

“FANTASTIC FAITH!”

I) What is true FAITH?

> **FAITH** (*pistos*) - A belief in or confident attitude toward God, involving commitment to His will for one's life. Faith is part of the Christian life from beginning to end. As the instrument by which the gift of salvation is received (Eph 2:8-9 - *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*), faith is thus distinct from the basis of salvation, which is grace, and from the outworking of salvation, which is good works. **Saving faith** involves personally depending on the finished work of Christ's sacrifice as the only basis for forgiveness of sin and entrance into heaven. But saving faith is also a personal commitment of one's life to following Christ in obedience to His commands. Finally, in the New Testament, faith can refer to the teachings of the Bible, the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). In modern times, faith has been weakened in meaning so that some people use it to mean self-confidence. But in the Bible, true faith is confidence in God or Christ, not in oneself. (From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

> **“The just shall live by faith.”** This declaration of the Christian's principle of life is found four times in the Bible: Hab. 2:1-5; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:10,11 Heb. 10:38. In Hab 2:4 - *“Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.”* The unjust are puffed up and live according to self-sufficiency. Atheism for example is religion of faith in man and not a Creator called God. The term atheist literally means “one without God” and refers to a person who claims to believe there is no Divine Being. It is represented in a variety of philosophical arenas: politics (Marxist communism), education (secular humanism), science (evolutionism), and religion (atheism proper). Atheism is a belief that allows man to live an immoral life without future accountability to a Holy God, so he thinks. This is the height of self-deception. Listen to the self-professed truth of two-world renowned atheist, “I’m an atheist! I am an atheist! God knows I’m an atheist!” said **Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev**. How about **Chairman Mao** who commented to Richard Nixon, “when I go to heaven to see God, I’ll tell him that for the present it is better to have Taiwan under the care of the United States.” But the Bible says, **“the just live by faith”**—their confidence is in God. To them, faith is more than a philosophy of life; it is the very principle of life. The just shall live his whole life by faith. **We are saved by faith (Acts 16:31 - “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved); we are kept by faith (1 Peter 1:3-5 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.), and we live by faith (Gal 2:20-21 - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.).** His faith shall be tried many times and in many ways, but faith will always be vindicated, because it is more than equal to any occasion.

II) How does FAITH become ACTIVE?

> Lessons in faith – Let’s read **Matthew 14:22-33**

- **Observe six action points of faith:**

- (1) **LOOK** to Jesus and take that step of faith! Jesus will enable you to do the impossible! **Faith begins in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ! - Heb 12:2 - looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** The apostle Paul teaches us in **2 Cor 5:7 - For we walk by faith, not by sight.**
- (2) **LISTEN** to Jesus; He said, **“Come!” Faith must overcome fear, doubt and discouragement. Faith builds through the Word of God - Rom 10:17 - So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.** God’s Word said it I believe it!
- (3) **PRAY** to Jesus! Peter’s faith faltered and he began to sink, but he exercised faith once again through **prayer, “Lord, save me!”** Remember our Lord said *“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” (John 14:13-14)* **The apostle John gives us insight on prayer in John 5:14-15 - This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us-whatever we ask-we know that we have what we asked of him.**
- (4) **HOLD on to Jesus! Let Jesus help you!** Observe that Peter walked on water back to the boat, probably his hand being pulled by the hand of Jesus. Is your hand in the hand of the Savior!
- (5) **PEACE** comes from Jesus! A faith walk produces **peace**. (The winds ceased (v32)). **Jesus said in John 16:33 - These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”**
- (6) **WORSHIP** Jesus! **Faith worships the Son of God!** The word *worship* is *proskuneo* in Greek, meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand.

> Evangelist and Bible teacher Porter Barrington writes, *“Faith defies reason; it moves mountains (Matt. 17:14-21). Faith does not always face facts; it never gives up (Heb. 11:32-39). Faith says, “God is working out His perfect will in my life, and I can wait, endure, and suffer.” Faith does not make anything easy, but it does make all things possible.”* AMEN!

> **IS YOUR FAITH GROWING? - MAKE A FAITH LIST:**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

STATEMENT OF FAITH

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

(Romans 10:17)

> **THE TRIUNE GOD** - We affirm our belief in one God, infinite Spirit, creator, and sustainer of all things, who exists eternally in three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three are one in essence but distinct in person and function. (Deut. 4:35; 6:4; Isa 44:5-8)

> **GOD THE FATHER** - We affirm that the Father is the first person of the Triune Godhead and the source of all that God is and does. From Him the Son is eternally generated and from Them the Spirit eternally proceeds. He is the designer of creation, the speaker of revelation, the author of redemption, and the sovereign of history. (Gen 1:26; 3:22; Is 48:16; Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 13:14; Tit 3:4-7; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 1:4-6)

> **GOD THE SON** - We affirm that the Lord Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity, eternally begotten from the Father. He is God. He was conceived by the Virgin Mary through a miracle of the Holy Spirit. He lives forever as perfect God and perfect man: two distinct natures inseparably united in one person. (Matt 1:22, 23; John 1:1, 2, 14; Phil 2:6, 7; Col 1:15-20; Rom 5:9; Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20)

> **GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT** - We affirm that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son and equal in deity. He is the giver of all life, active in the creating and ordering of the universe; He is the agent of inspiration and the new birth; He restrains sin and Satan; and He baptizes simultaneous to salvation, indwells and sanctifies all believers. We affirm that the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to every believer for the edification of the body of Christ and that these gifts are distributed by God's sovereign design. (Mt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:11, 18; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 6:19; 12:13; Eph 1:13; Tit 3:5; 1 Pet 1:2; 1 Cor. 12:1-31)

> **THE SCRIPTURE** - We affirm that the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, though written by men, was supernaturally inspired by God so that all its words are the written true revelation of God; it is therefore inerrant in the originals and authoritative in all matters. It is to be understood by all believers through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, its meaning determined by the historical, grammatical, and literary use of the author's language, comparing Scripture with Scripture. We believe that God's Word has been preserved in many translations throughout the world (Ps 119:160; Jer. 15:16; Ps 19:7-11; Zech 7:12; Mt. 24:35; John 10:35, John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4, 2 Pet 1:20, 21)

> **CREATION** - We affirm that all things were created by God. Angels were created as ministering agents, though some, under the leadership of Satan, fell from their sinless state to become agents of evil. The universe was created in six literal days and is continuously sustained by God; thus it both reflects His glory and reveals His truth. Human beings were directly created, not evolved, in the very image of God. As reasoning moral agents, they are responsible under God for understanding and governing themselves and the world. (Gen. 1:1; Gen 1:1-31; Gen 2:1-3; 18-25; Ex 20:11; Ps 90:2; 148:1-5; Is 14:12-14; Ezek 28:12-17; Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:8-10; Gen 3:14,15; Gen 3:1-19; Rom 1:20; Eph 3:9; Ps 8:3; 19:1; Heb 1:3; 11:3; Heb 1:14; Rev 7:11-12; Job 1:6-7; Luke 10:18; Col 2:15; Heb 1:6,14)

> **MAN** - We affirm that man was created in the image of God having personality (ability to think, decide and feel). We affirm that Adam, the first man, willfully disobeyed God, bringing sin and death into the world. As a result, all persons are sinners from conception, which is evidenced in their willful acts of sin; and they are therefore subject to eternal punishment, under the just condemnation of a holy God. (Gen 1:26, 27; Rom 3:10-23; Eph 2:1, 2; 2 Cor. 5:17)

> **THE WORK OF CHRIST** - We affirm that Jesus Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice by the appointment of the Father. He fulfilled the demands of God by His obedient life, died on the cross in full substitution and payment for the sins of all, was buried, and on the third day He arose physically and bodily from the dead. He ascended into heaven where He now intercedes for all believers. (1 Pet. 3:18; Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 15:3-5; Rom. 8:34; 1 Jn 2:1, 2)

> **SALVATION** - We affirm that each person can be saved only through the work of Jesus Christ by faith alone in Him as Lord and Savior. The believer is declared righteous, born again by the Holy Spirit, forgiven of all sin, and assured of heaven. (John 1:12,13; Acts 16:31; Rom 3:21-25; Eph 1:7, 1 John 2:2; 2 Peter 3:9; Eph 2:1, 2; Rom 5:18; 6:23, 2 Cor. 9:15, Tit 3:3-8; Jn. 6:37-49; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 38, 39; Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3:5)

> **SANCTIFICATION** - We affirm that the Holy Spirit indwells all who are born again conforming them to the likeness of Jesus Christ. This is a process completed only in Heaven. Every believer is responsible to live in obedience to the Word of God in separation from sin. (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Eph. 4:24; 5:25-27; 1 Thess. 5:23; Phil 2:12; 13; Heb. 10:10, 14; 12:10; Rom 6-8; Gal 5:16-24; Eph 4:21-24; 1 John 3:1-3; Eph 5:26-27; Jude 24-35; **Father:** John 15:2; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 5:23; **Christ:** Gal 2:20; Eph 5:26-27; Col. 1:22; Heb 13:12; Heb 2:11; Heb 10:10; **Holy Spirit:** 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom 8:13; Eph 1:17; Rom 5:5; Gal 5:22-23)

> **THE CHURCH** - We affirm that the universal church is the body of Christ composed of all born again believers. We affirm that a local church is an assembly of baptized believers, under the discipline of the Word of God and the lordship of Christ, organized to carry out the commission to evangelize, to teach, and to administer the ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Table. It functions through the ministry of gifts given by the Holy Spirit to each believer. (Matt 28:18-20; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 1:2; 11:23-26)

> **FUTURE THINGS** - We affirm that the return of Christ for all believers is imminent. It will be followed by seven years of great tribulation, and then the coming of Christ to establish His earthly kingdom for a thousand years. The unsaved will then be raised and judged according to their works and separated forever from God in hell. The saved, having been raised, will live forever in heaven in fellowship with God. (Rev 20:1-7; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Tit 2:13, 14; Rev 19:11-21; 20:1-15; Mt. 25:46; Jn. 5:28, 29; 11:25, 26; Rev. 20:5, 6, 12, 13)

> **WITNESS AND SERVICE** - We affirm the responsibility of each believer, motivated by the love of Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to witness for Christ, that the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to give the Gospel to every creature throughout the world are still incumbent on every believer. We believe in the will, power and providence of God to meet our every need in His service likewise to live sacrificially for the proclamation of the Gospel into the entire world. (Matt 6:33; Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 9:6-8; Phil 4:19)