

7. The Book of Philippians 1:24-25

Joy of Faith-Part 3

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(5-14-23)

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We have begun a study in Paul's letter to the Philippians—looking at its theme of 'joy' topically.

So far we've looked at:

- I. **Joy in Fellowship—1:3-6**
- II. **Joy in Proclaiming the Gospel—1:12-18**
- III. **Joy of Faith—1:25**

Philippians 1:25–26 (NKJV)

²⁵ And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, ²⁶ that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

So here in verse 25 Paul mentions **joy** again—but this time he connects it to **faith**. By talking about the '**joy of faith**' Paul is talking about the joy that comes from *having* faith—or even the joy that comes from *exercising* faith.

Faith is a very important subject in the Bible—in fact it's so important that it is talked about in every book in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation—so, needless to say, the subject of *faith* is not only an important subject—it's a critical subject.

I say that because everything God has for us in the way of grace (power to live *for* Him and blessings *from* Him) come to us as a gift that has to be received by faith if it's going to benefit us—even as Jesus said, "*According to your faith let it be done to you.*"

With that in mind, it's critical that we understand what biblical faith is if we're going to understand the joy that is associated with it.

There are 4 types of faith the Bible talks about:

- A. **The Shield of Faith**
- B. **The Gift of Faith**
- C. **Saving Faith**
- D. **Practical Faith**

Last week we looked at, **“The Shield of Faith”**—and that brings us this morning to:

B. The Gift of Faith

The '**gift of faith**' (**1 Corinthians 12:9**) is a supernatural *infusion* of faith given to a Christian by the Holy Spirit for the moment. By that I mean—it suddenly comes upon you and causes you to believe, without a doubt, that God is going to work a miracle, bring about a healing, provide a need or work in some way as the situation calls for.

It's a special, *temporary* supernatural *gift* of faith given to you by the Holy Spirit that allows you to be a channel through which the power of God can flow.

Understand, that the **gift of faith** is not a '*reservoir of faith*' that is with you always, that you can '*dip into*' anytime you want. One example of this gift in operation is found in Acts 3:

Acts 3:1-11 (NKJV)

¹ Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour*.

² And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; ³ who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. ⁴ And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." ⁵ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸ So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them--walking, leaping, and praising God. [*Here God gave Peter the gift of faith to heal this man*] ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰ Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. ¹¹ Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed...

Later on, when Peter is explaining what happened, he said in Acts 3:16:

Acts 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

This beggar didn't know Jesus and therefore didn't have any faith in Jesus that was his own—this was a gift of faith given to Peter by the Holy Spirit for that moment which God used to heal this crippled man.

My pastor talked about a time after a Sunday morning service how some young people brought their grandfather down the aisle who was crippled and in a wheelchair...

(I have experienced this gift in my own life).

The gift of faith is given by the Holy Spirit and can't be conjured up by those who want to see God work a miracle or healing. Sometimes He will give it to the person He wants to heal—and other times God will give it to the person He will use to heal someone who needs a healing.

Again, the gift of faith is a *temporary* gift given to us by the Holy Spirit when He wants to do a special work in a person's life (often when He wants to work a miracle or a healing)—when the work is completed the gift of faith comes to an end.

C. Saving Faith

The third kind of faith the Bible speaks of is saving faith.

Saving faith is the faith that's described in Ephesians 2:

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God [the gift is salvation not faith], ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Saving faith is exercised once in our lives—because a person is only saved once in their life (I believe in 'once saved always saved'—or in the 'eternal security' of the believer in Christ).

Saving faith isn't just 'head-knowledge'—it's believing in Jesus to the point of commitment.

Jesus isn't looking for a casual 'dating' relationship with you—He's looking for a relationship based on a life-long commitment—in other words, He wants to marry you—He wants to be your Bridegroom!

But again, many church-goers are satisfied with simply 'dating' Jesus but are not interested in taking their relationship deeper by making a commitment to Him—a commitment to love Him, serve Him, and to stay loyal to Him no matter what life brings their way—whether blessings or hardships for the rest of their lives.

This is the true nature of saving faith—not simply head knowledge where a person believes the 'facts' about Jesus. Many today say they 'believe' in Jesus—when they say that to me I like to ask them, "What exactly do you mean when you say you believe in Jesus?"

- Do you mean that you believe in the *facts* of Who Jesus is and what He did—in other words that He is the Son of God, Who died and rose from the dead?—"Yes, that's what I mean."

That's great, but the Bible says that even the demons believe that and tremble! (James 2:19)

To be saved you must take your 'passive' faith and bring it to the next level and make it 'active' faith—which means believing to the point of commitment.

Again, saving faith is only exercised once in a person's life—however, there is a faith that we do exercise everyday of our lives once we are saved—it's the last kind of faith on our list.

D. Practical Faith

Practical faith is sometimes referred to as '*sanctifying faith*'—because the more you exercise it, the closer to God you get—which in turn means the more sanctified you become.

A classic verse on the subject of *practical* faith is found in Habakuk 2:4 (quoted 3 times in the New Testament)—"*the just shall live by faith...*"

**Saving faith is the faith of a moment which affects my eternity—
practical faith is moment by moment faith which affects my daily life.**

Practical faith is so important to our Christian lives that the Holy Spirit devotes an entire chapter to the subject of practical faith in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews Chapter 11 has been called by some the greatest chapter in the New Testament—and the reason being is because once we are saved by faith, we start on a journey with the Lord whereby we must learn to live by faith every day. Hebrews 11 starts out with the best definition of faith you'll find anywhere in the Bible—

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- Is the writer saying that whatever a Christian *hopes* for—whatever they want if they believe strong enough—it will be theirs?—**NO.** (1 John 5:14-15)

Look, God is gracious and will often give us things we ask for even if He hasn't specifically promised those things to us—a new bike for our son or daughter; or a nice vacation for the family that we can't afford but He graciously provides when we ask Him etc.

However, these things are not promised to us by God in His Word and therefore are not a sure hope.

- What things *are* a sure hope that God has promised us in His Word?

The main ones, the ones that effect our eternity are:

- *Forgiveness of sins and salvation*
- *Heavenly inheritance someday*
- *Eternal rewards and glory with the Lord*
- *An existence without pain, sorrow, suffering, tears, hunger, thirst, sickness, or death*

Furthermore, once we have put our faith in Jesus, He has promised to provide our physical needs because He is our Father, and we are His children (Luke 11:11-13)

Peter said that the Lord has given to His children many “*great and precious promises!*”

So, these promises become the focus of our faith and the certainty of our hope—that what God has promised He is able and willing to give to us.

Hebrews 11:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ² For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

Three words in Hebrews 11:1–2 summarize what true Bible faith is: **substance**, **evidence**, and **testimony**.

1. Substance

The word translated “**substance**” is a Greek word that means “*support from beneath*”—in other words think of a ‘**foundation**.’

Faith is to our hope, what a foundation is to our house.

In other words, faith is what *undergirds* what we hope for—and what we hope for are the things God has *promised* us.

It's the same Greek word translated "**confidence**" in Hebrews 3:14. So we could translate this phrase—**"Faith is the confidence of things hoped for..."**

The Amplified Bible translates that Greek word, "**assurance.**" That Greek word translated, '**assurance**' (AMP) or '**substance**' (NKJV)—could also be translated "*title deed*", or "*ownership*".

In other words, as a child of God, biblical faith is believing that you already own what God has promised in His Word—even if you can't yet see it with your eyes or touch it with your hands. Think of God's promises like a piece of property that He 'deeds' to you by putting your name on it.

You now own that promise—even as God says in Hebrews 11:1, "**Faith is the title deed of things hoped for..."**

However, (and this is an essential part of receiving a promise from God)—true faith must always be coupled with expectation and obedience if it is going to please God. (Check out Noah in Hebrews 11:7)

2. Evidence

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, **the evidence of things not seen.**

The word **evidence** means "*conviction*" or "*proof.*" The Greek word is a legal term meaning "*evidence that is accepted for a conviction in a court of law.*"

A prosecuting attorney takes evidence into court to prove his case, and if it's a criminal trial—to get a conviction—to bring the jury to a decision based on the evidence.

Biblical faith isn't a blind leap into the darkness—it is reasonable and built on many infallible proofs (Acts 1:3) that will stand up as evidence in any court of law (the main example being the resurrection of Jesus Christ).

The resurrection is an event in the past that there is ample evidence to prove the reality of—but what about the evidence (proof) that something God has promised us will become a reality in our lives that we haven't seen Him provide yet?

Well, there are 2 things: 1. His character (He is trustworthy, faithful and cannot lie); 2. His 'track record' (He has always been faithful to provide what He has promised in the past—so we have no doubts that He won't be faithful in fulfilling His promises to us in the present).

That then brings us to the third word in Hebrews 11:1–2 that summarizes what true Bible faith is: *substance, evidence, and testimony.*

3. Testimony

Hebrews 11:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ² For by it the elders obtained a *good testimony*.

The word '**testimony**' is the same word in the Greek we get the word *martyr* (witness) from.

The purpose of our faith isn't just for our benefit—God wants to use it so that our lives (and how He has been faithful to us in fulfilling His promises) becomes a testimony (witness) to others.

If you understand the context of Hebrews 11, then you'll understand where Paul is going here and why he ties maintaining a strong faith with '*testimony*'.

These Jewish Christians were discouraged because they were suffering persecution at the hands of the Roman government and their own Jewish countrymen—and because of it, the faith of many of them was suffering, and some were even thinking of abandoning Christianity altogether and going back to Judaism.

Paul wants to encourage these by reminding them that the Christian life isn't an easy life—God's people, in both the Old and New Testaments, have always lived with hardships, persecutions and other adversities that resulted from living in a world that was hostile to God and His people—and the only thing that got them through it (and the only thing that will get us through the difficulties and adversities of life as Christians)—is faith (in His promises)!

This not only helps us endure these hardships—but our faith results in us having a good testimony (witness) to other Christians to encourage their hearts and bolster their faith in their adversities—but is also a witness to unbelievers that God will use to bring them to Jesus.

Primarily the faith Paul had in mind, was keeping our eyes on the promises of God that deal with eternity—

2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (NLT)

¹⁶ That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. ¹⁷ For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! ¹⁸ So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

Now as important as this kind of faith is in living our daily lives, especially when we're going through difficult times—it's easier said than done!

However, one of the things that encourages me and strengthens my faith are the testimonies of other believers that have gone before me—which is why I love to read biographies so much!

And Paul knew this also—which is why he uses most of chapter 11 to present a series of testimonies of some of the Old Testament saints and how they trusted God's promises, lived by faith, kept their eyes on the eternal, and became examples to the rest of us, to encourage our hearts in living our lives for God by faith.

He does this in the hopes of encouraging his readers to follow their example and not give up.

The greatest joy of having faith in Jesus Christ is, first of all, knowing that no matter how badly you've lived your life, God will accept you as His child if you come to Jesus by faith, repent of your sins, and receive Him into your heart as you Savior—

Romans 10:11-13 (NKJV)

¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

John 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

However, our joy as Christians doesn't end there—it continues as we *live* by faith every day in the promises of God—even if we have no idea how God is going to fulfill those promises to us.

In Romans, Paul lifts up Abraham as an example of someone who believed in the promise of God—even though it was impossible by human standards or ability.

Romans 4:17–21 (NLT)

¹⁷ That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing. ¹⁸ Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" ¹⁹ And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb. ²⁰ Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. ²¹ He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises.

Matthew 6:25–34 (NLT)

²⁵ "That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? ²⁷ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ²⁸ "And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, ²⁹ yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ³⁰ And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? ³¹ "So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' ³² These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. ³⁴ "So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Philippians 4:19 (NLT)

¹⁹ And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

The **joy of faith** is knowing that you belong to God who is watching over you and has promised to take care of you by supplying all you need to live your life on here on earth.

The Bible says that when God makes a promise—it is as good as done!

It's as good as done for 2 reasons: *1. It's impossible for God to lie; 2. What He has promised He is able to perform—for nothing is impossible for God.*

So, praise and thank Him for what He has promised—even before you see it become a reality in your life—that's what true faith does.

When we talk about the '**joy of faith**'—can you remember what your life was like *before* you put your faith in Jesus Christ—how you were 'on your own' often without hope in whatever problem you were facing?

And even now, you might not realize how much joy of faith you forget is in you in the daily circumstances of your life—holding you up when your circumstances are trying to knock you down.

Those circumstances might get rougher and rougher in the days and weeks to come.

Which means more and more you're going to need to focus, not on your circumstances, but on the promises of God and joys of heaven.

Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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