FULLY PERSUADED

Faith That Acts on the Word



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Introduction

Beloved, faith gives expression to the Word you have received. You have believed in the Lord Jesus, and His life is in you. Your walk of faith begins from that relationship. The Father has spoken, and His Word supplies the ground on which you believe, speak and act.

To be fully persuaded is to be settled in your confidence concerning what God has said. Romans 4 locates Abraham's persuasion in the ability of the One who promised. The promise was definite, and his faith had a definite object. That is where we must begin our study: with the Word of God and the God whose Word it is.

Faith is the response of the human spirit to that Word. It acts upon what God has said. Agreement that remains detached from our speech and conduct does not give the Word its intended expression. The Scriptures direct us to believe with the heart, receive in prayer, speak in agreement with the truth and do what faith requires.

These six chapters examine that progression through the actual passages. We will consider the hearing of the Gospel, Abraham's persuasion, the Lord's instruction concerning prayer, the speech of faith, the relation of faith to works and the command to stand fast. Read the principal passages alongside each chapter. Let their meaning establish both your confidence and your response.

You are not studying faith to remain an observer. Receive the instruction of the Word and give it expression in your life.

CHAPTER ONE

Faith Comes by Hearing

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Romans 10:17 (KJV)

Read Romans 10:8–17

The faith with which we respond to God has its foundation in His Word. Romans 10 does not begin with a person trying to create sufficient confidence within himself. Paul brings the message near: the word of faith which he preaches is in the mouth and in the heart. He then speaks of believing that God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead and confessing Him as Lord.

This is the Gospel being received. The heart believes, the mouth confesses, and the person calls upon the Lord. Faith is answering something God has made known. Before asking how strongly you feel about a matter, establish what the Word has actually said. The certainty of the message gives confidence its proper foundation.

Hear the message God has given

Paul follows the movement backwards through a series of questions. How will people call upon One in whom they have not believed? How will they believe without hearing? How will they hear without a preacher, and how will the preacher go without

being sent? The provision of the message and its proclamation matter. Faith has something definite to receive.

Verse 17 gathers that reasoning into the statement that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. We should therefore give attention to the content being heard. A moving voice can hold an audience, and repeated words can become familiar, but Paul is concerned with the message of Christ. The Gospel announces what God has done through His Son.

The Greek noun akoe appears in this argument with a useful connection. In verse 16 the KJV renders a form of it as report, within Paul's quotation from Isaiah. In verse 17 it is rendered hearing. The message heard and the response of hearing belong together. Faith is not produced by sound considered apart from the truth it communicates.

Paul's quotation also reminds us that hearing calls for a response. Not everyone had obeyed the Gospel. Its proclamation was real, yet some had not believed the report. We must therefore receive the Word rather than merely acknowledge that it has been spoken in our presence. Attention should lead into believing and action.

Give the Word its place

If you have received Christ, you are already a believer. Do not describe yourself as a person to whom faith is entirely foreign. You believed the Gospel and received the life of God. Continue giving attention to the Word through which that life has been made known to you. The faith you have received is to find expression in your daily walk.

Read a passage for understanding. Notice what is promised, what is commanded and how the surrounding sentences direct its meaning. When a familiar phrase is unclear, examine it rather than filling the gap with an assumption. Faith acts on God's

Word, so clarity about that Word is practical help for the action that follows.

You can hear instruction concerning forgiveness and then forgive. You can hear the Lord's direction concerning prayer and receive as He instructs. You can learn what is yours in Christ and bring your confession into agreement with it. In each case the Word is supplying the truth to which faith responds.

This is why meditation matters. Return to what you have read, consider its meaning and let it direct your thinking. Speak it with understanding. Give thanks for what the Father has accomplished in Christ. Then carry the instruction into the conversation, responsibility or decision before you.

The believer's life is nourished by the truth of the Gospel. Keep that truth before you. Confidence becomes definite as you recognise what God has said, and faith gives it expression as you act upon His Word. Hearing is therefore the beginning of a response, not the end of your responsibility.