

Ephesians Series

Lesson #061

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Dean Bible Ministries

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EPHESIANS

THE WEALTH, WALK
& WARFARE
OF THE BELIEVER

**What is Saving Faith?
Ephesians 2:8**

Eph. 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

Eph. 2:9, “not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

Eph. 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,”

1. Being “saved” = regeneration (being born again) = “made alive together”

This salvation is “through faith” which means faith must precede salvation.

Eph. 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that ‘*by grace through faith salvation*’ is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

Eph. 2:9, “not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

διὰ πίστεως

dia pistis

**through faith, belief,
trust**

The Volition Valve

Faith pipe must
first be opened



The
spiritually
dead sinner
separated
from the life
of God, the
water of life.



**The Volition
Valve**

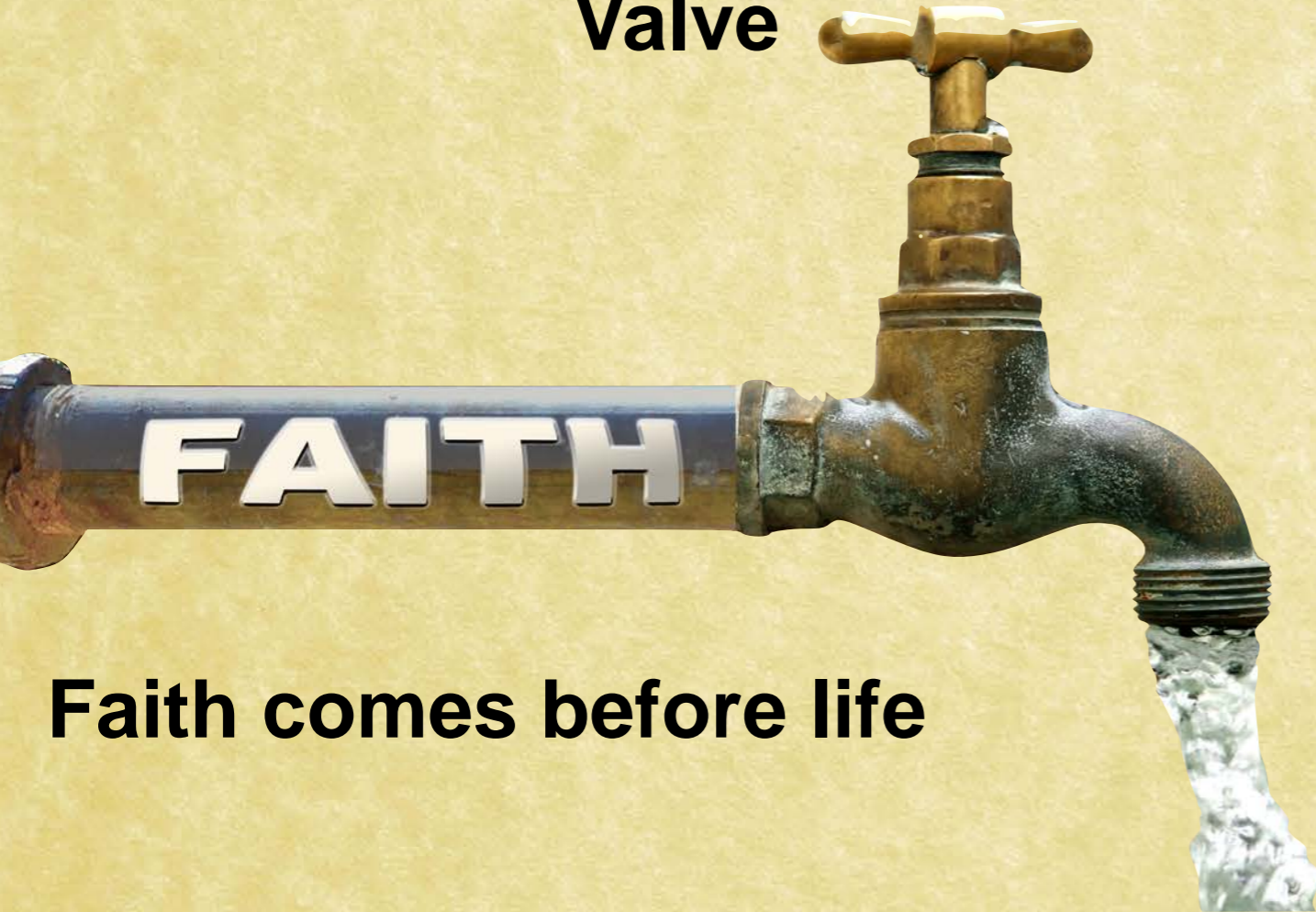
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**The Volition
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Faith comes before life



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What the Bible Teaches About *Saving Faith*



Basic Definition:

Faith has two primary meanings:

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Faith has two primary meanings:

A. Faith is understanding something and then accepting it to be true.

This is the act of believing, or the noun describing the act of believing.

“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” verb

“saved through faith” noun

1. Basic Definition:

Faith has two primary meanings:

A. Faith is understanding something and then accepting it to be true.

B. Faith describes the content of a person's belief system, *what* they believe.

Christian faith

Buddhist faith

Presbyterian faith

Roman Catholic faith

Gal. 1:23, “But they were hearing only, ‘He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy.’ ”

Eph. 4:5, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism;”

**2. Faith is fundamental to all knowledge.
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2. Faith is fundamental to all knowledge. Without faith there is no knowledge.

Human viewpoint: faith is non-rational, or goes beyond reason or empiricism and is thus non-verifiable.

Divine viewpoint: faith is rational. We believe with the intellect things we understand with the mind. Faith is either in the human ability to reason, interpret the sense data, or in the intuitive insights of their own mind, or in some external authority (i.e., the Bible).

The Basis of Knowledge

| | SYSTEM | STARTING POINT | METHOD |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|---|---|
| Autonomous Systems of Perception | RATIONALISM | Innate ideas; <u>Faith</u> in human ability | Independent use of logic & reason |
| | EMPIRICISM | Sense perceptions; External experience; Scientific method; <u>Faith</u> in human ability | Independent use of logic & reason |
| | MYSTICISM | Inner, private experience; Intuition; <u>Faith</u> in human ability | Independent, Nonlogical, Nonrational, Nonverifiable |
| Divine Viewpoint | REVELATION | <u>Faith</u> in the objective revelation of God | Dependent use of logic and reason |

“Unfortunately, at least in the present writer’s opinion, many Christians, motivated by an irrational pragmatism or by an even more extremely irrational mysticism, consider belief to be an emotion or feeling.”

~Gordon Clark, *Faith and Saving Faith*, 5.

3. Perception by faith is always non-meritorious.

It is not faith that has value, but the object of faith: *what* one believes.

A demon believes God is one, but monotheism doesn't save.

A person can believe Jesus Christ died for their sins and that by believing they will be saved, and they are.

4. Faith means to trust, rely on, have confidence in, believe, accept something to be true.

In order to operate, faith relies first on understanding, the comprehension of the mentality of the soul, then volition, to accept what is understood as true.

Gal. 2:16, “nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.”

The Object of Faith at salvation is the Person and work of Jesus Christ: “on the name”—a Jewish idiom for someone’s character, who they are.

5. Faith does not mean to commit to, to invite, to feel, but to trust that something is true.

With regard to the Gospel we believe that the statements in the Bible about salvation are true for us personally.

6. Biblical faith is a *response* to what is taught in the Bible, Rom. 10:17

Rom. 10:17, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Luke 23:40, “But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?’ ”

Luke 23:41, “ ‘And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.’ ”

Luke 23:42, “Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ ”

**Luke 23:43, “And Jesus said to him,
‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be
with Me in Paradise.’ ”**

7. To believe something, or anything, is true you must first understand it.

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**πίστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ
σωθήσῃ σὺ**

8. Faith is a mental activity triggered by volition. As such, faith cannot be emotion because emotion cannot respond to a command.

Acts 16:31, “So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ ”

**πιστεύω *pisteuo* 2 sing
aor act impera
to believe, trust**

8. Faith is a mental activity triggered by volition. As such, faith cannot be emotion because emotion cannot respond to a command.

John 3:36, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

ERROR: Faith is passive, non-volitional, the result of being persuaded.

Acts 28:24, “And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.”

**πείθω Verb 3 plur imperf
mid indic
πείθω peithō Verb 3 plur
imperf pass indic to
persuade; believe; trust**

**ἄπιστέω *apisteo*
3 plur imperf act
indic
to disbelieve,
distrust**

Historically, faith has

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Notitia</i> | Understanding |
| <i>Assensus</i> | Assent |
| <i>Fiducia</i> | Trust, Confidence |

“The crux of the difficulty with the popular analysis of faith into *notitia* (understanding), *assensus* (assent), and *fiducia* (trust), is that *fiducia*, comes from the same root as *fides* (faith). The Latin *fide* is not a good synonym for the Greek *pisteuo*. Hence this popular analysis [popular in Reformed Theology] reduces to the obviously absurd definition that faith consists of understanding, assent, and faith. Something better than this tautology must be found.”

~Clark, *Faith and Saving Faith*, 52.

9. As Clark explains, faith is understanding and assent, if we understand what assent means, and that saving faith is assent to the salvific proposition.

10. Therefore, you do not believe directly in a person, or come to salvation through a relationship with Jesus, but first believe the propositions in Scripture that inform you about Jesus and His saving work on the Cross.

This means faith is rational not irrational. Though what is believed may be irrational, faith itself is not.

11. Therefore, faith is an activity of the mentality of the soul which is directed toward first and foremost a proposition.

But for faith to be saving faith, the proposition must be the saving proposition.

12. Faith is not something we do, but it is the channel by which we appropriate what God has done for us.

Application:

- 1. No Biblical distinction between head and heart belief. Heart in the Bible always refers to the mentality of the soul.**

Application:

- 2. Saving faith is not a different kind of faith, but a faith with a saving object, the substitutionary death of Christ on the Cross.**

Application:

- 3. Salvation is not based on a personal relationship with Christ. Judas had one, James had one, all his brothers and sisters had one, yet none of them was saved. Salvation is based on the acceptance of a true proposition that Jesus died on the Cross as a substitute for our sins.**

Application:

- 4. Faith is something anyone can do.
Saving faith is saving, not because it is a separate kind of faith, but because it is in the correct Object, the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

John 11:25, “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

John 11:26, “ ‘And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’ ”

John 20:31, “but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”