

# Saved by Grace Through Faith

*Is Faith a matter of the mind or the heart? Consider the example of Abraham.*

*For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith...For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham...Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:13ff)*



## Faith and It's Opposites in the New Testament

|                                        | Faith as...                                                                                                                                                          | Opposite of Faith                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Matthew, Mark, Luke</b>             | Trust, confidence                                                                                                                                                    | Fear, anxiety, doubt                                                                               |
| <b>John</b>                            | Sight, Light                                                                                                                                                         | Blindness, Darkness                                                                                |
| <b>Paul</b>                            | Belief, Confession, Trust                                                                                                                                            | Boasting, Self-righteousness, Religious heritage alone                                             |
| <b>Thomas Aquinas (Roman Catholic)</b> | Our love for God is demonstrated by our willingness to submit our minds to the teaching authority of the church. Faith is submission to the authority of the church. | Heresy, Insubordination, Disobedience                                                              |
| <b>Luther (Lutheran)</b>               | Confidence in God's grace for our salvation, learned from Jesus Christ through the scriptures.                                                                       | Anxiety about salvation                                                                            |
| <b>Calvin (Reformed)</b>               | Recognition of God's goodness revealed in Jesus Christ through scripture, and a resulting confidence in life.                                                        | Thinking God is against you. Fearing God's judgment, in contradiction to the promise of scripture. |

### Calvin's Definition of Faith:

*"Now we can agree on the right definition of faith if we say that it is firm and certain knowledge of the divine goodwill toward us, based on the truth of the free promise in Christ, and both revealed to our minds and sealed on our hearts through the Holy Spirit."*

**From THE SCOTS CONFESSION (Scotland 1560, John Knox)**

**Faith in the Holy Ghost**

Our faith and its assurance do not proceed from flesh and blood, that is to say, from natural powers within us, but are the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; whom we confess to be God, equal with the Father and with his Son, who sanctifies us, and brings us into all truth by his own working, without whom we should remain forever enemies to God and ignorant of his Son, Christ Jesus. For by nature we are so dead, blind, and perverse, that neither can we feel when we are pricked, see the light when it shines, nor assent to the will of God when it is revealed, unless the Spirit of the Lord Jesus quicken that which is dead, remove the darkness from our minds, and bow our stubborn hearts to the obedience of his blessed will. And so, as we confess that God the Father created us when we were not, as his Son our Lord Jesus redeemed us when we were enemies to

him, so also do we confess that the Holy Ghost does sanctify and regenerate us, without respect to any merit proceeding from us, be it before or be it after our regeneration. To put this even more plainly; as we willingly disclaim any honor and glory for our own creation and redemption, so do we willingly also for our regeneration and sanctification; for by ourselves we are not capable of thinking one good thought, but he who has begun the work in us alone continues us in it, to the praise and glory of his undeserved grace.

**From THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM (Germany 1562, Zacharias Ursinus)**

**Q. 1. What is your only comfort, in life and in death?**

A. That I belong—body and soul, in life and in death—not to myself but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who at the cost of his own blood has fully paid for all my sins and has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil; that he protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that everything must fit his purpose for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

**From THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH (England 1649, Westminster Assembly)**

**Of Saving Faith**

1. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word: by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.
2. By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently, upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.
3. This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.

**From A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH (1983, Presbyterian Church (USA))**

- |    |                                                                |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | In life and in death we belong to God.                         |
| 2  | Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,                    |
| 3  | the love of God,                                               |
| 4  | and the communion of the Holy Spirit,                          |
| 5  | we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,        |
| 6  | whom alone we worship and serve.                               |
|    |                                                                |
| 52 | We trust in God the Holy Spirit,                               |
| 53 | everywhere the giver and renewer of life.                      |
| 54 | The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,                |
| 55 | sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, |
| 56 | and binds us together with all believers                       |
| 57 | in the one body of Christ, the Church.                         |
|    |                                                                |
| 65 | In a broken and fearful world                                  |
| 66 | the Spirit gives us courage...                                 |