

# That We All May Be One: The Law Of Faith

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*Series of lessons by the elders (Bob Cooper/Dwain Stoops)*

Bob's 3<sup>rd</sup> lesson – Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 (Sun. eve.)

## Intro

Sometime in the month of July of this year Dwain and I as elders decided to embark on a series of lessons. As we contemplated our responsibility as chosen leaders of this congregation, and the impending challenges that face all Christians, Dwain had an idea.

Since we are concerned about what the future holds for our congregation let's use the same theme that Jesus used when He prayed for all His disciples shortly before He was crucified (Jn. 17:20-24). Thus the theme of our series: **"That We All May Be One"**.

To "divide and conquer" is a popular tactic used by the king of beast. Satan is no different.

*1Pe 5:8-9 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, **firm in your faith**, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.*

We can see the apostle Paul was also concerned about his brothers and sisters being one in Christ -

*Gal 5:13-15 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, **but through love serve one another**. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.*

Within this theme we decided to talk about the differences between the old law and the new law/ the challenges of being one in Christ/ being like-minded when our opinions and traditions are different than our fellow saints/the issues of legalism/and the final lesson in this series will be about **the law of faith**

## Body

The expression, "the law of faith" is found only once in the entire Bible. In Rom. 3:27 Paul is using that expression to especially convey to his Jewish brethren that boasting about works performed in obeying the law of Moses is nullified by a new law called "the law of faith".

*Eph 2:8-10 For by grace are ye **saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves: **it is the gift of God**: Not of works, lest any man should boast. **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

The expression “the law of” is found in the old K.J.V. nearly 100 times. In Dwain’s lesson on legalism he defined **law as: the expressed will of the authority**. Some examples of this expression would be:

*Lev 6:25 Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is **the law of** the sin offering*

*Lev 14:2 This shall be **the law of** the leper in the day of his cleansing*

*Num 6:13 And this is **the law of** the Nazarite*

*Num 5:29 This is **the law of** jealousies*

*Jos 8:32 And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of **the law of** Moses,*

*2Ki 10:31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in **the law of** the LORD God of Israel*

*Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil **the law of** Christ*

In all these examples we are given God’s expressed will about the subject at hand.

Because of what the writer of Hebrews said in *Heb. 11:6* (“without faith it is impossible to please him”) we know that God has always wanted His people to be faithful (regardless of the dispensation of time they lived in).

As one continues on down through chapter 11 we see a large list of saints who became heirs of righteousness through the application of faith.

What is faith and what does it do for you?

Heb. 11:1 tells us that it is the support and the proof (substance/evidence) for things we hope for but do not see. Faith is what enabled the people of old to obtain a favorable report because they believed in God who created the whole world out of things that didn’t exist. They also believed that He rewarded them for seeking after Him. Their belief in Him spurred them on to do heroic things because they loved their Protector and Provider.

Clayton told me a story about a friend who lost all faith in mechanical machines. This came about when he witnessed a good ole “faithful” fork lift that failed one day at work. It was the same fork lift that had lifted hundreds of pounds of cheese over and over many times. Just for cheap thrills a co-worker using that same forklift was giving his buddy rides way up near the ceiling and then would suddenly let it drop very quickly. Without warning a belt broke and the rider plunged several feet to the ground fracturing his back in several places.

People have a tendency to put their faith in things they see but quickly lose it when failure occurs. As a H.S. and Jr.H. teacher of industrial arts I always taught the students to unplug a machine before you worked on it because it might accidently come on if the switch would fail. I think many students thought that that rule which came out of the textbook was a little overkill until one day we had a router that came on all by itself even though the switch was in the off position.

**Are we guilty of reading the manual of life but only half way believing some of its warnings?** “Well sure, this or that is possible but I don’t think it will happen to me.”

Eldred Oxley (a former elder here) once told me that if you put your faith in people you will surely be disappointed. Think of all the investors that are beside themselves because they put their trusting faith in Bernie Madoff. People disappoint because they all sin (*Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*)

The only thing that never fails is God even though we only see Him through the eyes of faith.

*Joh 20:24-25 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

*Joh 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

We must all be absolutely certain **with full assurance of faith** that what God has written through His inspired writers is the **absolute truth that can justify and make us holy**.

*Heb 10:22-23 Let us draw near with a true heart in **full assurance of faith**, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us **hold fast the profession of our faith** without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*

**Neither machines nor people give us full assurance of faith.**

A few weeks ago Kevin’s series of lessons on Romans made it very clear that faith in Christ Jesus was the only way to be justified and made righteous. In chapter 4 Paul discussed how Abraham was rewarded righteousness because he had a believing faith which was mixed with obedient actions.

*Heb 3:15-19 As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of **unbelief**.*

***Heb 4:1-2** Therefore, a promise being left to enter into His rest, let us fear lest any of you should seem to come short of it. For also we have had the gospel preached, as well as them. But the Word preached did not profit them, **not being mixed with faith** in those who heard it (them meaning the children of Israel).*

*We know that faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rm. 10:17).* In some ways the law of faith is like the laws that govern electricity. If it is used properly, it can produce wonderful things. Used improperly it is capable of killing you.

*2Jn 1:8-9 Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.*

Putting your full assurance of faith in anything or anybody other than God is asking to be hurt or killed literally or spiritually.

There seems to be 2 popular extremes in the religious world that begs our attention. One says that if we do good deeds God will give us heaven. The other says that good works are absolutely not needed to go to heaven and all that is necessary is faith that Jesus died and arose to take away our sins.

If we consider 2Cor.1:12 we can see that a Christian is to use Godly sincerity and not fleshly wisdom to conduct their lives just as the apostle Paul did. The Jews many times went through the motions of offering up sacrifices but their works were not mixed with faith but mixed with fleshly wisdom. For example:

*Mal. 1:6-8 indicates that many of the Jews may have had this attitude: "Why offer a perfectly good lamb to be sacrificed when I can get rid of this lame and blind one which is doing me no good".*

*Matt. 12:7 Jesus said He desired mercy over sacrifice. That's because He would rather see benevolence or acts of kindness and love (which is mercy) over external compliances of duties performed in religion that came in the form of sacrifices (especially tainted ones).*

Just going through the motions of attending church and breaking bread doesn't mean you have faith. The Corinthians broke bread but it was not mixed with faith (1Cor. 11:18-34).

The book of James is written to Christians who are struggling with many issues which seem to indicate their faith was not genuine. A genuine faith will produce real changes in a person's conduct and character.

*Jas 2:13-17 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

## Conclusion

Dwain , my fellow elder gave me a good example of how the law of faith is designed to function.

In Exod. Chapter 16 we have the story of the children of Israel complaining about not having enough food to eat and then asking God to provide them bread like they were used to in Egypt. God gave them bread but it was nothing like what they expected.

Let us take notice; before God gave it to them he promised that it would be given in a supernatural way ( i.e. down from heaven, not up from the ground). Therefore, their expectation was aroused, allowing them to have faith in the power and goodness of God. With the promise of daily bread to eat there was given a law. Each day they were to gather no more than what would be sufficient for that day. This law led them to daily "live by faith," taking no thought for the morrow, but trusting their lives to God.

The bread from heaven, which gave them life, was not provided by their works but by God's mercy. However, in faith they were required to only gather enough for one day at a time, trusting that God would provide the free bread from heaven for each succeeding day. This appears to be a good type or shadow of the Law of Faith under the New Covenant.

God the Father sent His son to earth to feed us the bread of life which is His word (Jn.6:35-58). This Word is the only thing that can make us justified before God (Jn. 1:1-18).

As we explored in our study of the Old Law and the New Law we either live under the law of sin and death or the law of Christ. When Paul talking to the Jews in Romans used the phrase: **“the law of faith”**, he was driving home a point. The point being that the only thing we can boast about is Christ crucified. No amount of works can anyone do, past or present that will take away sin except the blood of Christ!

The Law of Moses demanded righteousness but it could not deliver it because no one could fully and completely keep it. If you violated one law you were guilty of all (Js. 2:10).

Couldn't God allow a few sins to go unpunished (a slip of the tongue, a little white lie, a moment of complaining)? Of course not! God's authority and nature of holiness would be nullified.

*Rom 3:20-26 says, “For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the **righteousness of God has been manifested** apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it-- **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe**. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are **justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith**. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had **passed over former sins**. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

The “law of faith” is another name for “the law of Christ”. With this unmerited favor from God comes His expressed will. His expressed will longs for us to be one with Him.

**Rom 8:1-6** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

If you failed to read the article in our bulletin today allow me to recap. Faith is the starting block from which Christians begin their race. It can also be compared to the dock from which all Christians launch their ship to travel to heaven. Faith is the one and only key that unlocks the door of salvation.

Unless we have faith God cannot accept us as heirs to His throne. Until we have faith nothing else we do counts. By faith we...

*Believe – Heb.6:1*

*Enlighten – Jn. 12:35,36*

*Freed from condemnation – Jn.3:18*

*Sanctified – Acts 26:18*

*Justified – Rm. 5:1*

*Have access to God – Eph. 3:12*

*Live – Rm. 1:17*

*Resist evil – Eph. 6:16*

*Overcome the world – 1Jn. 5:4*

*Preserved in death- Heb. 11:13*