

The Role of Faith

by Bill Crews

Heaven's recipe for eternal life demands the ingredient, **faith** — a faith that comes from *hearing* God's revelation (**Romans 10:17**); a faith that is living, active, growing, abiding, unfeigned, unwavering and obedient. *"Faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen"* (**Hebrews 11:1**) In fact, *"we walk by faith, not by sight"* (**2 Corinthians 5:7**).

Jesus said to Thomas, who was unwilling to accept the reliable testimony of the other apostles that they had seen the risen Jesus and who had to be convinced by the Lord Himself, *"Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen,, and yet have believed"* (**John 20:29**). Ours is not a groundless faith. It is built upon testimony and other evidence of the highest sort. At the same time, ours must not be a half-hearted or half-way faith. It must not be adulterated by human doubts, wisdom or reservations.

We believe that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (**Hebrews 11:6**). *"By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear"* (**Hebrews 11:3**). We believe that God is the Creator of man, that the Bible is the word of God, and that Jesus is the Son of God — we believe that He was miraculously born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, taught His Father's words and did His Father's works, died for our redemption, was raised from the dead, ascended to the right hand of God, and will come again to raise the dead and to judge all the living and the dead. We believe that we have a God to glorify, a Christ to serve, a never-ending soul to save, a hell to avoid and a heaven to seek **though we have seen none of these**. It is faith — unfeigned, great, rich and perfected; not weak, little, barren or dead — that leads us into Christ and directs us on to heaven's gates.

Before one can enter Christ in baptism, he must believe with all his heart (**Acts 8:36-37**). To draw near unto God, he must have a true heart in fulness of faith (**Hebrews 10:22**). Like Abraham, he must not *"waver through unbelief, but wax(ed) strong through faith, giving glory to God"* (**Romans 4:20**). He will not be *"of them that shrink back unto perdition, but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul"* (**Hebrews 10:39**). His faith will grow exceedingly (**2 Thessalonians 1:3**); it will serve as a shield to quench all the fiery darts of Satan (**Ephesians 6:16**); it is the victory that will overcome the world (1 **John 5:4-5**). His faith will serve to resist transgressions and to guide in the pathway of righteousness. Will you please take time to read **2 Corinthians 4:16 — 5:1** and see if it describes your faith?

353602