

May 2020 Newsletter

And maybe that's the problem so many of us have, (because we're group oriented towards life), when we have problems, we look around and say, 'These people can't help me, they can't do anything for me, they need to be helped and protected themselves!' But we need to think back a little further to the fact, that this new group, called the body of Christ, is not just a group of sheep, **but has a shepherd over it and he is the one who will protect us all. We don't protect ourselves; the other sheep don't protect us; it's our shepherd who protects us.**

As Christians, we now have to shift our thinking from looking to our group to protect us, parents, friends, family, clan, tribe, neighborhood, community, nation, etc., **to looking to the Lord to protect us.** The group has played a major role in our development up to the time that we became believers, because in it we looked for acceptance, identity, security and protection. But now we have been taken out of it, we must no longer look to it for these things, although the tendency and temptation to do it might still be there. **We must now look, not even to the church for these things;** the new group that God has placed us in, but to the Lord only. He will protect us and he is our security. Not to mention that fact that our identity now is directly related to him in the new man, and our acceptance. This is a dynamic of faith also. We must change who or what we are looking at, or looking to. Where we have been looking to our family or group, and that because of years of programming to do so, we now look to the Lord for our security.

This goes back to the problem of the spirit verses the flesh. In the flesh, in our human nature, we will always be looking for some group to fulfill the need for security; be it our parents, family, friends, organizations, insurance companies, government, etc.. This is basically why people will do anything that a government will tell them to do; not just because they're obedient citizens, but because they look to their government for security. So whatever it says is acceptable to them. And if the government tells them that they have to come in and be branded like cattle, they'll do it. If they have to take a mark, they'll do it. If they have to carry a personal ID card, they'll do it. One is not going to throw his security away; insecurity is a threat to their very survival.

For the Christian, God has created in him a new nature. One that is spiritual and one that is oriented towards him, not the groups of earth. The new man looks toward God, who created it, but the old man looks towards his family environment; the group that he was raised in. The old man thinks there is security in the old group, for after all, he did have it at one time. **But the new man, who is able to think along doctrinal lines,** knows that there is no security there for him at all. He knows that his security is in God alone. Obviously, one can see that this is a growth concept. One does not break all these dependency concepts overnight. And much of it is a weaning process, whereby God weans him from the old family and group getting the believer to the place that all his dependency and trust is in Jesus Christ the Shepherd. This process can be painful at times. For when we are weaned from this person or that person, we also go through a period of confusion, disorientation, uncertainty, fearfulness, etc., because we are losing a security object. But we stabilize out when we see that our Shepherd is there taking care of us and protecting us. We begin to see what was always there.

Abraham came to the place where he trusted Christ completely, with no dependency whatever on other people. And this is what God has designed for all his people, where they trust Christ fully, no longer looking to other people to provide for them or protect them. It goes back to not only resolving these many trials and difficulties by faith in the Word, but getting to the place where we have a sense of belonging. Not only to this new group of redeemed individuals on the earth that God has called out of

the world system, but also of **developing a sense of belonging to Christ**, which comes through doctrine in the soul. As children growing up we felt abandoned, rejected, unprotected, insecure, unwanted, and maybe we were; leaving us with tremendous insecurity and fear. But now, as believers, we belong to Christ. We have our identity in him; we have his protection, and our security is in him. These are the facts of the believer's relationship to Christ. We may not be aware of this, we may not even believe it! But it is still true none-the-less.

The key to dynamic, healthy, spiritual living is found in believing the doctrines of God. For it is by faith that we perceive that these things are true. As was stated, to have a sense of security and mental well being, the individual had to be protected by his group, and he had to know that he was accepted and protected. And the same thing goes for the believer's relationship to Christ. He is accepted and protected by Christ, but he needs to believe that to have that sense of security. How he comes to this knowledge is through faith in the Word of God and it's teachings, and operating in the new nature under the filling of the holy spirit. For it is the new nature and the holy spirit that are oriented towards these things. Once we were not the people of God, but now we belong to them. This reality of the spiritual change must always be kept before our eyes. We have been taken out of the world, out of the dominion of Satan's group, and brought into a new group. **And all the security needs that we will ever have will come from the almighty hand of our eternal Father.**

55. The example of Abraham.

A. Heirs of the world - *"Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring- not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all."* Romans 4:16.

This goes back to the idea found in Romans 4:13, **where Abraham and his seed would be the heirs of the world. What is in view is being a part of the new humanity that will live and rule on the earth.** This entails the forgiveness of sins; justification, the legal declaration of righteousness; resurrection from the dead; a new body; the judgment seat of Christ for evaluation; position in the kingdom; ruling on the earth.

These are the things that God has planned, and that God intends to do for individuals. He wants to do them for people, but they will only be done on the basis of grace. They are a gift of grace, so no man can boast. And they proceed out of faith; salvation, and all the other attendant blessings of God, come out of grace through faith.

The promise of salvation and eternal life comes out of faith, so that it can be in keeping with the norm and standard of grace. In the original it has, *hina kata charin*, with *kata* indicating the norm or standard by which something is done; which tells us that **salvation is according to the standard of grace!** This is such a vitally important principle for all to understand; and one, sad to say, most do not. Whatever God does for anyone, must be done in keeping with the standard of grace.

There is the standard of works, which brings in the idea of working towards a goal and receiving it as wages due. In it, there is no glorification of the giver, because there is no giving; there is only the glorification of the one who is working. It also becomes a basis for bragging and boasting; and it also eliminates the idea of being thankful. Why be thankful, when you've done all the work? It also puts God in the debtor position, because he now owes salvation, etc., to the one who is working. And God will not have any of that! **God does not and will not owe any man anything!**

But when it's **according to the standard of grace**, then it all **shifts to the idea of a gift**. Now, God does these things and gives them as a gift to man. He doesn't owe anything to anyone in the process; it allows him to do things on the basis of grace, and enjoying the process of giving. It also creates the attitude of thankfulness in the one receiving the gift. It also eliminates all pride and arrogance concepts in the mind and the bragging of the mouth. So whatever God does for us has to be according to the standard of grace.

That's why there has to be faith. It is a non-meritorious concept; it is not a work; it is not a wage due one for working; it is not something that one can brag about. It's just faith! Salvation is a gift; Christ is God's gift to us; faith is a gift; our daily provisions are a gift; our blessings are a gift; everything we get from God is a gift; and these things are appropriated by the faith he gives to us.

Now these gifts, **this inheritance has been guaranteed to all Abraham's seed**. Not only the resurrection and eternal life have been guaranteed to us, but all the promises of God. The word for a **guarantee is *bebaios***, and it speaks of the unbreakable nature of a thing, **such as a contract; thus forming a guarantee**.

But what is interesting is that this guarantee of the promises of God is also tied back to the grace of God. In other words, it's the grace of God that guarantees our salvation and the eternal state. If it was left up to us, to our works, what guarantee could we produce, that we could not only save ourselves, (perish the thought), but keep ourselves saved and bring ourselves into God's eternal state? None! But if it's grace, and it is, then God is the one who guarantees that it will be done. And we notice that the promises of God concerning the eternal state, that are found in his promises to Abraham, were made not only to Abraham, but to his seed as well. **And we will see who his seed really is in the next phrase.**

God's promises have been made to those who are of the law and to those who are of the faith of Abraham. **Those who are of the law** is not a reference to those who were trying to gain the eternal state by keeping the law! This would contradict everything that Paul taught. What it is, is a reference to those born under the Mosaic period, those living in the nation of Israel from the time of its founding up to the time of Christ. Being born in the old testament era did not exclude one from the promises of God concerning the eternal state, nor did it automatically include them, just because they were racial Israelites. **They too had to appropriate them by faith in Christ, as Abraham did, and as all those living in the new testament era have to do. Those who are of the faith of Abraham** is a reference to all those living in the new testament era who believe on Jesus Christ.

Both groups are in view here in Paul's letter. The gentiles living in the new testament era, who were not racial descendants of Abraham; and those who had racially descended from Abraham. Both groups are heirs of the promises of God concerning the eternal state, **providing that they have believed on Jesus Christ**, as Abraham did. The promises made by *Yahweh* to Abraham were not restricted to him alone, or to his racial seed. One needs to see the study on [Hebrews 6:13-20](#) on this matter, for the fuller scope of the promises concerning the matters of the indwelling Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, the resurrection, eternal life, the New Jerusalem, etc.. All these things are for all believers in Christ, old or new testament. That's why it says that we too are the heirs of these things, along with the believers in the old testament; and that we too are counted as the children of Abraham. **The issue here is not race, or parentage, or a nation; but the issue that binds it all is faith! And we gain all these things by faith in Christ.**

It says that, **He is the father of us all**. The genitive plural of *pas* describes a particular group of

people, believers in Christ. Now Abraham isn't the father of everyone living on earth, **but he is the father of a certain group of people - believers!** When the term father is used of God, it speaks of his act of creation - the creating of the new man inside of believers in Christ. But the term **father** had many meanings in ancient times: 1) an immediate male ancestor, 2) a forefather or ancestor, 3) an honorary title, or form of respectful address, 4) the older male members in a church, 5) the one who taught the mysteries to a novice in the Babylonian cult of Isis in Delos; and the cult of Mithras, 6) it was also used of the one who was the prototype of a group, or the founder of a class of persons. And that's what we have here with Abraham. He did not create us spiritually, God did. He was not even our ancestor whom we came from in the flesh. **But Abraham was the father, or prototype of a group of people. Not Jews, not Gentiles, but believers in Christ!**

It was well known, and accepted, down throughout the centuries of the church age, until recently, **that the Church was the "true Israel"**, and that **Abraham was our father.** One man who believed in God, and believed God; and who, because of his faith, was heir to all the things promised to him by God; both things temporal and eternal. So Father, here, is not used as a pro-creator, but one who was the prototype of a group of people; all having this one thing in common, that they believed on Christ as their savior. **Abraham was the father of believers - all believers in Jesus Christ!**

B. The father of many believers - *"As it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations.' He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed- the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were."* Romans 4:17.

Although the word for **nations**, *ethnos*, is translated as nations here, a more accurate rendering in context would be **gentiles**. Abraham was not the father of many nations, such as, France, Germany, Ethiopia, etc., but the father of many gentiles. And the word gentiles used here is a reference to all those outside the people of Israel, who had believed on Christ as their savior. **So Abraham was the father of many believing gentiles, as well as, believing Jews.**

Now the Jews claimed that Abraham was their father, (and so do the Arabs for that matter), because they had descended from him in the flesh, which Christ recognized. But they were not really his children, because in the eyes of *Yahweh*, he does not recognize the flesh, but faith! This truth is well brought out, before Israel ever existed, even before Isaac existed, God told Abraham, *"I have made (appointed) you a father of many gentiles."* **God was not building a racist organization, but a people of all races, who would be recipients of his grace through faith in Jesus Christ.**

Abraham had believed in the God who has the power to give life to the dead. Not only those who are physically dead, but those who are sexually dead, as he was later on; and to call into existence, things that do not exist. **Very few people have believed, or understood, what God has the power to do; how he has the power to make something exist that does not exist.** This is a display not only of the power of God, but the sovereignty of his will; and some eternal purpose that he is working out. Abraham saw that God was working out some grand plan that would go on and be fulfilled over the years, and part of that would be a people of many races that would belong to God, as he did, because of their faith in Christ.

C. The hopeless situation - *"Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, (gentiles), just as it had been said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.'"* Romans 4:18.

Against all hope, is *para* with the accusative of *elpis*, and had the meaning of going beyond something, of going beyond specified limits. This takes into account the specified limits that man puts

on things, so that there can be a reasonable prospect of hope. A young man sitting in class in high school has the hope of going to college, becoming an officer in the Navy, flying airplanes, doing post graduate work, enrolling in the astronaut training program, etc.. This is a reasonable hope; it's within the limits of reason. But say an older man, 80 years old, wants to do the same thing. Is this a reasonable hope? No! It's beyond the limits of reasonable hope.

And that's the idea here with Abraham, who, at 99 years of age, was certainly **beyond the scope of reasonable hope concerning children**. But it was then, when he was 99 years old, that *Yahweh* said to him. *"I have made you a father of many gentiles."* Genesis 17:5. Now the perfect tense is used here to show that even though he had no children at all, in the eyes of God, it was as good as done. Abraham was beyond hope, but he had hope, because he believed God. You see it all depended on what one was looking at. If a man followed the conventional wisdom of the day, (human viewpoint), he would look at his body and say, 'It's no use; I'm beyond hope'. He would conclude that he is beyond the ability, beyond hope and give up. **But Abraham did not follow the conventional thinking of the day; he refused to do that. Instead, he looked to the oath and covenant of God and his promise to him.** *Yahweh's* promise to him was what Abraham chose to believe, and doing so he had hope, even when it appeared to be hopeless.

D. He faced the facts with faith - *"Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead- since he was about a hundred years old- and that Sarah's womb was also dead."* Romans 4:19.

So, Abraham **became** the father of many gentiles. The word is *ginomai*, which signifies a change of condition or state. Abraham became something that he was not before, a father, and a father of gentiles at that. (Notice that there is no mention of Israelites here; it's all about believing gentiles). And with the passive voice of *ginomai*, it shows that Abraham did not do it for himself, but God did it for him.

And Abraham did not weaken in his faith. From the time that God had made the promises to him, until their fulfillment, Abraham did not weaken in his faith concerning them. The emphasis in the Greek is on the results of the action. What is in view is Abraham contemplating his own body. It would be one thing to believe while one is young and virile; but it's another matter all together to believe when one has become old and sexually inactive. But that's exactly what's going on here. Abraham had believed God's promises to him ever since he had first received them. And throughout his life he did not weaken in faith concerning them, (a momentary lapse is not weakening in faith). **And now, after his own abilities had ceased, he pondered the promises again, and he still believed!**

The word for **facing the fact** is the orist active indicative of *katanoeo*. It means to observe, notice, consider, contemplate, understand, to notice and understand what is going on; to give one's full mental attention towards something, to meditate on something; to observe, with one's thinking processes in full operation. **What this tells us is that Abraham was fully aware of the situation**. He knew that he still had not received the child that God had promised to him; and he was fully aware that he was unable to have sex any more. His body was not dead, but it was good as dead, as far as the matter of sex was concerned. (The perfect passive participle of *nekroo* shows that it was a **permanent condition**. In fact, there were two things that Abraham pondered in his mind; the one was his own body; and the other was the body of his wife Sarah. Neither one of them could perform in the area needed to bear children. **And yet, even though Abraham considered all this very well and fully understood what it meant; he still did not weaken in his faith.**

This is taking faith and putting it to the test. It would be one thing to believe, or say that one

believes, when one's mind is not faced with the barrier of the reality; or the reality of life and its physical limitations. But to now be confronted with the reality of a situation that says "impossible", now, how does one's faith stand! Does it weaken, or stand strong? How many of us, when coming to God in the face of a great trial, that we have no answer for, or way out, say, or think, "Impossible". And how many of us have our faith crumble? And how many of us have our faith stand strong! How many of us, when we know that there is no human solution to what we are facing, weaken in our faith? But how many will stand there in faith, fully recognizing that the situation is impossible, but say instead, "Lord, to me, there is no way out; there is no answer; I can do nothing. But you Lord have promised, and I believe that you are going to fulfill your promise to me." That is exactly what Abraham did when faced with the impossibility of he and his wife's impossible situation; he believed God.

E. Strengthened by faith - *"Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God."* Romans 4:20.

Diakrino, **to waver**, was to vacillate between two things, **belief and unbelief**. And with the negative *ou*, it was emphatic. He definitely did not vacillate between belief and unbelief, even when he seriously contemplated his and Sarah's state of being sexually dead. Abraham believed the promise of God, even though he was in such a hopeless state; hopeless, that is, in the eyes of man. This whole episode appears to be pointing to a later period in Abraham's life. He had been promised a son by God and other things, yet he still had not received them. Year after year of his life went by and still no son; but still waiting, hoping, believing that *Yahweh* would come through on his promise.

Now a new factor had been brought into the equation, something that he didn't have to deal with before. And that was he and Sarah had gotten to the place in life, that happens to all people if they live long enough, that neither of them were capable of having children. And as he considered his own body and Sarah's, and what all that meant, he still remembered *Yahweh's* promise to him and kept on believing it. But now he knew, that if he was going to have that son, it really was going to have to be God who would bring it to pass. Before, one could think that he could contribute some part concerning the matter, and God would somehow make it all happen on the inside. But now he sees that it is going to have to be all from God to make it come true. And so he believed and was totally trusting in God to make it all happen.

It says that he was **strengthened in his faith**, and the word for strengthening is the aorist passive indicative of *endunamao*, which means to be strengthened inwardly, on the inside, **to be in-strengthened**. It refers to the dynamic of being strengthened on the inside, in the soul. The question is was he strengthened **in** his faith? Or **by** his faith?

The dative case can be used both for: in the sphere of something; or, the instrument by which something happens. **If we say that his faith was strengthened; what strengthened it?** If we say that he believed the power of God could give him his child, then the reasoning is circular. He did not waver, stagger, through unbelief; through the instrument of unbelief. **But was strengthened by his faith.** I guess it all depends on whether we are looking at the soul as a whole, or the activity of faith going on in the soul. Obviously, one can be strengthened in his faith; becoming stronger in faith, dispelling all the weaknesses of doubt, etc.; and one can be strengthened, and is, in his soul by faith. **We have seen under the doctrine of metabolization, that when the believer believes the promises of God, that faith changes the essence of God's Word into spiritual phenomenon, which strengthens the soul.** And that's what we have here. Abraham was strengthened by his faith in the promise of God. This act converted the spiritual energy found in God's Word into the spiritual energy needed to stabilize and strengthen the believer's soul.

And it says that he **gave glory to God**. Well, what was it that he did that glorified God? This glorifying the Lord occurred before he had received his son. It would be natural for him to give God the glory after he received Isaac, but he did it beforehand! The action of glorifying the Lord was in the orist participle, **which ties all into Abraham believing the Lord**. It was not some meaningless ritual of words that people say that gives God the glory, but the fact that the believer actually believes God! All during this time that he was waiting on the fulfillment of the promise, Abraham was not weakening in his faith, but actually getting stronger. And what was it that did it? The fact that he kept on believing God's promise to him! And this is also what glorified the Lord as well.

F. Fully persuaded by faith - *“Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.”* Romans 4:21.

The word for being **fully persuaded** is *plerophoreo* and it means to fill up the mind with thoughts or convictions, to be fully convinced. I guess if we were to look at the mind from the standpoint of a container that has nothing in it at all, all the way to being filled up to the top. From the standpoint of positive or negative thoughts, one could say that his mind no longer has any negative thoughts, only positive ones. Or we could say the same thing about peace, happiness, etc.. But here, with Abraham, (and us), it deals with faith; one's mental conviction about a matter.

In the mind, as an unbeliever, the mind has no faith towards God. But when he believes on God, he has some faith; a little faith in his mind, but lot's of unbelief. It's like having a crucible with a little gold at the bottom and filled the rest of the way with dross. But hopefully, as the years go by, the volume of one's mind will be filling up more and more with faith and replacing all that unbelief.

Now Abraham believed God when he had made his promise to him; and he believed God all his life. And when he became sexually inactive, he still believed God! **But something else happened along the way, which really strengthened his faith; and that was when he became fully convinced in his own mind that *Yahweh* had the power to do what he promised!** He had already come to this place before he became sexually dead. We don't know exactly what year it occurred, but somewhere along the way he had become convinced about the power of God. And in the passive voice, it tells us that he had received this conviction; **something had convinced him about God's power**.

Epangello, the word for **promise** was a **legal concept**; and in the perfect tense, it tells us that it had already been stated and stood as an existing fact year after year. *Dunatos*, the word for **power**, though, was used with *eimi* in the present tense, which shows that God continued to still have the power. ***Yahweh* had told him in the past that he was going to give him a son, and he continued to have the power to do it, even though Abraham no longer had the power.**

We've talked about this many times, but we see it here very clearly. Abraham had always believed that God was going to give him a son from the first day that *Yahweh* had promised it to him. But he actually became fully convinced in his own mind, that God was going to do it, when he saw that God had the power to do it! Yes, Abraham always believed God, but like the rest of us, he had areas of wondering, perhaps questioning, some little area in the soul that had to be cleared up; so that faith would completely fill his soul. This lack of faith was manifested in Genesis 15:1, where Abraham was afraid, and he talked about Eliezer being his son; and when he talked about taking possession of a land populated by thousands of people! He knew that he did not have the power to get them out! Genesis 15:8. It's important to understand that one can believe God and still have areas of doubt. Pockets or areas in the soul where one questions, *“What can you give me since I still remain childless?”* How can I

know that I will still gain possession of it?", areas that have not been cleared up yet. Once these areas have been cleared up, then one has been filled up with faith, or has been fully convinced in his own mind. And **it is the Word combined with our faith that clears them up.**

The attribute about *Yahweh* that cleared it up for Abraham was the power of God. He became fully convinced that God had the power to do what he had promised. Abraham was no fool; he knew, that to have happen what had been promised to him was beyond the scope of any human power and in a realm that defies description. He knew that it was one thing to make a promise, and another thing altogether to carry it out. He had never seen this kind of power; he certainly didn't have it. He didn't know if that kind of power even existed. But he became convinced that *Yahweh* had it, and was filled to the brim in his faith.

I guess all of us have our own areas that bother us. We know what the Bible teaches and have read many of its promises; promises that God has made to us. But we have questions; perhaps areas of doubt: Does God exist? Really? Will he answer my prayers? Why? Will God do what he has promised? Why? Does God really want to do things for me? Why? Does God really have the power to do these things? Do these things apply to me? And we need to address these areas, or whatever your areas are, and deal with them in faith and doctrine, until we are fully convinced in our own minds, as Abraham was, and so our faith will be complete:

The first one is, "**Does God exist?**" Obviously, the answer is yes. There are many references to the existence of God in the Bible, and then there is the matter of the entire created universe. Ultimately, the individual has to make a choice to believe this, though; and then to keep on going in positive volition towards truth, until he is fully convinced in his own mind that *Yahweh*, the God of the universe, does exist!

The second one is, "**Will God answer my prayers?**" The answer is yes, but one does need to understand the various matters regarding prayer. Not all requests are granted by God, and there are many reasons for that. So one does need to understand the doctrine of prayer. As to why he does it; the same thing, but basically; his justice, his grace, his mercy, because it glorifies him, it pleases him, it accomplishes his purpose, etc..

The third one is, "**Will God do what he has promised?**" The answer is definitely yes. And it goes back to his own integrity, faithfulness, righteousness, truthfulness, the unchanging nature of God, that fact that he is unable to lie, the fact that he is only able to speak the truth. So if God says that he will do something, he will do it! Perhaps it would be the concept that God is not able to lie, that would convince the believer in his faith.

The fourth one is, "**Does God really want to do things for me?**" And the answer is yes again, and for many reasons; 1) It please God; 2) It glorifies him; 3) He does it for his son's sake; 4) Then there is the matter of his great love for us. We need to be convinced of God's intentions towards us, and these concepts will help, so that there will be no area of doubt.

The fifth one is, "**Does God have the power to do these things?**" We have seen that God is unable to lie, now we need to see that God not only has the power to do these things for us, but the power to do everything! God is all-powerful; he created the universe out of nothing, and brings the dead back to life. Abraham saw this about God and became convinced that he had the power to do whatever he promised to do. And we need to be convinced of that too.

The sixth one is, "**Do these things apply to us?**" This is answered in v.24, where it says that they do apply to us also. Some think that they only applied to Abraham and the old testament believers, but the imputation of righteousness and the inheritance of God's promises not only applied to Abraham, but to everyone who has believed on Jesus Christ as their savior.

56. The momentum of faith.

One of the things about faith is that it gives us momentum in life. **It not only keeps us moving forward in life, but also in the plan of God for our life.** Without faith, without hope, one would just give up on life. He would exist in a state of hopeless despair, robotically putting one foot in front of the other, shuffling along with no sense of purpose, or of ever attaining to anything. But faith gives a believer purpose, hope; even the inner dynamic of the soul to keep the believer moving forward each day in the plan of God; **moving him on towards a seen, or unseen goal.**

You see faith believes something. It believes the Word of God and what it teaches. And thus, it gives the believer **hope**; something as a goal to move forward to each day towards a known, or unknown purpose; a purpose known only to God. Faith believes that God has a purpose for our lives; that he has put us here on earth and saved us for a purpose; a purpose known only fully to God. **And so faith gives the believer a personal sense of destiny and motivates the believer to go forward and to keep on going forward each day, regardless of the difficulties involved, or the failures of the past.** Faith looks forward to the future, believing that God has a plan for him to follow; a path of growth; a path of production; a path of service; a path of glorifying God. Faith moves the believer to action! It takes him out of passive resignation, defeat, failure complexes, etc., and it keeps him moving forward in the right direction. It is not positive thinking, having a cheery outlook on life, or things, "life is great, people are wonderful, business is terrific". It is totally God-centered and focused on the Word of God. Even if the believer has failed miserably in life and the plan of God; faith will move him forward in the plan of God towards the goal of fulfilling God's will for his life.

57. The example of Paul's faith.

We are familiar with Paul's letter to the Philippians and how he now was in jail; not because of any crime that he had committed, but because he had rebelled against the will of God, and had made some serious compromises with legalism by going back into the temple with a new convert to Christ.

Paul had left behind an outstanding career as a Pharisee in Judaism, (at least in the minds of people), before he had believed on Christ as his savior; a life, by the way, that he considered dung. But now, as a minister of Christ, as an apostle, to have his ministry