



The Good News

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What can faith do for me?

By Michael McCleary

The theme of our Gospel Meeting is “Being Built Up in Faith”. Andrew will lead us in a study that examines the nature of faith and how it can help us as we seek to serve God “*acceptably with reverence and godly fear*”. As we anticipate these lessons and the applications that will come from them, consider with me what faith can do for us.

Going south out of Tarpon Springs, Florida on Hwy. 19 back in 2005 there was a billboard with an advertisement for a new church called “Christ Church”. It had a picture of the two “pastors” - a man and his wife—and the words “Faith will rise to your family’s needs”. It is true that we can gain things from faith that will help us in this life. We realize that through faith in Christ and our obedience to Him, our physical lives can be benefited. The godliness that the Bible teaches “*is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come*” (I Tim. 4:8). But what if those who responded to that billboard were focusing on what faith could do “for me and my family” in this life only, not caring at all about what faith could do for their souls?

If the focus is on being a godly person and concerned about the saving of the soul for the next life, we will be living a godly life physically, and this will benefit us. We will be respecting the covenant of marriage into which we enter, and we will be abstaining from “*youthful lusts*” (II Tim. 2:22) including fornication, drug abuse, alcoholism, etc. These benefits will be gained by our understanding of God’s will and our desire to be obedient to that will. Imagine that a couple decided to start going to church for the specific purpose of fixing their marriage. They listen to sermons about godly husbands and wives, and soon their situation is resolved. Then they quit going, having obtained what they were seeking. It would be wonderful that they went and listened, and perhaps

some seed that was planted could come to fruition, but we can see how the focus was not where it should have been. They must understand that there is more to faith and its benefits than just a happy, or stable, marriage. Consider Jesus’ words in **Mt. 6:33** where Jesus tells us where our focus should be; “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*”. Consider also the “chapter of faith” of **Heb. 11**. In each of these examples of faith, read how their focus was on pleasing God and thus their faith “rose” to that goal. And notice how there will not always be happy endings to the physical lives of those who live faithfully—some were sawn in two, stoned, beaten, scourged, imprisoned, living destitute lives. Having faith does not guarantee a happy life in the physical sense—yet all these that died in faith had their focus on God’s kingdom and His righteousness. Having faith did not enable them to get out of terrible events—it enabled them to endure them. It is not the focus of faith in which the priority is having a good life now, but rather the focus of faith with the priority of obtaining salvation. The benefits for a person’s physical life, as well as the benefits for a godly family, will be a product of this underlying faith and desire to please God.

Consider **I Pet. 1:6-9** where we see the focus of faith in the saints. While being grieved by trials, they greatly rejoiced that, though their faith was being tested by fire, it would be found to “*praise, honor, and glory*” and that they would receive “*the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls*”. The focus of faith in the saints was on the next life, regardless of the consequences of that focus in this life. It might even mean living a difficult, sorrow-filled life—but that is how high faith will rise to meet the needs of the soul in pleasing God. Let us make our focus of faith on pleasing God, rather than thinking about what we can get out of it, realizing that our salvation depends on pleasing God.