest of her life.

And everything changes from that day. She changes her name. And let me say this to you.

In a very reverential way I want to say it. That Christian means Mrs. Jesus Christ. Did you understand that? That is the meaning of the word Christian.

When did my wife get my name? Only when she got married to me. If she just believed in me in my head, that is not going to make her my wife. It is admiring me does not make her my wife.

Your admiring Jesus Christ is no use. She had to make a decision that she is going to commit herself to me for the rest of her life. That is active faith.

And that is the type of faith that the Bible speaks about. Where I say to Jesus Christ, you are now my husband. I take your name.

I am going to call myself Christian. See, today that word has become so devalued that the real meaning is gone. Millions of people are calling themselves Mrs. Jesus Christ.

They are not married to him at all. They are liars. They are not married to Christ.

They have not given themselves to Christ. They do not have faith. What happened when my wife married me? All her life changed.

Now she had to fit in with my plans. She had to give up her plans. Isn't that what happened when you got married to somebody? Did that happen when you gave yourself to Jesus Christ? There are so many people who still got their own plans, do their own thing and say, I am married to Christ.

That is not faith. That is a head faith. And you are fooling yourself if you think you are a Christian.

Think of a marriage. Think what happens to a woman when she gets married. And all the things that change in her life when she gets married.

Was there a day in your life when everything changed like that because you gave yourself to Christ? There was a day like that in my life when I was nineteen and a half years old. It was exactly like getting married. My whole life changed.

My ambitions, my desires, my plans, everything changed because now another person had to control my life. That is faith. Dependence.

It is a confidence in God as my Father. It is a dependence upon Christ. I want to say one more thing about faith.

In James chapter 2, here is the final proof of faith. Verse 18. Someone may say, James 2.18. You may say you have faith, I have works.

Show me your faith without the works, I will show you my faith by my works. Real faith always produces the works of faith. And it says here in verse 20.

Are you willing to recognize you foolish fellow that faith without works is useless? It is not just a confidence in God as my Father. It is not just a dependence upon Christ. Like a marriage.

But just like in a marriage there are children produced. In the same way, if I am really married to Christ, then some works will come out of my life. And you know the children look like the Father.

The works of Christ will come out of my life. If you don't have such works, you have to question whether you really have faith. Was there some change in your life when you say you believed in Christ? Faith without works is like a body without any breath.

You know we can say that all the parts of our body are like all the doctrines in the Bible. There are so many doctrines in the Bible. And you can believe all those doctrines.

The Trinity, the death of Christ, His resurrection, His coming back. You can believe the doctrines about Satan and the Holy Spirit. All the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit.

They are all like all the parts of the body. Different different doctrines. Fingers, eyes, ears, legs, everything.

But all that is useless if there is no breath in the body. So what he is saying is you can have so many doctrines and your faith may not be real faith at all. So many Christians in one church feel I am superior to people in that church because I believe certain doctrines they don't believe.

Some Protestants think I am better than the Roman Catholics. Then there are some independent assemblies in Protestants who say I am better than the CSI and I am better than the Lutherans. In what way? It's only in doctrines.

What about a faith inside that produces the works of Christ? Faith without works is dead. Take a simple matter. The works of Christ are many but I will just mention one of them.

One of the greatest works that Jesus has done is forgiving people. When he was on earth he forgave many many people their sins. One of the last things he did when he was hanging on the cross was forgiving the people who crucified him.

That greatest crime that anybody committed to kill the son of God, there is no greater sin that was committed on the earth. Jesus forgave them. Have you forgiven everybody who harmed you? That is one of the children that are born through this marriage.

If you are really married to Jesus Christ, this child will definitely be born in your life. The child of forgiving other people. And if you have not forgiven other people, do you know that the Bible says your heavenly father will not forgive you? One mark of true faith is that you have the works of Christ.

Here is one of those works. Forgiving others who have done some terrible sin against you. I am sure all of you who are sitting here, some people have done some harm to you.

Anyone who is more than 5 years old has had somebody do some harm. And you may think that is a very big harm somebody did to you. Is it greater than crucifying the son of God? Has anybody done a greater crime than that against you? If you are really married to Christ, you will get his spirit.

Say, Father forgive him. He has done a lot of evil to me. But he does not realize what a terrible sin it is to hurt a child of God.

Forgive him because he does not know what he is doing. The same prayer that Jesus prayed on the cross is the prayer that comes out of the mouth of a person who has got real faith. Without such works, your faith is dead.

So I hope you have understood today something of the meaning of true faith. And it is so easy. All you have to do is turn from your sin and say, Lord I do not want to sin again.

I want today to be married to you Jesus Christ my Lord. And I want you to come and live by your spirit in me. And fill me with your spirit.

And Lord I cannot produce this child but you can produce it in me. Why don't you ask God to produce in you by his mighty power this child called forgiving others? One last verse. Philippians 4.13. This is the confession of a person who has got true faith.

It is a wonderful confession. Philippians 4.13. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Without him I can do nothing.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Don't ever say again, Oh I cannot obey that command of God. That is the language of unbelief.

Everything that God has commanded. Love your enemies. Speak the truth always.

Lord I can do it. Not in my strength. A woman cannot produce a child on her own.

But with her husband she can have a child. I am saying I cannot do any of these things. But when Christ is my husband he can produce in me all the things he has commanded.

I have many children. Children which are obedient to God's commandments. What a wonderful life.

I have tasted a little bit of it. It is like heaven beginning on this earth itself. That can be your experience.

Let's pray. Let's bow our heads in prayer. I want to invite you to be married to Jesus Christ today.

He is waiting. Just say yes Lord. I don't understand everything.

But I dedicate my whole life to you. Say it now to Jesus. Say Lord I will never turn back.

You are my Lord. I give everything in my life to you. I pray Father that you will give an assurance to everyone who has prayed like that.

Lord I have accepted that. In Jesus name. Amen.

In Jesus name. Amen. For more information visit www.osho.com

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ZVQoXCwUKgU.mp4>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/three-important-words-faith/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net