

Date: 30.09.2020

Time: 7.30pm

Service taken by: Rev Gavino Fioretti

Reading: Romans 3

Text: Romans 3:28

Outline: Faith Alone

a) Introduction

1 The origin of faith

2. The object of faith

3. The elements of faith

4. The nature of faith

Faith Alone

- **Introduction**

We've been looking at the mottos that characterised the reformers: grace alone, scripture alone and Christ alone as the only mediator and the only way to know the Father. Tonight we look at faith alone.

Our faith in Christ does not save us, but Christ saves through faith. Our faith will not save us or forgive us for our sins or make us righteous in the sight of God. If we were saved by our faith, we would be troubled. We doubt our salvation because our faith is weak and so easily shaken – we doubt our position before God. It's not our faith that saves us, but God through our faith that saves us. This is a great encouragement.

1) The origin of faith

Where does it come from? Some say that faith is the response of man to God's grace; that it's from man. In scripture, we see it's not in our own soul; faith is God's gift. Salvation and faith are gifts from God. God grants us the ability to believe in Christ. Peter's confession of faith that Jesus is the Christ came from God; this was a gift that God gave Peter. If we have faith in Christ today, it is because God has granted us the faith to believe. God has granted us faith – it's an evangelical grace. It's not God who does the believing, but us; we believe because God has called us, opened our eyes to our condition and need for Christ and He has given us the ability to believe in Jesus. It's not because God saw any potential in us – it's all His gift. Salvation is all of grace – even what we should be doing is given to us. We shouldn't judge or condemn unbelievers – God will judge. Outside of God's grace,

we'd be exactly like the unbeliever. If we weren't predestined to believe in Christ, we'd never believe in Him.

How does God impart the gift of faith? Through hearing the Word of Christ. God's Word produces faith in us. We see God's sovereign gift and sovereign grace, but this doesn't excuse unbelief as God gives all the means to believe. Through the preaching and proclamation of the Word with the application by the Spirit, we are granted faith and repentance. God brings people to faith by His Word – that's why we emphasise the Bible, including singing it in church. Faith is God's gift that comes from hearing His Word; this is as true today as it was the day we came to Christ. To grow, we need to feed our little faith on the Word of God. We need His Word to enable us to believe.

2) The object of faith

The Person of Christ: The object of saving faith is the Person of Christ. It's faith in Jesus, not in the presbyterian church or the Westminster confession of faith that saves us. The devil believes in Jesus – the devil believes everything the Bible says about Jesus but doesn't believe in Christ. We can know about Him without knowing Him. The only way to be justified is by faith in Christ. We need to ask Him, depend on Him. This is the beauty of faith; its simplicity. As a child comes to their father in trust, as a sick person goes to the doctor in trust, we trust ourselves to the care of the One we need. You believe in Him and cast yourself into His care, casting your soul into His hand.

The work of Christ: The object of faith is the work of Christ. We believe that He has done everything for our salvation, that He's done all that was necessary, all that was required. We believe that He's purchased us, redeemed us from the evil one to reconcile us to God. We believe in the sufficiency of the work of Christ and so we don't try to improve His work. We believe that His life, death and resurrection are all that is required for our justification. He's able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him. He's got the authority and right to save us. He's done all. He's our all-sufficient Saviour.

The promises of Christ: When believing the gospel, we believe all that Christ promises – that all who come to Him who are weary and heavy-laden, He will give rest; that all who believe in Jesus will not be ashamed, but will be saved; that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. The gospel is God's promise to sinners – that if you trust Him to save you, He will save you. We believe in Him as the One able to save us, as the One who has promised to save all who come to Him. You can't believe in Jesus if you don't believe in the gospel. The gospel is the good news of Jesus to Hell-deserving sinners. Believing in Christ's promises means you believe in Him.

3) The elements of faith

It is simple: Sadly we can make saving faith one of the most complicated truths. We mix it with so much that we don't see faith in all the mix. Questioning faith to the extent that no-one could meet the standard of faith thought to be required takes away the joy of salvation. Faith is a simple thing. God says that childlike faith is what's needed. You don't need a degree in theology to be saved – a child can have saving faith.

It involves knowledge: To believe in someone, you have to know that person. Faith requires knowledge for people to be saved. We have to tell others about Jesus' person, work and promises. Biblical faith is not a leap in the dark, it is not against reason. Biblical faith is based not on wishful thinking but on the truth of God as He reveals that truth in scripture to us.

We agree with what we're told about Christ: It's not enough to know the theory about Christ – we need to give assent to all this. The devil knows the truth about Christ, not doubting the trinity or that salvation is by faith – but an element is missing and that is trust. Knowing things doesn't mean we trust who says these things. Because of the facts clearly revealed, we put our trust in Christ and ask Him to save us.

4) The nature of faith

It's exclusive: Faith alone demands that we trust in Christ alone. We don't trust in Him and works, or Him and church, or Him and experience, or Him and knowledge. We trust in Him and Him alone. There's a place to examine ourselves and to see if we're in the faith; it's not pleasant to do this as we don't like what we find when we examine ourselves – so don't stop there, come to Christ.

It's essential: Without faith, it's impossible to please God. You can't have your sins forgiven without faith. You can't be right with God without faith. It's essential. It's not faith and works, but faith and faith alone that saves. It's all we need to be saved. The faith spoken of is a continual, present, daily faith – it's not a one off event, but a continuing action. Keep believing in Jesus. You might not know when you first had faith in Christ – you don't need to know when it started, but you need to know that your faith is in Christ today. Every day ask Him to save you and go to Him for salvation, forgiveness and life. Every day go to Him in faith. Don't content yourself with a confession made 20 years ago – is your faith in Him today? Saving faith lasts, it endures.

It's fruitful: Christ-centred faith is always accompanied by love. The fruit of the Spirit will be seen as God by His grace grants us faith. As we put our trust in Christ, our lives are transformed.

It's God-glorifying: Salvation cannot be by works or we would receive some of the glory. Only God is to be glorified by our salvation. Our salvation is by faith, so God gets all the glory. He's done everything and He doesn't share His glory with another – all the glory goes to God. Our faith, because it is the gift of God, brings glory to God. We worship Him because He's enabled us to believe in Him and through that faith we have peace with God. Our response to this is to worship and glorify God. God is manifest in His glory. He donates faith to sinners and His Name is exalted. Salvation is by grace. Christ saves us by faith.