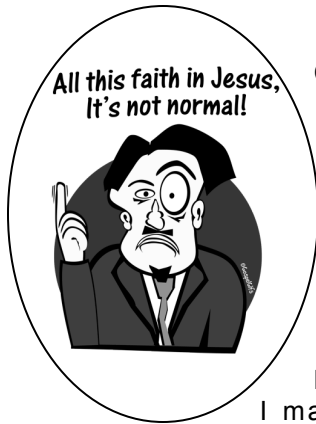


# Saving Faith



Contrary to what some people think, having faith is a very 'normal' thing. We all use it everyday. Like when you came in for this session. I'm sure you just sat down on your chair without first inspecting it to see if someone had removed its screws or sawed its legs. And if you brought a beverage with you it's not likely that you first had a chemist test it for 'foreign substances'. Neither did you look under the hood of your car to see if the motor was still there before turning the key and driving away. Faith, placing our trust in something or someone, is a matter of life. Everybody uses it whether they think about it or not.

But remember: faith is only as valid as the object in which it is placed! I may believe with all my heart that I can flap my arms and fly, but I will find out quickly enough that my faith is in the 'wrong thing' as soon as I step off a tall building. However, it's not the 'fall' but the 'landing' that hurts!! Many people follow false beliefs (and are happy for now) but one day there will be a 'landing'! [**Pro 14:12** and **16:25**]

The greatest statement of the role of faith in salvation is in **Ephesians 2:8,9**. It is God's grace and God's gift, but He does it for us because we are willing to trust Him! **Titus 3:5** says that it is "*not by works of righteousness...but by his mercy*" that he saves us!

**"Grace is getting that which we don't deserve - Mercy is not getting what we do deserve"**



**"Well? Why won't works work??"** Most people ask that question and the answer is simple: no matter how hard you try you can never be good enough!! Sorry, I know you're probably trying real hard, but "dig" all you want, a chest of gold is not under all that "dirt". Why call it dirt? Because the Bible tells us that (compared to God) "*all our righteousness is as filthy rags*" (**Isa 64:6**) It goes like this: God is watching not just our 'act' but our 'attitude'. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, gave several examples including the almsgivers who only gave to be "*seen of men*" (Mat 6:1-5) to which He explains "*they have their rewards*" Some of the most charitable giving around

has at its roots some selfish motive (such as popularity - consider the warning in Mat 7:20-23!) Another problem: even if you're doing pretty good keeping most of the commandments, it says in James 2:10,11 that if you break one, all is broken! [A cup with a broken handle may still hold coffee but that doesn't change the fact that it is still a 'broken cup']

"Ok, so...I believe...is that it?" Well, I would first ask, "Believe what?" Remember, believing that God exists is not what we are talking about [*"the devils also believe and tremble"* James 2:19,20] It does not take faith to know God exists [Psa 19:1-3 ; Rom 1:16-23] Even Jesus, his life and death, are a matter of historical record with overwhelming evidence. What requires "faith" is trusting that in the end He will accept us, not for our own righteousness, but for the righteousness of Christ in whose hands we have placed our lives.

- **Phil 3:9** "*not mine own righteousness...but...of God by faith*" (see also v.7,8,10)
- **Rom 10:9,10** Why? Because "*Christ is the end of the law...to every one that believeth*" v.4)
- **I John 1:9** Consider v.6-10, how we must be honest with ourselves in order to 'confess our sins' but then afterwards how the Lord will 'continue to cleanse' us if we 'continue' walking in His light.

The best statement of true saving faith, of one who has put himself wholly upon the 'mercy seat' of God, resting in his 'blessed assurance', is by Paul in 2Tim 1:12: "*I know in whom I believe...*" [Not religion – but relationship] "*and am persuaded*" [My mind is made up – 'I am committed'] "*that he is able*" [Heb 11:6 "...must first believe that He is...(God Almighty)"] "*to keep that which I have committed unto him*" [Heb 7:25 "...to the uttermost..."] Having "saving faith" is not just that you believe in God, but that you know God believes in you, that He wants you, loves you, and plans to keep you.