

# The Faith of Christ

Welcome my troubled friends. As we look about us we see a world riddled with fear, doubt, confusion and dismay, as people rush to and fro seeking comfort and truth where there is none. Tragically though we believers in Christ sadly often fall into such perilous times of the spirit too as we fall foul of the fear of the temporal and substitute our peace that rests in the eternal for the immediacy of need of the world.

Mankind is not blind to this age of inner turmoil, it's poison sinking deep into the hearts of every soul, like the venom of the marauding serpent whose evil deceit first lured man away from the peace of communion with God. So the world's populace is desperately seeking refreshment, calm, peace and tranquillity of spirit so as to bring a degree of health and well-being to it's troubled mind. One cannot go past a supermarket magazine rack, turn on the radio, watch a tv programme, listen to the news or even stand in a shop queue without hearing someone speak of the troubled nature of their 'mental health'.

Thus this disease is rife; a pandemic of the human condition that plagues so very many both vocally and more worryingly silently as confused and struggling minds trudge through each day awaiting a fresh hell. So what hope is there for a reeling populace that groans evermore painfully each day under the weight of a mind tormented by the cancer of sin amongst a Creation seeking it's renewal. Ah, here is the remedy! It is in the light and power of Christ Jesus! That increasingly evident groaning of all existence for renewal shouts as a voice in the wilderness of despair that there is one outside of this malaise of the sin that holds bound up in His mighty and tender heart, all the treasures of wisdom. There is One who stands high above the dredge of sin and transgression; One whose Holiness resounds across all eternity and requires all honour and glory be His forever. He is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the Only Begotten Son of God and the Redeemer of repentant mankind. Here is our end point and yet where is our starting point to find this treasure of peace that we all long for? How are we to gain Christ in whom is hid all treasures of wisdom and all hope of eternal rest? For He is the Omega, the great resolution of all things, the concluding hand of time who holds all worthiness to open the title deeds to all the Heavens and Creation itself. What a joy it is to know that the gracious Lamb of God holds the climax to all time and the key to eternity in His nail pierced hands. And yet there is more joyful news to those who suffer from a troubled mind. There is greater expectation of hope than this even this great triumph of Christ. How so you may ask? This is the quest upon which launch this day, to see how the beleaguered mind is brought to health in this very same One in whom is also the Alpha, the beginning of all Creation, alongside being the Omega, the fulfilment of all things.

Let us begin this quest setting out on one great assumption of understanding, that being that we have a knowledge of faith in Christ. This great Gospel truth is a bedrock of comfort to believers and thus our journey is undertaken today with fellow believers who may feel troubled in the state of their mental welfare. We shall not forget the poor souls who do not know and believe in this happy hope however, for the joy offered in Christ is available to all who would bend their ear to hear of His goodness.

We Christians have been reborn through saving faith in Jesus Christ, this the Scriptures makes abundantly clear. It is the central tenant of the Gospel that reaches out to fallen mankind that salvation lies in simple faith in the Risen Lord Jesus and repentance of sin before His glorious and mighty throne. It is a mighty rock of foundation to all believers in Christ and yet so many of us fall into great times of troubled spirits and tested minds even though we know of this wondrous grace to which we have been washed clean in. The great deceiver and Father of Lies that is Satan accuses us of our sins and challenges us that we are too foul of nature to be redeemed. If this great arrow

misses us, then he fires another arrow against our hope in Christ. Or it may be the venomous darts of trying circumstances in our days; trials such as ill health, financial woes, loss of loved ones, or any other deeply wounding barbs that threaten to drive us to utter dismay. The enemy is subtle and observant, knowing the location of previous wounds of sin each of us carry. He bides his time and awaits the hour when we allow our shield of faith to slip ever so slightly and then he fires his arrow with pure hatred of all that is gracious and holy within our lives, seeking to destroy even just one soldier of Christ. For you see if Satan manages to destroy but one of the sheep given unto the Good Shepherd that is Christ Jesus, then His perfect love and faithfulness towards His own has been broken. The perfection of His love would be brought into the greatest depths of doubt that all Creation would lament with the most soul piercing screams of dismay.

So we believers in Christ sometimes feel so broken by the assaults of Satan that we may struggle to hear the loving voice of Our Shepherd. Like the wandering sheep that has walked away from the secure fold of it's guardian and does not hear the guiding voice of it's protector; so too we may feel cut adrift of Christ. There may be some of you who know the great test of faith of which I speak and there may be some of you who consider me a mad man having never been tasked with suffering such cruel days. Happy are such souls who have not suffered such lowness of spirit, such desperation of mind that this same mind seemingly contends against it's own sanity. One can feel such levels of despair that it burdens the spirit greatly to fight against the notion that even the bastion of hope that is faith in Christ might fall under this vicious assault of darkened days.

To those who have suffered such dark times, there is a hope to rescue the troubled mind, the ailing spirit from such despair and malaise. As ever it is held within the eternal Word of God and revealed within it's purest form, the A.V/KJV Bible. Turn now to your Bible and sample the sweetness of hope offered by the honeyed words of Our Lord and Saviour who has brought nourishment to our troubled minds. Read Romans 3:22, Galatians 2:16, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 3:22, Ephesians 3:12, Philippians 3:9, Colossians 2:12, what do you notice? What hope is graciously extended to the broken believer? What balm is lovingly placed on the deep wounds of the troubled heart and mind of the follower of Christ? One simple word offers such magnitude of assistance in our hour of need that no attack of Satan can ever shatter. That word is 'of'. The faith OF Christ is our great refuge in such times of strained mental and spiritual health, in hours of such bleakness that even our very faith seems under threat. It is the simple truth that is the sustaining, unbreakable faith of Christ that burns within each and every one of His elect that brings us sweet relief from the fears that we shall never see happy days of hope enter our lives once more.

Our Lord is the author and finisher of our faith. He founded it, He nurtures it and supplies it of all it's needs so that He might present it fully grown in His grace before The Father in full assurance that He did not lose even one from His fold. For if each of these glorious texts spoke of faith IN Christ and not the faith OF Christ, then the burden of the sustaining of our faith would become unbearable in the great testing hours of which every true believer encounters at some point in the walk through these wicked days. We would have no great rock upon which to lean when we could not even bear up our own being; we would simply slip uncatchable into an ever deeper abyss of despair that falls unceasingly into the grave. How wonderful, how comforting it is that when we feel as though we are sinking ever deeper into troubled hearts and minds through whatever cause, He stands ready to catch us with His great and nail pierced hands.

He did not endure the tearing wounds of those great nails so that He would abandon the ones for whom He suffered so violently in both of body and spirit! He endured the most hellish of torments so that we might be spared them and that when we feel so greatly troubled, we might be reassured that our faith will never fall because He is it's lifeblood. He poured out His precious blood in full obedience unto the will of the Father, knowing that not even death itself could break the bond of

love between the Father and He. Thus through Christ we are brought into this eternal, unbreakable love; made sons and daughters of God through the righteousness of the firstborn, Jesus Christ. So our faith is not laid at our feet; we are not tasked with carrying this precious jewel through the battlefield of life. What a miserable assertion that would be for each of the children of God! Who would dare believe that they were strong enough in faith to make it through the Slough of Despond, Vanity Fair and other great trials unscathed in their faith? Who would claim such power of spirit to overthrow the snares of Satan with which every Christian is attacked by? No true Christian would ever claim such a thing, the humble redeemed heart would cry out in anguish at such a heavy burden to carry as it would see the battles ahead and faint under the toil even yet to come. We have though in Christ, a captain, a most able and mighty Captain of the Host of Heaven who stands before us, beside us and behind us, strengthening us with the power of His arm to never succumb to the weariness of the labour for His names sake.

Is the preciousness of this gracious doctrine beginning to radiant in the troubled heart and mind? I know it will be if the spirit in anguish is humble and sees that even the mightiest of souls falls under the strain of this life. In this most wondrous of truths we see how greatly cared for we are by God, how though He may have allowed our stumble, our fall into the pit of despair as did Joseph when he tasted slavery at the hands of his treacherous brothers; He never leaves us there and instead carries us up in His grace and appoints us to a throne of life eternal alongside Our Risen Lord Jesus. This is the great remedy to all maladies of spirit, to all troubled minds experienced by the Christian. This mighty doctrine of the faith OF Christ towards His own, for in it we rest knowing that whilst we are not immune to times of despair, we shall be brought through it by His great faithfulness.

So is this beautiful cure to the ailing spirit and the troubled mind available to all? Why friend of course! This eternal remedy of mournful souls seeking healing is a free gift available to all who long for it. The lost soul is not cut adrift of this gracious gift and Christ desires to be their present help also so that they might be counted as part of the heavenly family loved forevermore by The Father. Open the Bible and read the passages of which we spoke of earlier and see for yourselves the provision for which the Lord Jesus has gifted you through His eternal grace.

Yet here I caution all those who go to read of these most treasured verses of Our Lord's Word. Not all Bibles are equal before God, for He is of one pure standard and so His Word is of one pure standard. Variations and alterations of His wonders are not tolerated by any true believer and yet we embrace alterations and variations of His ordained Word! Though there might not seem any great danger in slight degrees of change, the Devil is a crafty adversary and in the slightest of doors left ajar will he attempt slip his poison into the Pure Word of God. This he seeks to do so as to lead the lost further away from redemption in Christ and bring the believer into such realms of spiritual torment that they would even question the eternal nature of the love of their Father towards them. If one were to pick up a NKJV Bible, a translation reputed to contain all the truth and beauty of this magisterial text but bring in simple changes to inconsequential language so as to make God's Word more accessible to modern minds and hearts; one would not find this most beautiful of doctrines that is the faith OF Christ. In modern versions such as the NKJV, 'the faith of Christ' is replaced with 'faith in Christ'. I see no benefit to the modern reader in this alteration but I do see a great harm to the reader in such a simple and seemingly innocent change. In removing this crucial word 'of', the translators have removed the great comfort of security of salvation based on the faith of Christ and placed it squarely on the faith of the Christian. Yet as we have ascertained, who amongst the human race is able to carry such a precious treasure through life and resist all attempts by Satan to steal it from them and leave them bankrupt of hope.

This is no trivial matter. To those whose minds are so greatly troubled they cannot fathom even the most basic of hopes, the most fundamental tasks or facets of life, the notion that their eternal

security is also dependent on THEIR faith in God is overwhelming to the point of despair. In this most subtle of attacks we see the fingerprints of Satan, his wicked intent to finally and fully break the hope of even but a single believer in the saving grace of Christ.

This tragedy is not limited to the troubled believer, it's poison seeps into the hearts and minds of the lost who seek salvation also. For how many of we wretches have believed that we were too wicked, too lost, too weak to be redeemed and yet found solace in the saving and sustaining power of Christ Jesus. Yet if we placed all emphasis of hope at the feet of the weary lost heart it would be a final great crushing blow to their ailing spirit. Their minds would be cast into an even greater abyss than which it first stumbled into. So it is no small matter upon which we contend, for by accepting this unnecessary alteration to God's Pure Word we bring into doubt the very power of Christ to lead all souls given unto Him by the Father into eternal glory! We challenge the very saving grace upon which our salvation rests! Yet by holding fast to the Pure Word of God we are assured of our salvation by the eternal and tender faithfulness of God towards those who call and know the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

So here is the great remedy for the modern mind who finds itself in search of 'mental health'. In truth this world is too rotten and ravaged by sin for peace and 'good mental health' to be achieved by any source found within it. We must look to another kingdom for our source of spiritual and mental health; we must look unto the Kingdom of Heaven. Herein resides the Prince of Peace, Our Wonderful Counsellor who knows all our frailties, fears and troubles having felt them all and who extends His loving hand towards we wretched sinners in compassion. He alone has the strength of faith, the certainty of hope that can overcome even the darkest of torments and bring us to rest forevermore in paradise. This is the source of good mental health, a deep and true knowledge of the saving grace of Christ, founded by Him, gifted by Him, sustained by Him and fulfilled by Him. Amen.

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