

Faithfulness

Acts 9:1-9

Life's greatest step is to turn from sin unto God. We have already studied the steps to salvation in the first couple lessons, but now what? Now, we need to stay saved! The road to heaven is narrow, but straight. We can walk its path and find Jesus waiting for us at the end. But, the road is not an easy one. We must be determined to fight a good fight.

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

I Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Being saved (born again) is just the first step on the road to heaven. A very essential first step, to be sure, but many other steps must follow. In this lesson, we will talk about one of the more important ones for you; FAITHFULNESS!

What do I do first?

Many Christian converts have trouble figuring out what to do first. They want to be powerful speakers, great singers, prophets, teachers, etc. But first, we must have our spiritual priorities set, and in proper order. Paul taught Timothy concerning reading the word, exhortation, and doctrine; coupled with the gift of God in his life (the Holy Ghost): that he should take heed to them and ".....continue in them: for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (I Timothy 4:13-16) Paul also instructed Titus, to teach the young men, "...in all things showing thyself a pattern of good works....." (Titus 2:7) In other words, instead of trying to pre-design your future in Christ, allow God to lead you into His will and purpose. Christian Living is the first step - before Christian Service.

When God created the heaven and earth, he set certain laws in motion to keep the universe running. He created: Gravity to control the motion of everything. He created water so that it froze from the top down when nearly all other liquids freeze from the inside out so that the fish wouldn't freeze in the winter.

It is the same for a Christian. He made man so that he would grow from a baby to manhood, learning as he grew. The Bible says that when we first come to Him we are babes. And that we must grow in Him. Just like a baby becomes a young person and then an adult.

I Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

The young man becomes a nuclear physicist only after he obtains the knowledge and skill he needs from years of schooling. A teenage girl becomes a skilled surgeon only after many years of training. The lion is not born a great hunter. The deer cannot leap over a huge fence on the day he is born. A baby bird doesn't fly the day of its hatching. GROWTH IS A PROCESS. Proper growth must be worked at. To be "all you can be" for Christ will require:

- o Much Prayer
- o Much Fasting
- o Diligent Bible Study
- o Attending Services
- o Other things which pertain to spiritual life and growth

Don't expect to be an Apostle or Prophet after the first week in the church. Regardless of what your calling or burden may be in future days to come, you must first learn the ways of the Lord! Go to bible studies, go to Sunday School, go to the evangelistic services on Sunday night, read your Bible, talk to the leaders and ministers of your church.

When you have questions ask the Pastor or a Minister of your church. Spend time in prayer over your questions and decisions. Learn all you can. Be like a sponge. Hunger for the things of Christ.

Areas of Faithfulness

Faithfulness is necessary in every area of our Christian walk. The difference in a successful and unsuccessful Christian life is faithfulness. Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 2:2 "....the things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men," Living for God is easier if you are sold out to Him, it is very hard if you live the life of a compromiser and are always trying to appease your conscience.

In worship:

- We worship Him with instruments (Psalms 150)
- We worship Him with our voices (Psalms 66)
- We worship Him with our hands (I Timothy 2)
- We worship Him with our giving (II Corinthians 9)

Worship Him when you feel like it and when you don't! We praise God when we're having a good day and when we don't have a good day, because God doesn't have any bad days! Be faithful in worship. Keep worshipping Him! He alone is worthy to receive glory and honor and Power!

Don't allow the devil to talk you out of worship, or to occupy your thoughts and keep you from worshipping. Don't sit with people in church who hinder your worship. When you come into His

presence, worship Him without hindrances. There is power in praise. You can praise and worship your way out of depression, oppression, problems, etc.

In Giving:

- Malachi 3:8-10 speaks of robbing God.
- Jesus spoke of paying tithes in Luke 18:12.
- Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek.

Tithing is merely the acknowledgment of God's ownership of our lives. We pay rent - don't we? To a landlord---good or bad! The Law teaches us of the offering of firstfruits.....but the principle of the tithe can be found all the way back in the Garden when God reserved something in man's sphere of activity for Himself. And said, "Don't touch it!" Tithing can be found under the Law for sure, but also before the Law, and after the Law in the age of the Church. Actually tithing is only the start; Jesus taught also of offerings, and alms.

God's blessing are upon those who give to Him faithfully. You will bring the curse of God on your home and finances when you are unfaithful to God. We give to Him as He prospers us.

In attendance:

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

It is impossible for you to be strong in Christ if you miss church. We are spiritually fed when we come to service. Missing church is spiritually equal to missing your natural nourishment. If you don't eat you will die - spiritually and physically.

You ought to be here every time the doors are open. During revival, regular services, even special events like baby showers. Dedicate your time to Him. Be faithful!

To the ministry:

Listen to the preaching/teaching.

Obey the Pastor, obey his teachings concerning your life.

Submit yourself to the decisions of the Pastor and ministers as unto God. Don't listen to gossip about the pastor or ministry. It takes two to gossip, one to talk and one to listen - both are gossips in the sight of the Lord. When someone starts to say something about the man of God, tell them you are going to pray for your pastor and hold his hands up. Be faithful to God's man and God will bless your life.

Hebrews 13:7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief: for that is unprofitable to you.

To the holiness standard of God's Word:

Psalms 96:9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

I Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

I Thessalonians 3:13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Faithfulness even when things are Tough:

In our text (Acts 9:1-9), we saw Saul (later to be called Paul) on the road to Damascus to persecute Christians. He had been doing this for some time. He had even been there when Stephen was stoned to death. He was miraculously converted! Praise God! We are all converted miraculously!

But, now, notice what Paul does after his conversion.

Galatians 1:13-18 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called [me] by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

This man spent three years in Arabia learning of God no doubt in much prayer. Then he went and spent 15 days with Peter in Jerusalem, to confer with him. To make sure that everything he understood about the Lord matched what Peter knew to be the actual teachings of Jesus.

If you can say nothing else about Paul, you have to say he was faithful to his heavenly vision.

Acts 26:19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

Read Acts 26:13-19 and II Corinthians 11:23-28.

The point being made here is that Paul was faithful. It didn't matter how he felt, whether he was hungry, how God was treating him, or whether he was free or not. He knew that Jesus had called him and he was going to serve Him.

You see, Paul loved Jesus! He was persuaded that nothing could ever separate him from the love of GOD! And he was faithful because of it!!

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.