

Elementary Doctrines Faith in God

Studio Session 30
Sam Soleyn
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We are discussing going on unto perfection, and the elementary doctrines of Christ. We are through in our first of the broadcast, with the particular doctrine of “Repentance from acts that lead to death”. Now what we want to do is go to the second, and today we’d like to speak of “Faith toward God”. Once again, in Scripture here is the reading: **“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permit.” (Inserted - Hebrews 6:1-3 KJV)**

Now, the second of these six elementary foundations is “Faith toward God”. It is not that we are unfamiliar with that expression: “faith toward God.” The problem is what we’ve been told about faith is a very limited view of faith. Oddly enough those who have taught us about faith would act as if they own the territory called “faith”. But the fact is, what they’ve done with it is isolated faith to certain particular usages, such as faith for health, faith for wealth, faith for things and possessions. And I think that I understand why God allowed the message of faith to be associated with these things because when you are immature, these are what you think about. When you are young in the Lord, your desire is for God to do something for you.

There are many stages in our growing up in God because our relationship to God, as the children of God, is referred to in Scripture in multiple sequences. For example, one of the references to “sonship” is the word “nepios” and what it means is: as it would suggest, nativity, birth, the very earliest parts of your life. Another reference is the word “paidion”, and it means literally, potty training, the point where you should be walking around and learning potty training, if you like.... the elementary doctrines. Then beyond that is the stage of a teenager, and that is the stage referred to as “teknon”. And beyond that is the stage called “huios”; and there is a final stage, which is “pater” which means father, paternity, and paternal father. So these are all the stages of sonship. But each of these words is properly translated, “son”.

“Nepios” is translated son, because a newborn child is a son, but he is not “huios”. When maturity is referred to it is “huios Theou”, the sons of God. When Jesus is referred to as the mature son who can take up the interests of the Father’s house, that reference is to him as “huios”. And when Paul speaks to Timothy, about the fathers, he refers to “pater”—“the fathers”. So, in your growing up into maturity there are various stages. At some point, and I believe it’s the point at “paidion”, which is potty training—the toddler stage in your walk with God—you ought to be introduced to the doctrine of faith. And I believe that the fact that God introduced the doctrine of faith to us through the teachers who were, and still are, preoccupied with what God can do for you, is the indication both of when you ought to be introduced to faith but it is also an indication of where the body of Christ is. It’s still at the place where it thinks about what God can do for you.

Now as you grow beyond that, to “teknon”, where you begin to take on responsibilities in the kingdom of God, and particularly when you become “huios”—a mature son in the house of the Father—and especially when you go beyond that to “pater”—to being a father in the house of God—faith too must grow up. Your understanding of faith must also grow up. Faith toward God begins with what God can do for you, but it should not remain there, it should become a way of life. For the Scriptures say, “whatever is not of faith is sin”. (Inserted – actual verse—**“But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.” – Romans 14:23**) For example, how would your faith in God grow up? Well, one of the areas in which your faith in God is meant to grow up, is that you begin to understand that the Living God lives in you and intends to live through you.

You see, Jesus when He said, “I only do what I see the Father doing and the son can do nothing of himself.”—and furthermore, in the same chapter, which is the 5th chapter of the book of John, where He says, “The son can do nothing of himself, only what the Father does the son also does.”—when He says that, He is declaring His faith in God as a way of life. (Inserted-actual verse—**“Jesus gave them this answer: ‘I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.’” – John 5:19**) That is, that He has entrusted Himself to God so completely, that whatever God elects to do through Him, Jesus is willing to permit. That requires a trust in God, not just for how your life might be preserved and enriched, but it requires that you believe that God is better able to direct the entirety of your life than you are. That is why Jesus is both the prototype of the sons of God, and He is referred to as the fully mature son. Because He’s totally obedient to the Father in what He does. That is then, He is “Huios Theou,” the Son of God.

Faith therefore, must mature from what God can do for you, how God can supply you, and how God can preserve your health. It must grow from that to your trust in God. And

inherent in that growing up is that you come to the realization that God has a plan for your life, which is how He, himself envisioned that He would live in time and space through your person, through your body. That is why we then can claim to be the body of Christ. It's our bodies, yes, but we have given Him our bodies and He now can live through these human vehicles to do through them what He specifically designed us to do and to be, in terms of His ability to use us for His eternal purposes known in His mind before the foundations of the world.

Clearly, faith for things and for your health is far below this level of understanding. And whereas I am not coming against that level of understanding, I am saying however, that's the beginning. That's like when a child in diapers cries because he has a need for something or throws a fit to get something. Now if that child is a "teknon", a teenager, and does the same thing, what may have been cute and acceptable when he was "nepios" and "paidion", newly born and cries because that's his only means of communication, or has not yet been disciplined, he's in the "paidion" stage. He hasn't been disciplined, so you put up with it, you wink at it, but you realize if you're the parent that you've got your work cut out for you. If he does that when he's a "teknon", a teenager, then you oppose it. You oppose him, because to let it go beyond there is to permanently warp his concept of what it means to be mature. Indeed it is to deny him coming to the next stages of maturity. And so, what God has begun to do is He's begun to hold off on giving us what we want in terms of money and health, so that we will grow up. Now when you grow up, and your faith grows up, the definition of faith is still the same but the application of it now becomes different.

What is the definition of faith, and specifically faith toward God? Here is the definition as the writer of the book of **Hebrews** states it in **chapter 11, verse 1**. There the writer says, "Now, faith is being sure of what we hoped for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for." (Inserted-"**Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.**" **Hebrews 11:1-2**) There it is again, "Faith is the substance," KJV says, "Its the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." (Inserted - actual verse -"**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**" **Hebrews 11:1 KJV**) Now exactly what is meant by that?

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." And how does this reflect a growing faith in the living God, a maturing faith to keep pace with your stages in life? Well it's like this: some time ago, Lucy and I were—my wife, my wife's name is Lucy—she and I were having this conversation. She is known for asking me the tough questions. You know, sometimes people are nice to me because they think I am more important than I actually am, but she doesn't have that illusion. She will ask me perhaps what others are not so willing to ask. She said to me, "Sam we are getting older, and are you saying that we won't get sick? And we won't have the problems that

commonly attend older people? And what provisions should we be looking at? And what plans should we be making for these things?” Well, its one of those conversations that would be very uncomfortable for anyone, so I sort of ducked. And I said, “Well, I’ll pray about it and I’ll give you an answer.” And when I tell Lucy I’ll pray about something, I know that I have to come back and give her an answer at some point because she’ll ask me, “Have you been praying about what we talked about?”

Well, in any event, when I tell people I’ll pray over things, I pray over them. And I prayed over this. And this is the answer the Lord gave me. The Lord reminded me of how, when I was a young man, and my greatest challenge, the greatest mountain I faced in my life was whether or not Lucy would accept my proposal for marriage, whether she would marry me. Well now I look back on that and I no longer have any qualms about what the answer might be. After almost twenty-eight years of marriage, I no longer have a question as to what her answer would have been. But in that day, in that time in my life, it was the largest mountain in my life. Then we had children, and we had the mountains that were associated with having children (their safety, their education, their well being, finances, those things.) Now the Lord showed me that when the mountainous obstacles in my life—as a young man, before I was married—were looming before me...that what I saw, in that day was the goodness of God. Then, when things changed and we had children, what I saw again in dealing with their issues, was I saw the goodness of God.

The Lord reminded me, moved it up to thinking about you know, buying a house, and all those things that went with other stages. And how difficult each stage appeared to be, but always what came about was, I saw the goodness of God. When I was making a decision to leave the employment that I could secure through my training and education and experience, to trust that God would go before me, and because He had called me to the things of the Kingdom, that I could expect that I would see His goodness in those very difficult things. Now in that day, when it was time as it were to leave off from the security of what I could do, to the call of God to respond, but having no guarantees that finances would come on time, that I would have the word of the Lord that I could declare in the moment, and so on. All the massive mountainous things, trials, problems, difficulties, that naturally attend each new stage of your walk with God, that what I did see then, also, was the goodness of God.

And so I had my answer. My answer was—when I came back to tell her what the Lord had showed me—I reminded her how, when we were young and those events, and how we saw God go before us and give us the answer. And when we had children, and we even thought of examples—an occasion when Tamarind was sick, and how God provided what we needed in the moment. And then when it was time for me to transition from the work I could do—and that I had been prepared to do through training and education and experience—and it was time to leave that behind and take up my call as an apostle in the

Kingdom, and how we saw the goodness of God then. And how subsequent to that, I contended with all sorts of problems in the church, betrayal through friends, disappointments when things that seemed to be on track broke apart because the enemy had gotten in and distorted the points of view. I had to believe that the things that God had showed me were correct, but there were times when nothing that was going on around me confirmed that what God had showed me was correct, and I stood and then God brought about some answers after a while and I saw the goodness of God then.

After I came back and we were having this discussion, I said to her, “Lucy, what I understand faith to be is this: It is the evidence of things that we cannot see”. Now evidence is an interesting thing. Evidence refers almost to a legal process. When you go to a court of law and you have an adversary, you have to present evidence in support of your point of view. The adversary is going to present evidence to contradict your point of view. Now the judge in a case such as that, the judge is typically chosen on the basis that the judge himself or herself has no prior knowledge of the facts and the case presented to him or to her. If it is a jury trial, the jury itself is selected on the basis of not having any prejudice in this matter, no prior knowledge. When you come before a judge and jury who in that sense, legally, are more or less a blank slate, you introduce evidence to present your case to those who are hearing and trying the facts. You must present a sufficiency of evidence to people who have no knowledge of your circumstances and the case that they are called to judge, but you must present a sufficiency of evidence to cause them to agree with your point of view.

So when it says, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and Faith is the evidence of things not seen.” then what it means is that there is an entire world and entire existence apart from what can be seen. Faith is your encounter—in a routine way through all of the stages of your life—with the reality of this thing, which, though you cannot see it, you’ve bumped into the evidence of its existence again and again and again. And the evidence is meant to cause you to rely on the reality of the thing that you cannot see, based upon your contact with it. We have not seen the Kingdom of God. You cannot say, “Look here the Kingdom; look there the Kingdom”, because the Kingdom is within you and the Kingdom is invisible. But does the Kingdom exist?

What evidence do you have that the Kingdom exists? The fact is that God continuously bombards you with the evidence that, though it is unseen, it is real. And that quantum of evidence may wear a label over it, because it’s consistently this form of evidence; you see the Kingdom of God in terms of “the goodness of God.” So the Scriptures say, “Blessed are you who have not seen and yet have believed.” (Inserted – actual verse — **“Then Jesus told him, ‘Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’” – John 20:29**) Therefore faith is not the same as “wished” or “hoped”. Faith is actually substantive; it is that in the course of your life you are introduced to the redundant evidence, that the thing...though invisible is

real because the evidence that you are encountering continues to support the point of view that whatever it is—and though you do not have the clarity of understanding about it—it is still real.

What God wants from the believer, is to grow from those early rudimentary encounters with God's goodness—the parking space that you got in front of the crowded restaurant, or the occasion that somebody called you at the moment that you were thinking about him or her—if you do not allow these things to develop in you and to become a body of evidence, then you have to learn again and again, the same thing. So, it seems foolish that, when God is teaching you faith, that, He teaches you faith in a manner that you can understand.

Now there is much more to faith than this. But we want to center in, to focus in a little bit more on this. I want to get over into “faith is the substance of things hoped for”. So in the next broadcast, I want to get over into that dual connection between this: “the evidence of things not seen,” and “the substance of things hoped for”, because that is another whole inquiry. And the thrust of this whole foundation is to say that even as we go through all the stages of sonship, so faith as a way of life should mature even as we the sons of God—without respect to male or female—we ourselves grow up and mature. When you are a youngster, when you are “nepios”, when you are “paidion”, God permits you to live in the realm of what God can do for you as the definition of faith. But from the time you become “teknon”, and you begin to handle things of the Kingdom and move on to “huios” and “pater” your faith has to grow up also. The sad truth is we have been introduced to faith at the level of children and we have remained at that level all this while. And that is why people don't know what lies beyond the ceiling of church and religion.

It is necessary for us to revisit the foundational doctrines, the elements of our faith, and then following that when we get these things right, we can “go on unto maturity.” The goal then of these teachings is to “go on unto maturity.” There will be several other teachings in this series on the elementary doctrines. I hope you'll study with me as we continue to discuss them. I am Sam Soleyn. God bless you and I'll talk to you again.

Scriptural References:

Hebrews 6:1-3

Romans 14:23

John 5:19

Hebrews 11:1,2

John 20:29