

So faith comes from hearing

by Hendrik Joubert

During our lifetime we will receive some advice, and we will give some advice. Some advice will be good; however some of it will not be good. The decision whether to accept or reject advice often depends upon the seriousness of the situation – what would be the consequences if...

We will consider the source of the advice to determine whether it is trustworthy or not. Some individuals simply are not known to be honorable, or they do not have the expertise or experience to give advice. Even after careful research we may not be guaranteed success. Consider all the statements of indemnity and the warnings found on prescribed medicine – will I use it, or not?

We do not have to say anything concerning the choices we make; it is obvious from our actions. What we do demonstrates whether we *believe* what we have heard and whether we *trust* the source. Our actions become a demonstration not only of what we believe, but also who we believe.

In the same way salvation is based upon faith in God and in His Son. (**Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16**) The extent of faith required is more than the mere mental acceptance of the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Many accept this fact, however they will not demonstrate their faith in Him by following His advice: ***"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?...Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. ²² "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'"*** (**Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-23**)

The basic principle of faith being demonstrated by actions is obvious from the Lord's question recorded by Luke and the subsequent statements given through Matthew. What I believe and what I do is based upon the source of that faith, and here the question of reliability is of paramount importance. If I do not do as directed by God what I do will be considered ***lawlessness*** – no sinner has the right to decide what God is to accept and what not.

It is through the apostle Paul that we learn what the proper source for our faith and the resulting practice should be: ***So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*** (**Romans 10:17**) The word of Christ is sometimes referred to as the gospel, as is the case in the first chapter of the letter to the Romans: ***For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to***

***faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."
(Romans 1:16-17)***

Notice that the gospel is the power of God for everyone who believes for in it God's power for salvation is revealed – the gospel contains instructions on how one is to be saved. Those who believe in God and believe in the advice given through the gospel will demonstrate their faith by following these instructions. (**James 2:14-26**) One does not illustrate faith in God and His Son by following the advice of the Pope, or any other man or group of men. When men make the rules for worship, that worship becomes vain: ***'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'***" (**Matthew 15:9**)

Notice the following instruction received through the apostle Paul: ***Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.*** (**1 Corinthians 4:6**) The situation he refers to may be found in **1 Corinthians 1:10-13** where men started calling themselves after those through whom they heard the gospel, and by whom they were baptized. Consider the similarity to the numerous denominations where one bears a name to indicate your loyalty and the version of *the faith* that you adhere to. Dividing the body of Christ and identifying with a name other than His is specifically condemned since Jesus is the one who paid the price by dying on the cross.

The gospel is also referred to as the faith, and it is through Jude faithful followers of Christ is exhorted to contend for the faith which was once for all times handed down to the Christians of the first century, that which we are able to read in our Bible. (**Jude verse 3**) The Scriptures contain everything one needs to know in order to please God. (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) What I do will demonstrate whether my faith comes from the word of Christ, or the word of men.