

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
THE WAY OF SALVATION—FAITH
GOD'S SALVATION BEING FOR EVERYONE
THROUGH FAITH

Over the past few evenings, we have looked at the things that man considers to be ways of salvation. If we do not twist the Word of God but trust in it, we will see from it that none of those things are a condition for salvation. As we have mentioned already, according to the Bible there is only one condition for salvation—faith. Together the words faith and believe occur in the Bible over five hundred times. Among these many verses, over a hundred verses tell us that salvation is by believing, that justification is by believing, and that we receive life by believing. In over thirty places we are told that through faith we receive this or that from God. These places show us that man is favored by God through faith and nothing else.

Why does the Bible put so much emphasis on faith? Tonight we will consider why faith has to be the way of salvation. But we must first ask a question. Is salvation a work of man or a work of God? Is it man's plan or is it God's plan? Does it originate with man or with God? Those who do not know God do not know salvation. Only those who know God know God's salvation. Those who know God have to admit that it is God who has initiated salvation. It is God who has planned it, and it is God who has accomplished this plan. As we have mentioned before, everything is done by God. On our side, we do not have to do anything except believe.

Why do we have to believe? It is because redemption is accomplished by Christ. God wants to make the method of salvation so simple that everyone can obtain it. That is why He requires only faith. If salvation is from God, it must be universal. If God's salvation were just for a certain group of people, God would be partial. If God's way of salvation required something from us, that something would become an obstacle to our salvation. If there were the simple requirement that man had to wait five minutes before he could be saved, even that would greatly diminish the number of saved ones in the world. Many people do not have even five minutes to wait. God would not have to require even perfect righteousness. If He were to require righteousness in only one thing, perhaps you could render Him this righteousness, but hundreds of thousands of people on earth might not be able to do so. If such were the case, salvation would not be so simple.

In America there was a famous preacher named Dr. Jowett. He had a co-worker named Mr. Barry. Mr. Barry was a pastor in a church, but he had not yet been saved. One night someone rang the doorbell of his church. After letting the bell ring for a long time, Mr. Barry reluctantly put on his night robe and went to see who it was. At the door was a young, improperly dressed girl. When he asked her bluntly what she wanted, the girl asked, "Are you the pastor?" When he admitted that he was, the girl said, "I need help to get my mother in." He thought that a girl dressed in such a way must have a terrible home. He thought that perhaps her mother was drunk, and she needed help to get her mother back into the house. He told the girl to call the police, but the girl insisted that he go. He tried his best to turn her down and told her to go to the pastor of the church nearest her. But the girl said, "Your church is the nearest church." Then he said, "It is too late now. Come back tomorrow." But she insisted that he go at once. Mr. Barry thought for a while. He was a pastor of a church with over twelve hundred members. If one of them saw him

walking with this young girl dressed in that kind of way in the middle of the night, what would they think? But the girl insisted and said that if he would not go, she would not leave. Finally, he gave in and went upstairs to change. Mr. Barry later told Dr. Jowett that while he was walking to the girl's house, he pulled his hat down very low to cover his face and tucked in his coat for fear that others might see him. The place where they went was not in a nice area. When he stopped before the house that they were to enter, he saw that it was not a decent place at all. Then he asked the girl, "Why do you want me to come to such a place?" The girl answered, "My mother is very sick. She is in terrible danger. She said that she wants to get into the kingdom of God. Please get her in." Mr. Barry could not do anything except step into the house. The girl and her mother lived in a very small and dingy room. Their home was very poor. When the sick woman saw him coming, she cried out, "Please help me to get in. I cannot get in." He thought for a while and wondered what he should do. He was a pastor and a preacher, and here was a woman who was dying. She wanted to enter the kingdom of God; she wanted to be taught how to get in. What could he do? He did not know what to do. So he spoke to her in the way he spoke to his congregation. He began to tell her that Jesus was a perfect man, that He was our model, that He sacrificed Himself, that He displayed such benevolence, and that Jesus went about helping people. If men follow in His footsteps to sacrifice themselves, to love and help others, and to serve society, they would uplift their humanity and others' humanity. Mr. Barry was talking to her with his eyes closed. When he finished, she became mad. She cried out, "No, no! This is not what I want you to speak about." Her tears began to fall. She said, "Sir, tonight is my last night on earth. Now is the time for me to settle the question of eternal perdition or entry into God's kingdom. This is my last chance. Don't try to take me for a ride or play games with me. I have sinned my whole life long. And not only have I sinned, but I have also taught my daughter to sin. Now I am dying. What can I do? Don't play games with me. All my life I have done nothing but sin. Everything I did was unclean. I never knew what being moral meant. I never knew what it was to be clean. I never knew what it was to have a conscience. Now you are telling such a sinner as me, in the state that I am in tonight, to take Jesus as my model! How much work would I have to do before I could take Jesus as my model! You told me that I have to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. But how much would I have to do before I could follow in His footsteps! Don't play games with me at this hour so crucial to my eternity. Just tell me how I can get into God's kingdom. What you told me will not work for me. I cannot do any of those things." Mr. Barry was taken by surprise. He thought to himself, "These are the things that I learned in theological school. I studied them for my doctorate in theology. I have been preaching them for the past seventeen or eighteen years. And these are the things I have read out of the Bible. But here is a woman who wants to get in, and I cannot help her." So he said, "To tell you the truth, I don't know how to get in. I only know that Jesus was a good man, that we have to imitate Him, that He was benevolent, and that He sacrificed Himself to help others. All I know is that if a man takes Jesus as his example and walks as He walked, he will be a Christian." In tears the woman said, "Can you do nothing for a woman who has been sinful all her life to help her enter God's kingdom at the last hour? Is that all you can do to help a dying woman to get into God's kingdom, who will have no tomorrow and who will have no second chance?" Mr. Barry was stuck. He had nothing more to say. He thought, "I am a servant of Christ. I am a doctor of theology. I am a pastor of a twelve hundred member church. But here is a woman on her deathbed, and I cannot help her at all. She even thinks that I am playing games with her." But then Mr. Barry remembered something he had heard from his mother while sitting on her lap when he was seven years old. She had told him that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, that He was crucified, and

that He shed His blood to cleanse us from sins. Jesus of Nazareth died for our sins on the cross and has become the propitiatory sacrifice. He remembered these words then. He had neglected these words all his life, but that day these words came back to him. Then he rose up and said, "Yes, I have something for you. You do not have to do anything, but God has done everything in His Son. He has dealt with our sins in His Son. God's Son has taken away all our sins. The One who demands the payment became the One who pays. The One who was offended became the One who suffered for the offense. The Judge has become the judged." At that word, the woman's face showed signs of joy. He went on to tell her all that his mother had told him. Then, suddenly the woman's face turned from joy to tears, and she cried, "Why didn't you tell me this earlier? What should I do now?" He then told her that she needed only to believe and to receive. At that word, the woman died. Later Mr. Barry told Dr. Jowett that on that night the woman entered in and he also entered in.

I have been touched in my heart many times by this story. If there is salvation, it should be available to anyone. If you say that one must be baptized before he can be saved, then the thief on the cross could not be saved, because he was not baptized. If you say that one cannot be saved unless he makes restitution, then the thief on the cross could not have been saved, because both his hands and feet were nailed firmly to the cross. I am not saying that we should not be baptized or make restitution. But the condition for salvation is not restitution, baptism, confession, or repentance. Repentance is nothing but a changed view about one's past. If it were a matter of law and work, who could fulfill it? This woman is the best example of God's salvation being for everyone.

BELIEVING IN THE LORD'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

The only condition for God's salvation is faith. Faith is saying that you are willing and that you want it. What is the faith that the Bible talks about? First, God has accomplished redemption by the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. His work on the cross has been completed. Why has it been completed? I do not know why. Neither do you. Only God knows why. How can the blood of the Lord Jesus redeem us from our sins? Why is the Lord's redemption effective? We do not need to ask these questions. These are matters for God. The Lord's work on the cross has been accomplished, and God's heart is satisfied.

The cross of the Lord Jesus is not for satisfying our heart. It is for satisfying God's heart. Does the settlement of a debt satisfy the heart of the creditor or the heart of the debtor? If God feels that something is sufficient for Him, we also should feel that it is sufficient. God is righteous. If He says that the Lord's work is able to redeem us from sin, it is surely able to redeem us. Whether or not you think that the work is sufficient is irrelevant. What matters is that God thinks that the work is sufficient. It is not just a matter of whether or not the money has been paid. What matters is whether or not the creditor considers the money paid. If the money you pay satisfies his heart, you will have no problems. I wish I could repeat this a hundred times. The work of the Lord Jesus is not to satisfy our heart. The work of the Lord is first for the satisfaction of God's heart. It is God who demands the judgment on sins. It is God who requires that sins be dealt with. It is God who said that without the blood there is no remission of sins. If God were unconcerned, the blood would be unnecessary. The blood is there because God is concerned. If God were

unconcerned, the cross would be unnecessary. There is the need of the cross because God is righteous.

The Lord has accomplished all the work on the cross. Hence, God raised Him from the dead. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the proof that God is satisfied with the Lord's work on the cross. Although we do not understand how the cross has satisfied God's heart, we know that Jesus of Nazareth has risen from the grave. Was it the death of Jesus of Nazareth that the apostles went all over the world to preach? Have you heard such a gospel? I have never heard such a gospel. They went all over the world only to tell others that Jesus of Nazareth has been resurrected. If you read the book of Acts, you will see that the apostles did not preach the death of Jesus for our sins. What they told people everywhere is that this man had resurrected. They preached this because the fact of the Lord's resurrection proves that His death has glorified God. The Lord Jesus was resurrected because His work had been accepted before God. His redemption is complete, and we can now be saved. If the Lord's work had not been completed, He would have been left in the grave. Hence, resurrection is nothing other than the Lord Jesus satisfying God's heart. The Lord Jesus has resurrected from the dead. The apostles preach this to us as a proof for our faith, calling us to believe in the Lord Jesus. On the one hand, salvation has to do with the Lord's death. On the other hand, it has to do with the Lord's resurrection. His death is for the settlement of our debt and the forgiveness of our sins. By this death the problem of our sins is solved. His resurrection is the proof that His work of death has satisfied God's heart. God considers His work right and proper.

I have used an illustration before, which I will use again for the sake of the many new ones with us. If I have sinned, I should go to jail. But suppose a friend of mine volunteers to go in my place. Because he goes to jail, I am released. But it is not until he is released that I know my case is settled. Only then will my heart be relieved. My body is released because his is imprisoned. But my heart is released only when he comes out. Until the case is over, he will still be inside. If he is still in jail, I will not know if he has borne my punishment or if I will still be wanted. When he is out of prison, I will know that the case is settled. In the same way, as soon as the Lord Jesus died, the problem of my sin was solved. But the Lord Jesus had to resurrect before I could know that the problem of sin was solved. He was delivered for our transgressions and was resurrected for our justification. He resurrected because the problem of our justification was solved. We can go to the world to tell everyone of the work God has accomplished through the death of His Son Jesus Christ. At the same time, we can tell others that through the resurrection of the Lord, God has given us a receipt and a proof. It informs us that the task is finished. Today we do not merely believe in the cross. Rather, we believe also in the resurrection.

Can you find one verse in the Bible that tells man to believe in the cross? It is very strange that we are always told to believe in the resurrection. If you meet a nominal Christian today who may have been a member of a church for ten, twenty, or thirty years and talk with him a little, you will realize that there is a big difference between believing in the cross and believing in the resurrection. I met a member of a denomination once who had been an elder for thirty-eight years and a "Christian" for fifty or sixty years. When I asked if he believed in the Lord Jesus, he said, "Yes." But when I asked if he knew that his sins were forgiven, he dared not say yes. Then I

asked him if Jesus was his Savior, and he said, "Yes." But when I asked him if he was saved, he said that he did not know. When I asked him if he believed that the Lord Jesus had been judged on the cross for our sins, he readily said that he did. Not only does the Bible say this, even our hymn book says it. It says that thousands of bulls and goats on the Jewish altar will not forgive us of our sins, but the one sacrifice of the Lord cleanses us from all sin. When I asked this man if he were cleansed from his sins, he said he believed that the crucifixion of the Lord was for his sins, but he dared not say that his sins were washed away. I cannot blame him for being unclear. It is true that the Lord Jesus died on the cross. But how can one know that this cross counts? He believes in the cross, but how does he know that the cross has solved all his problems and settled his case? Although the settlement for sin happened on the cross, what makes us clear is the resurrection. If you repay someone some money, how do you know that the amount paid is sufficient and that the bank notes are genuine? What if the notes are counterfeit? Only one thing will assure you that the amount has been fully paid—a receipt from your creditor saying that the amount has been paid in full. When you pay the money, the creditor clears your account, and you know that the matter is settled. In the same way, the death of the Lord Jesus speaks of what He has done for God, while His resurrection speaks of what God has done for us. Death is the settlement between Him and God, but resurrection is the announcement to us of the settlement between God and His Son. God said that the debt has been cleared. If you believe that the Lord's death is for your sins, the Lord's resurrection will then declare that your sin record has been cleared. Many people say that we have to settle our sin account, and that if it is not settled, we cannot be saved. Thank the Lord that my sin account was settled before I was even born. Even the receipt was issued. The death of the Lord Jesus was the settlement of the debt, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was the proof of this settlement. Resurrection is the proof of justification. We are justified because God has been gracious to us and has redeemed us from sin. The death of the Lord Jesus was for the solution of sin. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was for the proof of justification. Hence, our faith rests on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

This is not all that resurrection accomplished. If we think that it is, we are wrong. This is only the objective aspect of resurrection. There is still the subjective aspect. Objectively speaking, the resurrection of the Lord becomes the proof of our salvation. If anyone were to ask me how I know that I am saved, I would tell him that I have the proof. This proof proves that I am saved. You may tell me that you were saved on a certain date in a certain year because that was when you received the Lord. I would then ask how you could know that was sufficient. You may say that you confessed your sins that day, but how do you know that confession is sufficient? You may say that you cried for your sins that day, but how do you know that your tears will wash your sins away? You may say that you have repented, confessed your sins, and accepted the Lord Jesus, but how do you know that this repentance, confession, and receiving of the Lord is sufficient? If you asked me, I would answer that I am actually saved because of the Lord's death, but I know that I am saved because of the Lord's resurrection. My friends, you have to differentiate between the two. I am saved because of the Lord's death, but I have the assurance and clear knowledge that I am saved because of the Lord's resurrection. When I pay the money, I settle my debt. I know that I have settled the debt because I have a receipt. Thank God that He has given us a proof and a receipt. His Son has paid the debt for all our sins on the cross, and through the resurrection of His Son, He has informed us that the matter is fully settled. Hence, all of the Lord's work is now finished.

If there is anyone here tonight who still doubts that he is saved, I only need to ask him what he has believed in and what he has received. It is not sufficient for a person just to believe in the cross and to receive the redemption of the Lord on the cross. One must also believe in His resurrection. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is God's message to us. It shows us that God has accepted the Lord's work. Thank God that the cross has satisfied God's heart. That is why there is the resurrection. Thus, the foundation of our faith is the death of Christ, but our faith is also based on the proof of resurrection. Death is His work of redeeming us. Resurrection is the proof of His having redeemed us. Notice that here I have said "having redeemed." Death is His work of redeeming us, and resurrection is the proof of His having redeemed us.

RECEIVING THE LORD'S WORK THROUGH FAITH IN GOD'S WORD

The work of the Lord is now complete. His death has taken place, and His resurrection has also taken place. What happens next? The Bible shows clearly that God has put all His Son's work in His Word. What is the Bible, and what is God's Word? Many times I like to think of God's Word as God's pocket for His work. God put all His work into His Word. If God were standing among us today, and He wanted to show us His Son's work and the proof of this work, how could He do it? He put the work of His Son's cross in His Word. He also put the proof of His Son's resurrection in His Word. Today God communicates all these things to us through His Word. When we receive His Word, we receive the proof of His work. Behind the Word are the facts. If there were no facts behind the words, the words would be empty. Behind the words there surely are the facts.

In winter, everyone, both male and female, wears gloves. God's Word is God's glove. All His works are contained in it. One day I met a western female missionary. She did not know what it was to believe in God's Word. She thought that all she needed to do was to believe in God, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in God's work. I told her that without God's Word there is no way to believe in God, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in God's work. Once we believe in God's Word, all these items become effective to us. After two hours of talking, I still could not get through with her. Later, she was about to leave. She had on a pair of deerskin gloves. She was about to take off the gloves to shake hands with me. I said, "You don't have to take them off. I can shake with your gloves on." To her this was quite impolite. Perhaps she considered that I was a Chinese and that I did not know proper manners. When I shook her hand I asked, "What am I holding now, the hand or the glove?" Immediately she understood what I meant. I told her that the hand was in the glove. When I shook the glove, I was shaking the hand. I shook the glove, because in it was the hand. This is like the Word of God. God has put Himself and all the work of His Son's cross in His Word. When you hand me God's Word, you are handing me God in His Word, plus all the work of His Son. When she left, she told me that everything else that had been said was useless. This one word cleared her up.

Today we preach to others the work of God's Son and the testimony of His resurrection. However, it is by His Word that we preach these things. If a man receives God's Word, he receives God's work and God's grace. God's Word is precious because in it there is the substance. What use is it if the gloves are empty? Even if you squeeze them all day long, it is useless. They

are useful only when the hands are there. Without the Lord Jesus, the Word of God is dead letters. Without the Lord Jesus, I would surely burn this book.

Hence, what is faith? It is nothing other than the receiving of God's testimony for the work of His Son. God has placed the work of His Son in the Word and has communicated this Word to us. When we believe in His Word, we are believing in Him. First John 5:9 says, "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater." What is the characteristic of God's testimony? "This is the testimony of God that He has testified concerning His Son." The Word of God is concerning His Son. Please read verse 10: "He who believes into the Son of God has the testimony in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar." Please notice the next clause: "Because he has not believed in the testimony which God has testified concerning His Son." What is it to not believe in God? It is to not believe in God's testimony of His Son. What is to believe in God? It is to believe in the words God has spoken, the testimony that He has made concerning His Son. Hence, to believe in God is nothing other than to believe in God's testimony. In the past two weeks, we have seen God's testimony. We have seen what God has done for us, what problems He has solved through His Son, and what proofs He has given us. God has spoken to us His Word. What should we do now? We should believe in Him, that is, we should receive the testimony He has concerning His Son. If there are some here who have not been saved, some may have told you already that you should believe. But what should you believe in? You do not have to believe in a Christ that is sitting in heaven. That is too far away. All you have to do is to believe in this book. This is so near. God's hand is already in the glove. The glove is God's Word. When you believe in God's Word, you are believing in God's Son. When you receive the words of the Bible, you are receiving everything in the Word. Over the past eighteen hundred years, George Müller may be considered as one of the men with the greatest faith. When others asked him what faith was, he answered that faith is when God says something, I say the same. Faith is to believe in God's Word. It is to believe in God through His Word.

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMMUNICATING GOD'S WORK TO US

There is another matter related to faith in God's Word. How can God's work become ours? The key is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come. The Holy Spirit is the keeper of God's Word. The Word of God is living because the Holy Spirit is keeping watch over it. God has placed all His works in His Word. The Holy Spirit is keeping watch over it on the side. Whenever man receives God's Word by faith, the Holy Spirit comes and applies all of God's works to him. Here we see how complete the work of the Triune God is. It is God who has loved us and who has purposed the work of redemption. It is the Son who has accomplished the work of redemption. It is God who has placed the work of the Son in the Word, and it is God who communicates to us through the Holy Spirit all the works of the Son contained in the Word. The greatest problem of man, and his most foolish thought as well, is to be confused about the condition for the Holy Spirit's work. Man thinks that if he repents God will work, or if he is baptized God will work, or if he confesses his sins or does good works, God will work. But there is not such a thing. The Bible tells us clearly that only the Holy Spirit can communicate the Lord's work to us. The characteristic of the Holy Spirit's work is fellowship. After the Lord Jesus accomplished all the work, the Holy Spirit came and communicated this work to us. If there were only the accomplished work of the Lord Jesus without the fellowshiping work of the Holy Spirit, it would still be useless to us. Without the Father, man cannot be saved. Without the Son, man cannot be saved. Likewise, without the Holy Spirit, man cannot be saved. Although there is the

work of the Father and the Son, there is still the need of the Holy Spirit to communicate these works to us and to cause the objective matters to become subjective.

The question is now what we should do in order for the Holy Spirit to work on us. The Bible shows us clearly that there is only one condition for the Holy Spirit to work—faith. Do we receive the Holy Spirit by the works of the law or by faith? It is by faith. This is what Paul told us in the book of Galatians. When we believe in God's Word, the Holy Spirit will apply this word to us. That is why I said that the Holy Spirit is the keeper of God's Word.

If there is anyone here tonight who is not yet saved, I hope that you will open your heart to receive God's testimony. You do not have to worry about who the Lord Jesus is. You do not have to worry about who God is. What relates to you directly is the Word of God. If you have a proper relationship with the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will communicate to you all the works of God and the Lord Jesus. If you open your heart and call on Him and invoke Him, like the publican who prayed for God to be merciful to him, or more accurately translated, to be propitiated to him, you will be justified. Once you open your heart to call on Him, the Holy Spirit will communicate God's work to you. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Tonight I am only speaking about the initial things of salvation. Actually, all the works of the Holy Spirit follow this principle. Whenever you come to God to receive His Word, the Holy Spirit will make this Word come alive. It may seem that what you receive are dead things, but when the Holy Spirit comes, He will make them alive in you. Do not try to accomplish anything yourself. Do not think that the Holy Spirit is ignorant of your faith in God's Word. No, as soon as you believe, He comes in immediately to work. There is nothing that He does not know. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in redemption. The Triune God has accomplished all the work of salvation for us in order that we may be saved.

THE FUNCTION OF FAITH—SUBSTANTIATION

Perhaps you may ask, "Why would the Holy Spirit communicate to us all of God's work in His Word when we believe in this Word?" The words in 1 John that we just read tell us what faith is. That is the work of faith. But what is the function of faith? The function of faith is the substantiation of the Lord's work in us. This is what Hebrews 11 shows us. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for." The King James Version translates this word as the noun "substance," but in the original language it is not a noun but a gerund, a verbal noun. Darby's translation renders it "substantiating." This is not a noun but a gerund from a verb. This kind of gerund is used often. For example, in the church there is the "overseeing" by the elders. This overseeing is not a noun but a gerund. "Substantiating" is also used in the same way. Faith is a substantiating. Do not underestimate this translation. I have been looking for ten years without finding a suitable word. Then, when I discovered Darby's use of "substantiating," I think I came across the best translation. Everything in the world, whether animals, plants, or minerals, has to be substantiated by us. While we live on the earth, we are constantly substantiating things around us. My eyes substantiate every sight and color. While I am speaking here, some brothers and sisters who are hard of hearing do not know what I am talking about. They only see my mouth moving. I have the words, but they lack the substantiating. I have the substance, but they do not have the power of substantiating it. They cannot substantiate my word in themselves. If there were a singer or some wonderful music here, I could substantiate it with my ears. When our

hands touch something, we know that it is smooth or coarse. Our nose can identify a good or a bad smell. Our tongue can identify a sweet or a salty taste. All these are substantiations. All the organs in the human body are doing the work of substantiating.

What is faith? Faith is not making something out of nothing. Faith is substantiating what is there. Faith is not daydreaming or the speaking of a dream. Faith is to manifest what is there already. This is why Hebrews says that faith is the substantiating of things hoped for. The word "things" should be translated "substance." Although they cannot be seen, it does not mean that they are not there. The greatest problem of man today is that he does not have the substantiating ability. As a result, he doubts the reality of the things. If you tell a person who has lost his taste buds to take a sweet drink, he will say that it tastes like some soy sauce he just drank. This is to have the substance without the substantiation. All the spiritual things are there. God has placed all His works in His Word. If you have faith, you will substantiate them.

We who are preaching the gospel are not preaching nonexistent things. The problem today is that many will not substantiate them. In Christ I am full of substance. But many would not substantiate these things. Tonight we have two brothers here who cannot see. I can say that this book is black and that book is brown. When they touch these books, the two are the same to them. You can tell that one is black and another is brown because you can see, but to them there is no distinction between black and brown. If they ask me what black is, I can only say that black is black. I cannot explain it. There is no way to explain it. What is the difficulty? The difficulty lies in their lack of the substantiating ability. It is the same way with us before God. Many are like deaf or blind people. When you talk to them about spiritual things, they say that they do not feel this or that. They have no way to substantiate those things.

Hence, what is faith? The apostle told us clearly that the function of faith is to substantiate the spiritual things. Something was not there with you. Now it is there. Today we are living in a physical world, but God has put all the spiritual things in His Word. The Word of God is full of the things of God. Do not take the Word of God that lightly. Even eternity is in the Word of God. What is the function of faith? The function of faith is to manifest spiritual things in the same way that eyes manifest shapes and colors, ears manifest sounds, and the nose manifests smells. Faith manifests spiritual things. This is why God wants us to have faith.

RECEIVING BY BELIEVING THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED

Now we have to see how we have to believe. In the Bible, faith has its own laws. In the whole New Testament, there is only one place that tells us the function of faith—Hebrews 11:1. At the same time, in the whole New Testament, there is only one place that tells us how to believe—Mark 11:24: "For this reason I say to you, All things that you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and you will have them." Here it tells us what it is to believe. What is faith? Faith is to believe in the Word of God. "Believe that you have received them." We have to pay attention to the word "received." It is in the past tense. If you meet a man today who says that he will receive, immediately you know that he does not have faith. If you ask someone if he has believed in the Lord Jesus and if he has been saved, and if he tells you that he hopes to be saved, then he surely is not saved. All those who say that they want to receive or that they hope to

receive do not have faith. Mark 11:24 shows us clearly that faith is to believe that we have received. Faith is not to believe that we will receive. It is not to believe that we shall receive, are about to receive, or can receive. All these "wills," "cans," and "shalls" are not faith. Only the faith that believes that one has received is the faith that the Bible talks about.

Many times when I preached the gospel to someone, he would hear about the work of God and realize that all has been done. I would show him his corruption, his weakness, his sins, and his degradation. As a result, he would confess his sins and come to see the work of the Lord Jesus. After this we would kneel down to pray. First I would pray for him. Then he would pray himself. He would confess that he is a sinner and that he has committed many sins. He would ask for forgiveness and ask for the Lord to give him life. After he prayed in this way, I would ask, "Are your sins now forgiven?" If he said, "I believe that God will forgive my sins," I would say to myself, "Forget it. Here is another dead case." If he said, "I believe fully that God will forgive my sins," I would know immediately that he did not have faith.

When will a preacher rejoice over a listener? It is when such a one prays and says, perhaps in tears, that he is clear about everything now. You know that such a one has passed the gate and has obtained eternal life. He may say, "Thank the Lord, the problem of my sins has been solved," or he may say, "Thank the Lord, He has accepted me," or "Thank the Lord, God has forgiven all my sins on account of His Son." When you hear this, you know that such a one has believed and is saved. There is only one kind of faith in the Bible—the faith that believes that one has received. Everyone who says that he will receive, can receive, shall receive, and must receive, has not received.

My friends, this is the way to believe in all the facts in the Bible. With some people, after you pray with them, you know if they have passed from death to life and if they are saved. Many hope to be saved. This is not the real faith. Once I talked with a man who said that he fully believed that he would be saved. I said, "You had better change your wording a little. You should say, "I fully hope" instead of "I fully believe." If you fully believe, then you have received it already. Hence, anyone who has not put the word "have" or "already" into the word of God has not believed. If you say that your sins have been forgiven, this shows that you have believed. If you say that you have overcome your sins, this also shows that you have believed. Or if you say that you have received, this again shows that you have believed. Whenever you can say that you have received, at that time you have truly received. My friends, the matter today is very simple. I will not lower the standard of the Bible. All of God's works are accomplished. The Word of God has been preached to us. The Son of God has died. The Lord Jesus has resurrected. What should we say now? We should say, "Thank the Lord, I have received." This is good enough. Sometimes, when I attend revival meetings, I can almost cry. When the people there cry, I also cry. They cry for themselves, but I cry for God's salvation. They plead to God saying, "Oh God, save me," as if by this begging, God would be touched to love them or to turn and save them.

Thank the Lord. Those who have faith do not need to pray. Those who have faith are full of praises. Never say that prayer is a sign of faith. Please remember that, on the contrary, prayer is a

sign of lack of faith. All experienced Christians know that where there is faith, there is praise. One hymn [Hymns, #690] says:

Hear	the	message	from	the	throne,
Claim	the	promise,		doubting	one;
God	hath	spoken,	"It	is	done."
Faith	has	answered,	"It	is	done."
Prayer	is	over,		praise	begun.
Hallelujah, "It is done."					

You cannot say, "It will be done." All those who say it will be done do not have faith. God said that everything is done. You also must say that everything is done. God said that He has accomplished everything, and I believe in this. This is all that matters.

The greatest problem today is that when you go to many denominations, you meet hundreds of church members who say that they believe that Jesus will save them. They believe that Jesus will and can save them, but this is not faith. This is hope. To do this is to annul the Word of God. For example, if I give this book to Brother Hu and he says, "I believe that you will give it to me tomorrow," this is not politeness but an insult to me. Today God has sent His Son to accomplish redemption. If we still say, "Please save me," what is this? What we ought to say is, "God, I thank You because You have taken care of all my sins on the cross." My friends, a sinner cannot be saved by prayer. A sinner can only believe that Jesus has saved him.

Faith is not a merit. Never consider faith a work. Some say that they do not know if their faith is strong enough. God has made faith so simple for you, but man has made a simple thing very complicated. Suppose I have a brother who is short of money and has become very poor. Now I want to give him some money. I tell him, "You do not have to do anything. You cannot afford even to work. Here, take this money and go." By doing this, I am making the matter most simple. However, suppose his mind is very complicated. Suppose he would ask, "If my brother is going to give me money, should I take it with my left hand, or should I take it with my right hand? Should I take it at noon, or should I take it in the afternoon? Should I take it standing up, or should I take it sitting down?" He wants to study how he can take it. This would be the greatest mistake in the whole world.

While I was in Cheefoo, I met a sister. I told her that if she would believe, she would receive. She said, "I have been doing this for a week. I still do not know how I can believe. I do not know if this is the right way or that is the right way to believe. I do not know if my faith is strong enough." I told her that God has accomplished all the work. She only needs to believe in a simple way. But she was too analytical. She made faith a work.

Thank the Lord that it is the simplest thing on earth to receive salvation. We do not have to do anything. It does not mean that nothing has to be done. It only means that the Lord Jesus has done everything. God says that He has died. I say that I believe He has died. God says that the Lord Jesus has resurrected and become a proof. I say, "Yes" and agree that His resurrection has become a proof of my justification. He says that my sins are forgiven, that He has saved me. I will not wait. I believe, and the matter is settled. When I believe, I have received. Thank the Lord.

This is all. We have passed from death to life. There is no need to feel anything or to wait for any peace or joy to come.

A few years ago, I preached the gospel to one person. He told me that he believed in the Lord Jesus, that he believed that he was a sinner, and that he believed the Lord Jesus had forgiven his sins. But he had a problem. He did not feel that the Holy Spirit was working mightily in him like he thought He was working in other Christians. I asked if his sins were forgiven. He answered, "No." I asked him why. He said that he did not feel the Holy Spirit working in him yet. I said, "My friend, you are absolutely wrong. The Bible does not say that whoever feels that he has believed in the Son of God has eternal life. We do not believe by our feelings. Rather, we believe by the Word of God." When a person gives this book to me, I do not have to feel anything. I only have to believe in his word. Salvation is without any condition. There is, however, the proper procedure. The procedure of salvation is not work; it is simply to believe and to receive. Whatever God says, I say the same. This is to receive. Thank the Lord that His grace is sufficient for us.