

Faith in Christ

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Preacher: Jason Webb

- [0 : 0 0] Well, last week we talked about regeneration in this class. We're talking about the Christian life, a doctrinal introduction.! And so we're talking about those doctrines that specifically relate to the Christian life.
- We're not talking about every single doctrine that's found in the Bible, but instead we're talking about those doctrines that relate to how we become a Christian, what happens when we do become a Christian, from the beginning to the end.
- And so last week we talked about regeneration. It's that amazing work of God where he does another genesis in our own hearts and in our lives.
- We are born again. We are created again. We are raised from the dead. It's a resurrection. And so God puts his own life in us in regeneration.
- It's one Puritan said it's the life of God and the soul of man. It's his life in our souls. And so just as in conception and gestation and the birth of a baby, life passes.
- [1 : 1 0] Life is taken from the mother and brought and put into the child. In the same way, in the new birth, we are born of God. He imparts life to us. He gives us life.
- And so our souls are recreated is another way of putting it. Remember, it's another genesis. It's another genesis one, two, where it's dark.
- There's chaos and the spirit comes and he hovers over the over all that chaos and brings order and brings life and brings flourishing. There's a pattern, even in Genesis one of this is what he does in creation.
- And similarly, this is what he does in recreation in our soul. He brings order and beauty and life out of where there's nothingness.
- And so even Peter says, praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope.
- [2 : 1 4] And so it's this new birth, this new life. We're born into a living, still active hope.
- So to be born is now to be born into this great expectation, which is to come. And so the new birth, as we've talked about it, is the beginning of eternal life.
- It is the beginning. It is not the end. So the end is life eternal, just as the seed within us is indestructible because it's from God's word.
- It's by the Holy Spirit. And so Peter goes on for you have been born again, not a perishable seed, but if imperishable through the living and enduring word of God.
- And so brothers and sisters, life has eternal life has begun here below. And that's why Paul can say you're a new creation. You're a part of that creation to come has sort of reached back into time and entered in to you.
- [3 : 2 1] It's but it's still unfolding and it's still growing. And it will only blossom. And it will only blossom. In heaven with the new heavens and the new earth, eternal life and where we will be sons and daughters of our father forever.

So that's where we are going. That's the end of regeneration. And we talked about the beginning. So that's the living hope we are born into. So just looking back over this entire class, we've talked about sin.

We've talked about the fall. We've talked about God's plan. We've talked about God's call. We've talked about conviction. We've talked about new birth. And today we are talking about faith in Christ faith.

Now, regeneration is inseparable from the faith and repentance that by which we enter into the kingdom of God.

And so in John chapter three, Jesus says we can't see the kingdom. We can't enter into the kingdom unless we are born again. And so regeneration is the granting of those abilities to see and to enter into the kingdom of God, where God's salvation reign is and is happening.

[4 : 41] But we actually enter into that kingdom by faith and repentance. So regeneration is giving us the ability and faith and repentance is actually how we enter into that kingdom and we join that kingdom.

Now, so for our next two lessons here, and next week we're not going to be in this class. And the week after that, we're not going to be here because we're going to have some guest speakers.

But the next two times we're here, we're going to be talking about faith and repentance. And so we want to just pause for a second as we begin these two lessons.

And we want to think about a question. And the question I have for you to think about is, is there an order logically or temporally or time-wise to faith and repentance?

Is there a first and a second in faith and repentance? Sometimes people say repentance goes before faith.

[5 : 54] They argue like this. We will never come to trust in Christ until we feel sorry for our sins.

And so repentance must always be first, at least logically speaking. Now, the problem with that is that that is confusing two ideas.

That's confusing conviction and repentance. So in conviction, we see that we're guilty. We feel that we're guilty.

But that is not the same thing as repentance. Our feelings about our guilt, our feelings, our realization about our danger, about our condemnation, is not the same thing as repentance.

And so the tendency then, when you think, or when people think, well, I need to have this certain amount of conviction. There's this tendency to think that I need to have a certain amount of conviction before I can believe.

[7 : 11] I need a certain amount of repentance as a qualification for faith. And so you aren't really allowed to believe or your faith isn't really a legitimate faith until you feel X amount of badly for your sins, sorrow for your sins.

Now, in a sense, we need to think about the relationship between repentance and faith the other way around. So we're just talking logically here.

And I think we really are talking about not necessarily the temporal order and how the time, faith and repentance, I believe, happens exactly at the same time because it's two sides of the same coin.

But one has a sort of a leading role in it. And that's where I think we need to think about faith and repentance, where faith logically comes first.

And what I mean by that is evangelical gospel repentance is always is always based on faith in God's word, faith in the gospel.

[8 : 23] It's faith in God. It's always based on the hope and the promise of forgiveness and reconciliation in the gospel that's held out in the gospel.

So this is what this is an important thing for addressing sinners. It's an important thing in counseling. And it's this idea that sin is what we do.

Sin is what we do when we don't trust God, when we don't have faith. Sin is what we do when we don't think God is good enough. Sin is what we do when Christ isn't enough, when his word isn't trustworthy, when he isn't good or gracious.

Sin is what we do when we don't trust God.

Sin is what we do when we don't trust God. Well, didn't accuse God of bringing them out to die? Right. So they grumbled because they had a poor and a low view of God.

[9 : 53] God just you brought us out of the desert or you brought us out here just to die. Now, that's a suspicious, cynical way of looking at God. And so notice it wasn't because there was no food.

It wasn't because they didn't there. There wasn't any water. It was because they didn't trust God that they grumbled. So Jesus and the temptations in the desert is put into the very same situation that the Israelites are put into.

He is brought into the wilderness. He is brought into the place of hunger and suffering. And in that place where the circumstances are basically the same, he trusts God.

And so he doesn't grumble. He doesn't sin. And so the Lord in the wilderness was trusting the Lord.

And so he didn't sin. And now my point is, is when we when we're thinking of God suspiciously, when we think Christ isn't good, God isn't merciful, then we are never going to turn away from our sin.

[11 : 02] We'll never turn away from our sin until we see that Christ is good. God's word is true, that he can be trusted, that he means to do us good.

And so we might have what older theologians, the Puritans and the people after that called legal repentance and legal repentance is where you're sorry for the consequences of your sin.

We're sorry and we're afraid of hell and we wish there wasn't condemnation. But in our heart, the love for our sin and our attachment to that sin just goes on.

We would keep on it in our sin if we could. We would do it, but we and we maybe wish we could. And so there might be legal repentance.

We might even have a change of life. So you see that where people have this change of life. They redo their whole thing. They turn over a new leaf, but they don't have a change of heart.

[12 : 14] They don't have a faith in God. Maybe they change their outward sins into inward sins, but they don't change their sin into faith.

Now, gospel repentance is based on faith in God. This is how John Calhoun, the Scottish theologian.

This is what he wrote in his book on repentance. True repentance is this godly sorrow for sin and this holy abhorrence of it. So that's what repentance is.

It's sorrow for sin, not for the consequences of the sin, but for the sin itself and an abhorrence of it. So you genuinely hate it for what it is.

Godly sorrow for sin and this holy abhorrence of it that arises from a spiritual discovery of pardoning mercy with God in Christ.

- [13 : 15] And from the exercise of trusting in his mercy. So you're sorry and you hate your sin because you found pardoning mercy being held out to you.
- And he goes on his godly sorrow. This man's godly sorrow springs likewise from his views of the infinite majesty and excellence and holiness and amiableness.
- That is the pleasantness of the pleasantness of God, of that transcendently glorious God whom he has insulted.
- And so in faith you see God is good. God is great. God is wonderful. God is exalted.
- God is majestic. God is holy. And he is he he genuinely is beautiful and excellent and wonderful and good.
- [14 : 21] And I have sinned against him. I've insulted him. And so it's this growing realization and appreciation for how wonderful and good and pleasant God is that drives repentance.
- The goodness of God leads us to repentance. Now, that is not to take away the place of the law. That is not to say that sin is not rebellion or anything like that.
- It is all of those things. But what I'm trying to say is repentance, gospel repentance comes out of this growing sense of God's goodness and his graciousness, his kindness, his greatness, his holiness.
- And even the promise of the gospel. So think of Psalm 51. David repents of his sin with Bathsheba and he turns away from his sin. But he does it with a full appreciation that there is mercy in God.
- He's not. He's not.
- [15 : 56] He's not. He's not. He's not. He's not. So the prodigal son, he got up from his pigsty in that far country when he thought of the goodness of his father.
- He said, even my father's servants are treated well. Even my father's servants, he treats them better than how I'm what I've got here.
- And so it's this. And I want you to think, what did he think of his father when he left? He didn't want anything to do with him. He was cramping his style.
- He was no fun. He was no good. He was he was someone to run away from. And so the real repentance and the turning and going back to the father began when he came to his senses and he said, wait a second.
- That's not who my father is. My father is good and kind, even to his servants. And surely he'll take me back. And so he turned his feet toward home.
- [17 : 00] So at Pentecost, Peter preached, repent and be baptized. Every one of you and the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. The summons to repent.
- Held out this gospel promise of forgiveness. There is grace. There's for hope. There's forgiveness. Believe it and repent. And if they grasped by faith the promise of forgiveness, they would repent.
- And this is why we don't just preach repentance without faith. This is why we don't just preach repent. Period. End of statement to sinners.
- That's why we preach the gospel to sinners, because it is the hope of the gospel that motivates repentance. That says, OK, I'm going to turn away from my sin and turn to God.
- And God is good. And so sinners without any hope, without any hope of acceptance, without any hope of God's grace and mercy, will not turn to God.
- [18 : 07] If God is only a frowning judge. Then sinners will not turn in genuine repentance. They'll be sorry for their sins.
- They'll be afraid of judgment. They might make some legalistic changes in their life, but they will not come to the father and humble, holy repentance.

Happy repentance. They won't come to Christ for healing. There won't be any change of heart. Sinners who need to repent need to hear both the law that says you have sinned.

What you have done is not right. It has not measured up. It has transgressed the law. They need to hear that. And they also need to hear the good news that Jesus saves, that God is full of love for returning sinners, that there is forgiveness.

There is hope. And if they believe, they will repent. If they believe the law, if they believe in Jesus Christ, they will repent. So faith and repentance, they go together.

[19 : 16] They always go together. They're marriage partners. Where one is, the other is. They're two sides of the same coin. You can't do one without the other.

Not really. You can have pretend faith or pretend repentance, but genuine biblical faith and genuine biblical repentance, they are two sides of the same coin. And so you can't move further to the you can't go north without moving away from the south.

And you can't go south without moving away from the north. And so moving toward God and faith always means moving away from sin. And real moving away from sin in your heart, in your disposition, in your attitudes, and in your life is always a move in the direction toward God.

And this is why the whole business, I don't know how much of it is a controversy anymore, but the whole controversy of the lordship salvation that was especially going on 20 years ago, at least it was being written about all that so much 20 years ago or 25, 30 years ago, was so important.

Because there were certain people, and there still is, people teaching that faith without repentance is all you need to be saved.

[20 : 46] And faith without repentance is no faith at all. You cannot take Christ as savior, but not take him as lord, as the one who can command your life and the one who says, you can do this, and now you shouldn't do that.

And you've got to turn from that. You can't believe and not repent. That doesn't make any sense. That's like talking about a four-sided triangle.

Like, you understand what four-sided triangle means, those words, but there's no such thing. And they don't make any sense. You can say the words, but it doesn't mean anything.

Believing Christ as my savior without repenting on my sins are just words that don't mean anything. That's not real faith.

That's not really coming to Jesus Christ. Faith and repentance go together. Today we're talking about faith. And we're talking about it.

[21 : 49] And next week or next time we're going to talk about repentance. But faith and repentance go together. If we really believe, we turn from our sin.

And the way that we really turn from our sins is by believing the gospel, by believing and trusting Jesus Christ. So we want to dig deeper into what faith is this morning.

And I just have three bullet points in our last 15 minutes. Three bullet points. What is faith? What is saving faith? What is it made up of?

Three bullet points. The first is faith contains knowledge. How can they believe on the one they have not heard? You need to have knowledge in order to have faith.

Faith and knowing go together. You can't have faith in a stranger. That's not real faith. That's not real confidence.

[22 : 50] You can be presumptuous. You can be foolish. But real sound faith, you have to know that person. So John 17, 3. Jesus prays, this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

So this goes back to John chapter 1 in that prologue, where John says, No one has ever seen God, but God the one and only, speaking about Christ, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

So when we come in faith to God, we come to know him. We're introduced to him.

This is personal knowledge. Matthew 11, no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

So do you see what faith does? So here's the Father and the Son. They know each other. They're connected. They're related. They have a relationship. And we, by faith, are introduced into that relationship.

[24 : 05] We're introduced. We are brought in. And so we know the Father. We know the Son. They know us. And so ultimately, there's no trust without knowledge.

You don't let complete strangers watch your children. You don't even let them watch your pets. You wouldn't give them your goldfish. That's the kind of knowledge that we are talking about.

Yes, there is an intellectual side to this. And I don't want to demean that or reduce that. The more we know about God, doctrinally, biblically, the more we know about God, the more we can come to know God.

So just in the same way, the more you know your spouse, what their life was like, what they like, the things about them, the more you get to know them, the deeper you go into the relationship.

A week and a half ago, my wife and I were having this conversation about going to college and being in high school and making these decisions.

[25 : 19] And we were just talking about what it was like for us, what we were trying to remember about how we were thinking about it and what we were doing. And she found out some things about me that she didn't know.

And I found out some things about her that I didn't know. That's the intellectual side. But because I have now that intellectual material, I and I hope she we feel closer together.

We know each other a little better. I know maybe a little more of why she does what she does or what makes her tick, because there are certain truths about her life and my life.

So more information can lead to more intimacy. It doesn't always. So there can be really, really smart people that know all sorts of things and they don't have an intimate walk with God.

It doesn't always, but it definitely can. So in the Bible, faith is knowing it's knowing about God. But building on that, it's knowing God himself.

[26 : 29] It's where I relate to him. He relates to me. And so Jesus says, this is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God. Knowing to God, relating to him personally, is what faith is all about.

Second bullet point, what is faith? Faith is a scent. Faith is a green. It's a green with God.

It's a green with God's word. What he says. It's a green about the truth about Jesus Christ as well as coming to know him.

There's even a sense that coming to believe, coming to a scent can sometimes even go against our wishes. And what I'm talking about is, Saul came to faith almost despite himself.

He came to a scent to who the Lord is and who he was. And it wasn't necessarily according to what he was looking for, according to his wishes.

[27 : 35] You can't help but believe when Jesus appears to you in glory and throws you down, leaves you blind, and you do what Saul did. He said, who are you, Lord?

He didn't know exactly who Jesus was. He didn't know at that point, is Jesus Savior? He didn't know any of that at that exact point.

But he did know, you're in charge. You're the Lord. And the Lord says, get up and stand on your feet.

I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. And then talking to King Agrippa. So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.

Paul assented. He agreed with the Lord. Jesus was the Lord.

[28 : 36] Jesus came as the Lord. And Paul said, Lord. Jesus said, do this. And Paul said, yes. He went along. He agreed.

Paul agreed in his mind. The Lord is in charge. I do what he says. And whatever the Lord is going to show me and teach me, that's what it is.

I agree. I assent. Assenting is agreeing. You can see a negative picture of this in the Proverbs. Remember that scene? Well, let me just read it.

It's from Proverbs chapter six. I think. At the window of my house, I looked out through the lattice. So you have Solomon looking out. He looks through the lattice.

I saw among the simple. I noticed among the young men, a youth who lacked judgment. Then out came a woman to meet him dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.

[29 : 33] With persuasive words, she led him astray. And this is the words that I want you to notice. All at once, he followed her. Like there was this moment of tension.

This moment of she's seducing. She's talking. She's explaining. And he's for a moment. He's listening. He's thinking. And he's not completely going along with it right now.

But all at once, he followed her. He agreed. He went along. Little knowing it will cost him his life. A scent is agreeing.

It's going along with. It's thinking and agreeing with something. That something is true. So the con man says, trust me. Those are the famous.

That's what con men say. They want you to trust them. And pretty soon, you think what he is promising is true. And at once, you go along with it. You agree.

[30 : 32] You agree that they're telling the truth. Even in this case, that they're not. You can't help yourself. You buy in. So faith is agreeing to what the Bible says about Christ.

It's agreeing in a genuine agreement that Jesus is the Savior, that I am the sinner. He is the perfect sacrifice. And through him, we can.

And we are forgiven. And a lot more. You can read in our confession of faith. What saving faith is. It's agreeing with every part of God's revelation about who he is and all the truth in it.

By faith, we believe the law is perfect. By faith, we believe the law is good. By faith, we believe I'm a sinner. By faith, we believe Jesus Christ is the Savior. By faith, we believe all of these things.

So what is faith? It's genuine agreement. It's this mind that says, it's putting your mind and your heart and your life in agreement with what God says.

[31 : 43] Now third, what is faith? Faith is trust. It's confidence. It's knowledge. It's assent. But the heart of faith is trust.

You even see it in that picture from the Proverbs. The guy goes along with her. He trusts her. And he trusts her because he's simple. He doesn't know that going along with her, giving himself to her is going to cost him his life.

But that's what trust. That's what faith is. It trusts that person. It's to entrust. So saving faith is to entrust yourself to Jesus. It's to put yourself into his arms, into his hands and say, I'm yours.

I'm going along. And so Jesus says, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. And in faith, you come then and you give yourself to him.

He says, come, I'll give you rest. And you say, yeah, there's rest there. And you go. You put yourself into his hands. You let him be the savior.

[32 : 56] To trust him is to feel safe enough with him to give yourself into his hands. That is the amazing thing.

And that is why faith is a gift from God. Despite your sinfulness. Despite your sin. Despite everything that the Bible says is coming the sinner's way.

Despite the danger of having dealings with the holy God. In faith, you trust him. You say, Jesus is enough. And so you say, Jesus, I come.

Nothing in my hand I bring. Simply to thy cross I cling. So it's putting aside all your own self-protection. All your own schemes. All your own personal ways of dealing with your life.

And it's letting God be God. Letting Jesus be the savior. David Vaughn, when he was here, he said, it's saying, I'm the sinner.

[34 : 03] You're the savior. I'm the problem. You're the solution. So it is knowledge. It is a sense. But finally and fully, it's trust.

It's trust. Knowledge of him and assent to what he is saying leads to this surrender.

This resting in his arms. And so you turn from your suspicion. And you fully rest in who he is. You make the jump.

It's not a jump, a blind leap. It's not a jump in the dark. It is a jump into his arms. It's running to him when you're afraid. A faith is that sigh of relief that just puts all the all your weight onto Jesus Christ.

It's that sigh of relief when you lay down your arms. You've been fighting God and you lay down your arms and you look into his face and what you thought was the enemy. It turns out to be your friend.

[35 : 09] Faith is also taking up your cross and following Christ. So faith involves a life surrender. That's all part of this. Why will I take up my cross and follow Jesus Christ?

I won't do that if I don't trust him. That he is worth it. That this is okay. That he will help me.

So you fall into his arms and that surrender means you forsake everything for him. Everything. So you're forsaking your old life.

Your old agenda. Your old plans. It means sacrifice. And you put on the altar. Your plans.

Your life. Your schemes. Your self-protection. Your pride. Your own self-confidence. Your all your everything. You put it on the altar. It means becoming like Christ in his death in order that you might know the power of his resurrection.

[36 : 12] It means renouncing worldly honor and wealth. Just as Moses did. Because he saw the treasures that were in Jesus Christ and the pleasures of Egypt had nothing on what Jesus and the in the Messiah was offering.

And so it means you renounce worldly wealth and honor. It means committing yourself to live against this world. So the Hebrew Christians gladly accepted the confiscation of the possession of their possessions for the sake of Christ.

They said for Jesus sake we will give this all up. And they made that trade gladly. Just like the the the pearl of greatest price.

You you give up everything you have in order to have it. You do it gladly. Faith is giving everything else up that you might gain Christ. Paul puts it like this in Philippians. For whose sake I've lost all things.

And is it such a great loss to get Christ? No I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ and be found in him. The the bottom line is that faith is having confidence that Jesus Christ will be enough for you.

[37 : 23] More than enough for you. More than enough for anything that you lose for his sake. It's confidence that you can take him at his word. It's confidence that you can trust him with your life and all of it.

It's confidence. This says his promises are sure. His commands are my good. That he is wise enough and he is good enough and he's kind enough and he's great enough to be all that I need.

In any circumstance. In any situation. For any sin. For any problem. Any trial. It's confidence that the cross was enough to absorb all my sin. That I don't have to add anything of my own.

Just the naked cross is enough. His blood is enough to cleanse every one of my stains. It's confidence that Jesus is enough.

His life is enough. And so I'm the problem. He's the solution. Whatever my problem is. He is the solution. It's confidence that knows that there's a place in the father's heart for me.

[38 : 28] So when I go to the father. I find welcome. I find arms wrapped around me in love. And I find that I'm received and I'm loved. It's that kind of confidence that brings us to Christ.

That joins us to Christ. It's that kind of even fearlessness and confidence. That makes us abide in Christ. Christ. So not just at the beginning.

But the whole of your life. You're staying with him. You're abiding in him. You're resting in him. You're stuck to him. You're on him. And so you can read Hebrews 11.

That famous passage. Abraham, Moses, Enoch, the people of Israel, Rahab, David, Samuel, the prophets. All of them by faith did amazing things.

And it was that confident, fearless trust that God is going to be enough. That he is enough. That Jesus Christ is enough.

[39 : 26] And so in faith, we join them. We join them. We say what the Bible says about God is true. What the gospel reveals about Jesus Christ is true.

And so whatever the cost, whatever the fear, whatever the difficulty or the uncertainty, God is enough. Christ is enough. And I'm sure. I'm sure of it.

So. We live by faith. We live by faith. Faith is knowing God. It's assenting.

It's agreeing with God. It's trust. And it's that kind of faith that leads us to repentance. That is always pulling us away from our sin.

And pulling us towards the Savior. It's saying, I don't need to do this. I don't need to have this idol. I don't need this false salvation. Because I have more than enough in Jesus Christ.

[40 : 23] And so, Jesus, I come. And so, faith, that kind of faith, inevitably and always leads and includes repentance.

And that's what we're going to talk about in a few weeks. My time's gone. We're dismissed. We're dismissed.