

THE FAITH BUILDER

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

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From The Editor

This morning I preached on Colossians 2:6-23. When I was preparing the sermon, I discovered some really important points that we all need to be reminded of, so I have decided to set them out here.

It is important when we consider a passage of Scripture that we read it slowly to ensure that we understand the real meaning of it. We need to see what Paul actually wrote and to see how he used particular words and phrases to bring out the meaning of what he was trying to convey to the Colossians. We understand that what he wrote was not to the Colossians alone, but to all the churches, and this letter would have been distributed widely so that all believers would be exposed to Paul's understanding of the Gospel.

Often, when we read through a passage, we read it at the start of the sermon and then go on and preach our pre-conceived interpretation of it. This is really true when it is a very familiar passage. So, when we read or teach a particular passage of Scripture, we need to make sure that we are basing our interpretation on what Paul actually wrote, rather than what we think he wrote.

The verses from the passage are written in bold as we work through it verse by verse.

⁶So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him

There was a time in our lives when we said "yes" to Jesus. Some of us might have been brought up in Christian homes and might not identify an actual event that happened. Others decided for Christ in a memorable event and had a big turn-around in their lives as a result. Regardless of how it happened, we have all at one point received Jesus Christ as Lord. This was one of the entry points that Peter pointed to on the Day of Pentecost. When the crowd asked, "**What shall we do to**

be saved?” He replied, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”** What this means to us is that we receive Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives. This has to be a conscious, deliberate, and personal choice.

But this is just the entry point. We cannot just leave it at that. Once we have put our hand to the plough, we need to move forward. Jesus said that having put our hand to the plough and looking back, we are not fit for the kingdom of God. This means that if we stop moving forward for Christ, we lose our fitness for the kingdom of God. If our lives continue as they were with our hearts still in this world, then our decision for Christ is just a religious exercise and not a true conversion.

For our faith to be real it must result in action. What is that action? Continuing to live our lives in Him. We need to be defined as children of God, with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. Others need to see it. If they don't see the different then we need to look at the depth of our conversion to Christ.

Those who are living in Christ are not shamed of their faith in Him in front of family, workmates and friends. There is no such thing as a secret disciple.

⁷rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Our roots were once in the world, but we have been uprooted and planted in Christ. We are growing every day in faith. Not just faith in anything. Our faith is in what we have been taught out of the Scriptures. We hear good teaching every Sunday morning. If we are living in Christ, our faith is being strengthened through the preaching and teaching.

Another characteristic of true conversion to Christ and that we are living in Him is that we are “overflowing with thankfulness” We are always feeling exceedingly grateful for what Jesus has done for us – that He has revealed Himself to us, and given us the faith and ability to say “yes” to Him.

In 18th Century Colonial America, the Methodists were criticised by the Presbyterians because of their excessive emotion. But the

Methodists were overjoyed that Jesus had saved them and they were not hesitant in expressing that joy.

⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

We are exposed to all sorts of forces that would attempt to water down our faith and get our minds off our mission. It is our responsibility to ensure that we continue with our personal mission for Christ. We can't blame anyone else if we go wrong. Paul says that we have to take the responsibility to go on for God, to find the will of God for our lives and keep on the path.

John Wesley was criticised because he included this very point in his theology. The Calvinistic Presbyterians believed that only the Holy Spirit could bring a person to salvation, and then once saved, the person remained saved regardless of the type of life he lived afterward (although Calvin did teach that holiness of life was an evidence of election and true conversion). Wesley believed that although the Holy Spirit brought revelation and conviction, it was the person's responsibility to say "yes" to Christ, and it was also his responsibility to go on for Christ afterward. He taught that a person could be lost again if he did not make the effort to develop his ongoing sanctification and holiness. It appears that Wesley's theology is more consistent with what Paul is saying to the Colossians in this passage.

The distractions come through other people. The Apostle John says that we must test every spirit. This means that whatever anyone says to us that might have an influence, it needs to be thoroughly tested. People can look and sound very plausible, but you can be taken captive through stuff that comes through the media, advice from family and friends, even other Christians. Anything that is not firmly based in the teaching of the New Testament is "hollow and deceptive philosophy".

What we have to think about: is everything that we do in church firmly based on the New Testament, or is it based on human tradition? A lot of religious tradition, unless fully backed by Scripture, is "hollow

and deceptive". We had a group which exercised a prophetic ministry in our church a while back. What they said and did was totally consistent with New Testament Scripture. But some said, "We are Presbyterians, and we don't go in for that sort of thing." The problem with them was that they forgot that the founders of the Presbyterian Church, the Scottish Covenanters, John Knox and John Welsh, were strong in the prophetic, and their prophecies came to pass. A friend of mine has said that the most powerful and life-changing prophecies that he has received came from Presbyterian elders. So, in actual fact, many Presbyterians do "go in for that sort of thing!"

Would it be fair that those people, who put their tradition above what is clearly taught in Scripture, are taken captive by human tradition, based on the spiritual forces of this world instead of Christ? Not every religious activity is based on Christ, and we need to know the difference.

**⁹For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,
¹⁰and in Christ you have been brought to fullness.**

The whole fullness of God lives in Christ. The whole nature and character of God is seen in Christ. Everything that God is and has is in Christ. But that is not all. Paul says that in Christ, we have been brought to fullness. This is an amazing fact. Because Jesus is a complete Saviour, we are complete Christians. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. In Christ we lack nothing. Sadly we are living very far short of who we actually are. Do we really believe where we stand with Christ?

He is the head over every power and authority.

See that? If He is the head over every power and authority, so are we! Why? Because Jesus is seated at the right hand of God, and we are seated right there with Him. Does that describe your life? If not, why not?

¹¹In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ.

This means that your whole life foundation was absolutely changed. You are no longer ruled by the forces that control this world. You are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit. You don't have to live like any other person in the world.

I don't mean that you give up your jobs, homes, families and possessions as some ultra religious people do. But you are not defined by them. You are defined by what are the motivating forces of your life. You are a whole new species of person with a specific mission. It was Christ who took out your hardened, stony heart and replaced it with a new heart. You have a different purpose in life.

You didn't save yourself. Jesus did it.

You didn't fill yourself with the Holy Spirit. Jesus did it.

He paid the price for you. His seal is upon you. You are identified as not only a follower of Christ, but as a brother or sister of Christ; a joint heir with Him to receive everything that the Father would give to Him. If we could only grasp this, what different people we would be? What a different church this would be. This church would be packed to the doors with people coming to find out what we have that makes us so special.

¹²having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Baptism is the symbol that when Jesus died on the cross and was buried in the tomb, we were buried with Him. Our lives, as we knew them, were gone. We died. When Jesus was raised from the dead, we were raised with Him. We were given eternal life. This is what makes us a whole new species of people. The full reality of our resurrection will happen when Jesus comes again. In the meantime, we have a down-payment. We are filled with the Spirit. This comes from putting into practice the second requirement put to the crowd by Peter on the Day of Pentecost: **"Believe that God raised Christ from the dead"**. It is on the basis that we believe that Jesus rose from the dead, that we have received all these things I have been writing about.

¹³when you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ.

Before we said “yes” to Christ, even if we were brought up in Christian home, as far as God was concerned, we were dead in our sins. This is because God has no grand-children. If we remained in our sins, our eternal death would have become a reality, because those who are in the flesh cannot please God. The Scripture says that God is angry with the wicked every day. Those are the people who have never said “yes” to Christ and therefore remain subject to the hollow and vain philosophy of the world.

But as soon as we said “yes” to Christ, God made us alive. We passed from death to life. Our spirits were made alive. This is why we might not have felt any different. This is because our spirit is separate from our feelings and emotions. Emotions come with the realisation of what has happened to us. But there is a difference, and maybe others see it first. And there should have been a difference and there should be on-going development in faith and grace.

He forgave us all our sins. ¹⁴having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us.

The result of saying “yes” to Christ is that we are totally forgiven. The debt that we owed God has been completely paid. The debt condemned us, and we could never have been able to pay it back. But Christ paid that debt when He died on the cross for us. Now, God has absolutely nothing against us. There is now no longer any need to have sin-consciousness. Why?

He has taken it away, nailing it to the cross

God has taken all our sinfulness away. He has nailed all our sins to the cross of Christ. But, we see only Jesus nailed to the cross. What God did was to put all our sin on Jesus, and then allowed Him to be nailed to the cross. It wasn't just the Romans who nailed Him there. It was God Himself. That's how much He wanted to save us. This is why we should be overflowing with thankfulness to God for what He has done for us.

¹⁵And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Before we were converted to Christ, we were under the authority of the spiritual powers and authorities of this world. We are not talking about governments or employers here, or “she who must be obeyed” at home! Satan is the god of this world. We were under his authority and power. But God has disarmed Satan’s power and authority over us.

When the Japanese surrendered at the end of the Second World War, they were disarmed in every country they had occupied. Before the surrender, they had full authority and were prepared to back it up with their weapons. But once disarmed, they had no authority and had to comply with the British and American forces that took over. Before, they were a feared enemy. Now, they were a subdued group of people. As soon as Jesus rose from the dead, Satan became a defeated and subdued foe, having completely lost his authority over everyone who made Jesus Christ their Lord.

It seemed that it was Jesus who was made a public spectacle by being lifted up on a Roman cross, but in actual fact, it was Satan who was made the spectacle in his absolute defeat and disarmament. He no longer has any weapons to fight against the Christian believer. He can only bluff with words.

This is why we need to test everything that is spoken to us or any teaching that is offered so that we are not taken captive through Satan’s deception. The devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Notice that all he can do is roar – full of sound and fury, but with no teeth. He can also appear as an angel of light. Notice that he is no longer an angel of light, but can only appear as such. We must remember that the counterfeit can look so much like the real thing, that it is possible for even the elect to be deceived.

But the message of the cross is that we are made more than conquerors through Christ. We are fighting a battle that has already been won for us. Gallipoli was a battle which was lost before the first soldier landed on its shores. The British and French commanders

underestimated the strength and ability of the Turkish military, and because of inadequate intelligence were not aware of the extensive minefield across the Dardanelles Strait. But when we enter the fight for our faith, we fighting from a position of victory! Are we living in the light of that?

¹⁶Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

These are outward rituals which for the Christian believer are non-compulsory. We don't have to follow food rules like some. We don't have to take part in traditional church religious festivals. We are not forced to set aside any special day for religious reasons. Man looks on the outward appearance and judges people that way. But God looks on the heart. We don't have to accept any criticism from anyone about how we decide to worship God.

Who cares where the piano is placed in the church? Who cares whether the Bible is brought in at the start of a service or whether it is there already? Who cares if we decided to have the Lord's Supper every week instead of every month? What difference does it make if anyone conducts the communion part of the service instead of the "approved" ordained minister? What difference does it make whether a church has an ordained minister or a group of elders running a church? I tell you that God doesn't.

These things are shadows of the reality. The reality is in Christ, and He is in you. Christ in you, the hope of glory. God doesn't care about the outward forms of worship, and who conducts it. We don't need priests to represent us before God when He says that we are all kings and priests and are able to come to Him directly.

God also doesn't care about church buildings. We don't need temples when we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, not the church building. There is no presence of the Holy Spirit in a church building when no one is there. As soon as the people enter, they bring the

Spirit in with them. It is the people who love Christ who are the atmosphere in a church. God is more interested in the state of our hearts before Him.

¹⁸Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind.

There are always people who care more about the externals in a church, and a lot of church conflicts and divisions are over those things. There are people who make a great show of spirituality and like people to know how humble they are. But if you put a foot wrong, they are the first to criticise you.

We need to be very fussy whom we listen to. Because Satan can appear as an angel of light, we need to be careful about listening to people who say they have had angelic visitations given them special revelations that we must accept. There are those who go on about the “deeper life” and present themselves as being somehow superior to the ordinary believer. Paul says not to listen to such people.

I know who are the good men in my church who are mentoring me. I listen to them because they have earned my respect because they have shown to be faithful men of God. But there are others who are always spouting on about how close they are to God, and what they have done for Him, and they do not hesitate to “teach” how to be a better Christian. But these are puffed up with their own importance and are ruled by their own unspiritual minds. We can safely ignore people like that. So, what is their problem?

¹⁹They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

They have lost connection with Christ. They are more concerned about their own so-called spirituality and what they know, and what they are doing for God. They are looking inward, having confidence in their own gifts, skills and knowledge. They are tending toward New Age thinking instead of having the mind of Christ.

Our Religious World



The health of the human body depends on its connection with the head. If a person breaks his neck and the spinal cord is severed, the body becomes paralysed and useless. I heard in the news lately that a surgeon thinks he can do a head transplant in the near future. Others have expressed fears that having a new head on a body, or vice versa, can cause insanity because of the dramatic change.

Therefore, it is important to have the right head on your body. All knowledge, gifts, skills, and the true filling of the Holy Spirit comes from Christ who is the head of the body.

²⁰Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: ²¹"Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"?

There are people who are dead to the world in Christ still living as if they still belonged to the world. Again, I want to say that this does not apply to the law of the land, or the rules of the workplace. This is the religious world with its rules and regulations. It is no longer a matter of "thou shalt not" any more. We have been set free from all religious rules and laws.

²²These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings.

We follow those rules which enable us to be safe in our community, on the road, stay healthy and safe, complete our studies, and keep a good job. But they do not define us as Christian believers.

²³**Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.**



What we are talking about here are religious rules. They have the appearance of making a person more wise, but they force people to worship in particular ways that are not consistent with the New Testament, whether these people want to worship that way or not. The rules promote false humility instead of the genuine faith that makes a person truly humble before God. But these rules do not restrain a person from sinfulness.

There is a strict religious community that has appeared in the New Zealand news this last week. They have very strict rules concerning dress, who they should marry, how they are employed, and freedom to come and go from the community. The leader of this community, in spite of these strict rules, still did time in prison for sexual offences to female members of the community. The strictness of the rules did not restrain him. This example is exactly what Paul is talking about.

Summary

The Christian faith is quite simple really. It's all the religious rules that people feel they need to follow, or those imposed on them that makes it more complicated than it should be. A member of the strict community mentioned above said the reason why she was afraid to leave was that "I don't want to lose my salvation."

When Jesus died on the cross, we died with Him. That means that we are dead to our sins and our life in the world. When Jesus rose from the dead, we were made alive to God. We received eternal life, and the down payment of it was the infilling of the Holy Spirit. We are seated at the right hand of God with Jesus. We are children of God and the devil has no authority or power over us. Jesus is our head and we are His body. We function as Christian believers as we remain connected to our Head. We have a mission. "Go into all the world and make disciples of every nation."

God has a plan and purpose for our lives. As long as we continue to strengthen our faith in Christ and develop our minds to think like Him, we will become like Him.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.



'GURU'

BEWARE OF SELF-DECEPTION

By Rodney W Francis

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves"

(James 1:22).

As I have been challenged afresh in recent times of the need to put our beliefs more into practice ~ and to take them beyond the theory stage more ~ I came across the above verse. It is so important that we grasp the truth of the Gospel ~ and act upon it ~ otherwise we are only deceiving ourselves. The word "deceive" means "to delude; to deceive wholly; delude thoroughly; to deceive the mind; implying a self-originating and subjective deception; to make to wander; cause to err, lead astray; used of religious deceit or doctrinal error. A wandering, seduction from the truth; to reckon wrong, mis-reckon, miscount; hence, to draw false conclusions. Then to cheat or deceive by false reasoning, hence, to deceive; to speak falsely, to lie to any one" (Bullinger's). Self-deception happens when we only hear the word of God but do not commit it to practice.

Jesus warned us that there would be ***"false christ's and false prophets rising up who would show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect ("chosen selected ones")"*** (Matthew 24:21-25). The Apostle Paul also warned us: ***"Now the Spirit expressly ("explicitly") says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons"*** (1 Timothy 4:1). Notice that deception is a spirit ~ an evil

spirit. A deceiving spirit leads us away from the truth of Jesus and takes us into believing what is not true. Paul was warning Holy Spirit-filled believers of the dangers of decisions that lead to deception. Beware!

It is extremely important that we Christians are aware of the world we are living in today and know that there is a huge spirit of deception at work. With deception **a deceived person does not know they are deceived.** They believe they are believing the truth; that they have a revelation of God and are doing right. It can be quite difficult ministering restoration and healing to a deceived person because they are convinced they are right (and we cannot violate a person's will). Many Christians get deceived because they do not know their Bible. How can we be obedient to the call of God if we do not even know what is written in the Scriptures? **The voice of God never violates the principles of Scripture.** It is therefore vital that we have a daily devotional life where we read the Scriptures and commune with God. We cannot afford not to in these days! The only sure way to know the source of the voice we are hearing is through knowing the principles of the Scriptures. If the voice does not line-up with the Scriptures, then that voice is not the voice of God.

So, how can we avoid being deceived, self or otherwise? **It is essential that Christians always keep Jesus Christ as the Source and Centre of their focus, devotion and worship.** He is ***"the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father (God) but through Him"*** (John 14:6). Any person or thing that takes the place of Jesus in our lives becomes an obstacle that can side-track

us and take us into self-deception. Make very sure that your life is totally submitted to, and given over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. If He is not "Number One" in our hearts and lives, then someone or something else is. It is also very important that you have other committed followers of Jesus Christ in friendship relationship with you, so that if they have any genuine concerns about you and your life, beliefs, etc., that they will feel the freedom to talk to you about it. We need people who will "challenge" us from time to time as deception is very subtle and we do not know when we are being led astray by it.

In the Book of Revelation 2:6 & 15 we read of those ***"who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."*** We are not told what the doctrine (teaching) of the Nicolaitans was, but it was something that God hated. The tragedy is that it seems that that particular doctrine was started by Nicolas who was one of the seven deacons chosen in Acts 6 because of his good character. The criteria to be chosen as a deacon was ***"good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom"*** (Acts 6:3). Nicolas had a tremendous future in God, but somewhere along the way he listened to a wrong voice and got caught up into believing false teaching. That false teaching 'promoted' Nicolas into a place where others (who believed his false teaching) looked to Nicolas more than to Jesus. The teaching was even named after him! Solomon is another example of someone blessed of God with a wisdom above all others; yet somewhere along the way he got deceived and lost all of the advantages of the wisdom that God gave to him (1 Kings 11). The message is that we cannot take anything for granted. **We must**

continually keep our eyes and focus on JESUS CHRIST and follow His teachings daily. Otherwise we are opening ourselves up to becoming deceived.

When we listen to preachers we need to be like the Bereans in Acts 17:11: **". . . they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."** Even the Apostle Paul's preaching came under their scrutiny. Let's face it: there are many teachings circulating in Christian church circles these days that do not give Jesus Christ His proper place. **HE IS LORD!** And when He is LORD we DO what He asks of us. We put our believing into action, into practice. If Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all!

The whole of the New Covenant is the revelation of what Jesus Christ came into this world to accomplish. We are told to **"Look unto Jesus, the Author ("originator") and Finisher ("perfecter") of our faith . . . consider Him"** (Hebrews 12:1-3). Remember also that the Holy Spirit of Truth has been sent to reveal more of Jesus to us, to bring His words to our remembrance, to glorify Him, etc. (John 16:13-14). When the Holy Spirit is having His way in our lives then He always seeks to draw us closer to Jesus Christ. ~
Rodney W. Francis.

Bible Readings: Ephesians 3:14-21
Ephesians 4:1 Hebrews 4:12-16

Prayer: "Dear Lord, in Jesus' Name, please help me to have ears to hear what You are saying to me today. And help me to believe and obey Your voice more and more in these times. Open my eyes to any self-deception

that is in my life and deliver me from its subtle grip so that I can be a true Bible believer and glorify Your Name in my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen."

(April, 2015). "The GFM" BARNABAS BULLETIN is a monthly communication sent into at least 115 nations (that we know of). Previous issues are available on our Website. Please feel free to forward, photocopy and/or post this Barnabas Bulletin to your Friends. You may be the very means God uses to impact someone else's life with the reality of the love of Jesus. If you wish to be on our regular E-Mailing list, please contact us at the addresses above. If you would prefer to receive this E-Mail in Plain Text, please inform us. If you no longer wish to receive from The GFM Ministry, send us an E-Mail with the words "Please Unsubscribe" in the subject line ~ Thank you.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE THE PROMISES OF GOD!

Have you encouraged someone today?



A man is talking to God. "God, how long is a million years?" God answers, "To me, it's about a minute." "God, how much is a million dollars?" "To me, it's a penny." "God, may I have a penny?" "Wait a minute."

A Jewish man moves into a Catholic neighborhood. Every Friday the Catholics are driven crazy because, while they're eating fish, the Jew is outside barbecuing steaks. So the Catholics work on the Jew to convert him to Catholicism. Finally, after many threats and much pleading, the Catholics succeed. They take the Jew to a priest who sprinkles holy water on the Jew and says, "Born a Jew, Raised a Jew, Now a Catholic." The Catholics are ecstatic. No more delicious, but maddening smells every Friday evening. But the next Friday evening, the scent of barbecue wafts through the neighbourhood. The Catholics all rush to the Jew's house to remind him of his new diet. They see him standing over the cooking steak. He is sprinkling water on the meat and saying, "Born a cow, Raised a cow, Now a fish."

source: <http://www.jokes4us.com/religiousjokes/everyfridayjoke.html>

FAITH
is like Wi-Fi,
it's invisible but
it has the power
to connect you to
what you need.

God Has No Favorites

By Kenneth E. Hagin

Why don't some people believe their faith in God will work? I know from experience that a lot of people have faith in my faith and in the faith of others. But they don't have confidence that their own faith in God will work. For some reason, they don't believe in themselves. The reason for their unbelief is that they don't know what the Bible teaches about who they are in Christ. They need to find out.

Some people think they're not "good enough" for their faith to work. Some feel their faith is not strong enough. Some people are so acquainted with all of their own failings and weaknesses that they're always willing to believe anything against themselves: their unworthiness, their unfitness, their weakness, their lack of faith, and so forth.

If we can get these people to let us pray and believe for them, we can get answers for them—temporarily. But Satan will rob them of the blessings God intended for them to have unless we teach them the facts of God's Word.

A Bible fact that gave me faith was this: God, my Heavenly Father, does not have any favorite children. He loves every one of us with the same love.

Sometimes natural parents have a favorite child, but God doesn't have any favorites. Get that fact down in your spirit by saying out loud, "God has no favorites."

Every person born into the family of God has the same redemption. You are not any more saved than I am, and I am not any more saved than you are.

Somehow in people's faulty thinking, they assume that another Christian has more than they do. Yes, someone else may have more light of the Word, and he or she is walking in that light, but everyone born into the family of God enjoys the same redemption.

The child of God has been redeemed from the hand of the enemy. Every one of us has. Satan was conquered for you personally. Satan was conquered for me personally. (When I say it like that, it buoys up my faith.)

The believer can say, along with the Apostle Paul, “. . . [Jesus] was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25). It’s ours—mine and yours! It belongs to us, so I can make that personal. I can say He was delivered on account of my offenses, and He was raised for my justification.

Redemption belongs to every one of us. Furthermore, I’m not any more justified than you are, and you’re not any more justified than I am. (The same Greek word translated “justified” can also be translated “made righteous.”) Jesus didn’t die for my trespasses any more than He died for your trespasses.

COLOSSIANS 1:13-14

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

The Christian, then, can confidently say, “He delivered us,” or to make it personal, “He delivered me.”

The individual Christian can confidently say, “He delivered me out of the power (or authority) of darkness.” The Greek word translated “power” here is translated “authority” elsewhere in The King James. So we could say, “God delivered me out of the authority of darkness and has translated me into the Kingdom of His dear Son.”

Friend, this does not belong to just a few. This absolute redemption is the personal property of every child of God, whether he knows it or not. (If he doesn’t know it, he can’t walk in the light of it—but it still belongs to him.)

This redemption is personal. It is an absolute redemption from the dominion of the devil. Satan doesn’t have dominion over us any longer. Satan has no right to rule over us with sin, sickness, or anything else that

belongs to him. Satan is not our Lord or our Master; Jesus is our Lord and our Master.

This redemption belongs to every believer. It's my personal property and your personal property. To increase your faith, repeat out loud: "It is my redemption. It is my personal property. It belongs to me."

Colossians 2:15 says, "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." This verse teaches us that Jesus put Satan to nought and triumphed over him. Another translation reads, "He stripped him." What did Jesus strip Satan of? His authority over man.

When Jesus put Satan to nought and stripped him of his authority, Christ acted in your stead—in your place. He did it for you. Now, through Christ, you have overcome the enemy!

1 JOHN 4:4

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome THEM:

because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Who is the "them" we have overcome? We find from reading the first three verses of First John chapter 4 that John was talking about the devil and all of his cohorts.

Notice he didn't say we are going to overcome them; he said we have overcome them. How could we have overcome these demons? Because what Christ did was marked to our credit. He did it as our Substitute. (He did it in our place, and God marked it to our credit as though you and I were the ones who did it!)

Someone may ask, "If we've overcome them, why are we having such a problem with them?"

Because we don't know we have overcome them, or we aren't walking in the light of what we do know. When you know what the Bible says and walk in the light of it, you don't need someone else to exercise his faith for you.

I can understand the problems people have in this area, however. I can relate to people. I've stood where they are. At one time I didn't know this, either. I hadn't been taught. And I was afraid of the devil.

If the devil showed up anywhere, I ducked out of the way, trying to hide. I had heard preachers tell how powerful the devil is—and about all the evil he was going to do—and I didn't want to meet him! If he stuck his head up anywhere, I darted out of the way and hid.

Why? Wasn't I saved? Yes, I was saved. Wasn't I filled with the Holy Spirit? Yes, I was filled with the Holy Spirit. I just didn't know the truth. I'd nearly quake in my boots when the least little thing—opposition or anything—rose up. But one day many, many years ago, I found out the truth from the Word of God. When I found out the truth, instead of hoping the devil wouldn't show up, I went out looking for him!

I was no longer afraid of the devil. Instead of my darting down a back alley when I saw him coming, now he turned and ran when he saw me coming! He said about me, “Uh-oh. He's found out the truth, boys. He's found out the truth. We can't defeat or devour him anymore. He's learned the truth.”

If you just think you've learned the truth, the devil will put you to the test to see if you really believe what you say you believe.

Now can you understand why John said, “You have overcome them . . .” (1 John 4:4)? You have overcome them. Christ acted in your stead. He did it for you. You have overcome them because Jesus has overcome them (all these spirits). You're not going to overcome them; you have overcome them.

No, we're not bragging about what you are in the flesh. (You don't amount to much in the flesh.) We're talking about who you are in Christ. You see, you now have the same eternal life Jesus has. The Bible says, “He that hath the Son hath life . . .” (1 John 5:12). You have the Son, so you have the life. That means you can say, “I have taken Jesus as my Savior. I have confessed Him as my Lord. God has given me eternal life—His own nature. I am a new creature, created in Christ Jesus. I have God's ability to perform the good works that were prepared beforehand for me to walk in” (Eph. 2:10).

You can say, “I have God’s ability, because I have God’s nature. I have dwelling in me the same great, mighty, wonderful Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead” (Rom. 8:11).

You can say, quoting First John 4:4, “Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world.”

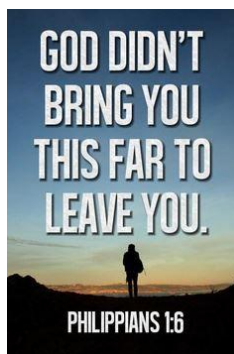
These are Bible facts that will build faith in you and help you grow to where you can believe God on your own and not have to depend on someone else.

And when you get to the place where you know your faith in God will work, you will become dangerous to the devil! You will make hell afraid of you, and you will make Heaven glad.

Until you get to this place, even though you may be saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, the devil will have you at a disadvantage. He’ll hold high carnival in your body, and he’ll dominate your life.

Know the facts of God’s Word—what belongs to you and who you are in Him. Friend, spiritually speaking, you are born of God. You’ve got God’s nature. The life of God is in your spirit. You are His child. He is your Father. You can say, “He has declared me righteous. He has made me righteous. I am the righteousness of God in Christ” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Make this confession out loud: I am the righteousness of God in Christ. I know who I am! I’m a new creature in Christ Jesus. I’m a child of God. I’m an heir of God. I’m a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. I’m the righteousness of God. Hallelujah!





Paul Christensen

This magazine's purpose is to build up the faith of believers.

I am an elder of St Aidan's Presbyterian Church in Conifer Grove, Auckland NZ. At present, I am assisting with the ministry of the church along with the other elders and very capable preachers as part of an elder-run church.

I am including articles from recognized, effective pastors and ministries that have proved themselves in having the Holy Spirit work with them in the conversion of sinners, effective and powerful impact that they have on believers, and in the growth of their churches. I think that it is important for the members of the congregation to have a range of ministry outside of their usual one-person ministry that has been the norm for a number of years before our current minister recently resigned.

You will notice that I have included jokes and humorous pictures in this magazine. I am a strong believer in humour as a healing resource. I believe that the business of sharing the Gospel is serious, but some become so serious that they are dour and humourless. I don't think that these people are a good advertisement if we want our church to grow and be filled with believers who are passionate for Christ and who approach their faith with joy. "In His presence is fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11), and good, clean humour is an important part of that.

All articles are printed with the kind permission of the authors, who believe that it is important that the message of the Gospel gets out there, and the importance of walking with God in love and faith, along with unity among Christian believers.

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Once you have read this, pass it on to someone else who might be encouraged by reading it.