



Faith

A Sermon by George Müller of Bristol

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” - Hebrews xi, 1, 3.

The subject of our meditation this evening is, What is faith - how it may be increased? And the growth of faith, which I will endeavour to illustrate by some of the experiences which, by the grace of God, I have realised in the exercise of belief in His promises as revealed in His Word.

First: *What is faith?* In the simplest manner in which I am able to express it I answer: faith is the assurance that the thing which God has said in His Word is true, and that God will act according to what He has said in His Word. This assurance, this reliance on God's Word, this confidence, is faith.

No impressions are to be taken in connection with faith. Impressions have neither one thing not the other to do with faith. Faith has to do with the Word of God. It is not impression, strong or weak, which will make any difference. We have to do with the written Word. We have to rely on the written Word, and not on ourselves or our impressions.

Probabilities are not to be taken into account. Many people are willing to believe regarding those things that seem to them probable. The province of faith begins where probabilities cease and sight and sense fail. A great many of God's children are cast down, and lament their want of faith. They write to me, and say they have no impressions, no feeling; they see no probability that the thing they wish will come to pass (Luke 18:27). Appearances are not to be taken into account. Impressions and feelings and probabilities are not to be taken into account. The question is - if God has spoken it in His Word.

Now, preliminary to what I have to say to you, dear Christian friends, lay to heart that it is because there is so much dependence on these things that we have so little blessedness among us. All these things must be left alone. The naked Word of God is what we are to depend upon. This is enough for us.

And now, beloved Christian friends, you are in great need to ask yourselves whether you are in the habit of thus confiding in your inmost soul in what God has said, and whether you are in earnest in seeking find whether the thing you want is in accordance with what He has said in His Word. If it is, that the thing you ask for will come to pass is as sure as that you were able to confide in Him.

Second: *How faith may be increased!* God delights to increase the faith of His children. He is thus glorified before an ungodly world and the powers of darkness. The confidence of His children in times of trial, discouragement, pain and sorrow, gives great encouragement to other Christians. God delights that He may do good to others through them and that they themselves, through the exercise of faith, may obtain an increase of it. For difficulties, costs, crusts, hindrances, bereavements and losses, though we shrink from them, and shrink exceedingly, are the very things God uses to develop us more and more, as the young infant has its weak limbs developed, till by and by they grow to the power of a man's. For I am not one of those who believe that we can attain to strong faith at once, any more than a weak infant can spring into manhood at once. Our faith, which is weak and feeble at first, is developed and strengthened more and more by use.

What we have to do instead of wanting no trials before victory, no exercise for patience, is to be willing to take them from God's hands as a means, I say, and say it deliberately - trials, difficulties, obstacles, bereavements, necessities, are the very food of faith. I get letters from so many of God's dear children who say, "Dear Mr. Müller, I'm writing this because I'm so weak and feeble in faith". Just so surely as we ask to have our faith strengthened we must be willing to take from God's hands the means for strengthening it. We must allow Him to educate us through trials and bereavements and troubles. For it is through trial that faith is exercised and developed more and more. God affectionately permits difficulties that He may develop increasingly that which He is willing to do for us; and to this end we should not shrink, but if He gives us sorrows and hindrances, and losses, and afflictions, we should take them out of His hands as evidences of His love, and His care for us in developing more and more in us that faith which He is seeking to strengthen in us.

Again, it is necessary that we seek to acquaint ourselves with God as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. We must not content ourselves with the notions that people have about God, but we must diligently seek to know what He has disclosed regarding Himself. And we must not take the notions which the Church and many professing Christians have of God; for I say deliberately that the notions which the Church of Christ has about God are not the truth, and we do not want to gather our views from what the Church says about God, or what Christian men say about Him; but we want to come to the very fountain, the revelation the Lord has made of Himself in His written Word, and step by step, as we read, to learn not only of the power, infinite wisdom, justice, and holiness of our God, but also of His gentleness, pity, beautifulness and bountifulness. When we read and see what God has revealed of Himself in His Word we shall find out more and more from it that God is the Lovable One, **God is the Lovable One, GOD IS THE LOVABLE ONE**; and before I go any further, I stop and ask you what is the response of your inmost soul? Is God, to you, the Lovable One? If not, you are not acquainted with Him. You have yet to find out that He is the most Lovable One. Oh, seek to say in your inmost heart that He is the Lovable One! The result will be that you will confide in Him unreservedly, at all times, in all circumstances. Though He slay you yet will you trust in Him. Turn and read the ninth Psalm. With your very own eyes read the ninth and tenth verses: "The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble". And, "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: For Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee". We who learn to see God as He has revealed Himself in His Word, are so satisfied with God, and in His dealings with us, we see how everything is for our good. On this account it is so deeply important for our usefulness and for our growth in faith that we get correct ideas of God from the fountain of truth contained in His Word. In the exercise of our faith, and in studying God in His Word, our faith grows. I say this deliberately, advisedly, and tens of thousands of God's tried children will say the same thing.

The Church of Christ is not aroused to see God as the beautiful and lovable One He is, and hence the small measure of blessedness. Oh, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, seek to learn for yourselves, for I cannot tell you the blessedness! In the darkest moments I am able to confide in Him, for I know what a beautiful and kind and faithful and lovable Being He is, and if it be the will of God to put us in the furnace, let Him do it, so that we may acquaint ourselves with Him as He will reveal Himself, and as we know Him better, we come to the conclusion that God is the most lovable Being, and we are satisfied with Him, and say, "It is my Father - let Him do as He pleases."

When I first began allowing God to deal with me, relying on Him, taking Him at His Word, and set out fifty-one years ago simply relying on Him for myself, family, taxes, travelling expenses and every other

need, I rested on the simple promises. I found in the 6th chapter of Matthew a passage, "I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Therefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" No man could by care and forethought array a lily. Put a flower under a microscope and you will say it has been attired by no other than the living God. "Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek): for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

I believed the Word. I rested on it and practised it. I "took God at His Word". A stranger, a foreigner in England, I knew seven languages and might have used them perhaps as a means of remunerative employment, but I had consecrated myself to labour for the Lord. I put my reliance in the God who has promised, and He has acted according to His Word. I've lacked nothing - nothing. I have had my trials, my difficulties, and my empty purse, but my receipts have aggregated tens of thousands of pounds, while the work has gone on these fifty-one years, I have had great difficulties, great trials and perplexities. There will be always difficulties, always trials. But God has sustained me under them and delivered me out of them, and the work has gone on.

Now, this is not, as some have said, because I am a man of great mental power or endowed with energy and perseverance - these are not the reasons. It is because I have confided in God; because I have sought God and He has cared for the institution which, under His direction, has one hundred and seventeen schools with masters and mistresses, and other departments of which I have told you before. The difficulties in such an undertaking have been gigantic, but I read that they that put their trust in the Lord shall not be ashamed. Nearly twenty years ago a beloved brother from America came to see me, and he expected to find me an old man helpless and decrepit, bowed down with burdens, and he wondered, I did not look old. "How is this?" he said, "that you keep so young under such a load as you are carrying?"

"My dear brother," I said, "I have always rolled the burden on the Lord. I do not carry one-hundredth part of it. The burden comes to me, and I roll it back on Him." I do not carry the burden. And now, in my seventy-sixth year, I have physical strength and mental vigour for work as great as when I was a young man in the university, studying and preparing Latin orations. I am just as vigorous as at that time.

How comes this? Because in the last half century of labour I've been able, with the simplicity of a little child, to rely upon God. I have had my trials, but I have laid hold on God, and so it has come that I have been sustained. It is not only permission, but positive command that He gives us to cast the burden upon Him. Oh let us do it, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee." Day by day I do it. This morning again sixty matters in connection with the church, of which I am a pastor, I brought before the Lord, and thus it is day by day, and year

by year; ten years, twenty years, thirty years, forty years. And now, my beloved brothers and sisters, come with your burdens, the burdens of your business, your profession, your trials and difficulties, and you will find help.

Many persons suppose it is only about money that I trust the Lord in prayer. I do bring this money question before the Lord, but it is only one out of many things I speak to God about, and I find He helps. Often I have perplexity in finding person of ability and fitness for the various posts that I have to have supplied. Sometimes weeks and months pass, and day by day, day by day, I bring the matter before the Lord, and invariably He helps. It is so about the conversion of persons; - prayer, sooner or later, is turned into praise. After a while, God helps. It is so about the needs of our work in sending our tracts and books, and missionary efforts. After a while God helps. We're never left, we're never confounded.

Do not, however, expect to attain full faith at once. All such things as jumping into full exercise in such things I discountenance. I do not believe in it, I do not believe in it, I do NOT believe in it, and I wish you to plainly understand I do not believe in it. All such things go on in a natural way. The little I did obtain I did not obtain all at once. All this I say particularly, because letters come to me full of questions from those who seek to have their faith strengthened. Being over again, staying your soul on the Word of God, and you will find an increase of your faith as you exercise it.

One thing more. Some say, "Oh, I shall never have the gift of faith Mr. Müller has got. He has the gift of faith." This is the greatest mistake - it is a great error - there is not a particle of truth in it. My faith is just the same kind of faith that all of God's children have had. It is the same kind that Simon Peter had, and all Christians may obtain the like faith. My faith is their faith, though there may be more of it because my faith has been a little more developed by exercise than theirs; but their faith is precisely the faith I exercise, only, with regard to the degree, mine may be more strongly exercised.

What little faith I have is the grace of faith, not the gift. But he who has the grace of faith always has it accompanied by love, rendered "charity". The gift of faith is able to command, and may even command devils. The grace of faith has to do with the written Word of the Lord.

Now, my beloved brothers and sisters, begin in a little way. At first I was able to trust the Lord for ten pounds, then for a hundred pounds, then for a thousand pounds, then for a hundred thousand pounds, and now, with the greatest ease, I could trust Him for millions of pounds if there was occasion. But, first, I should quietly, carefully, deliberately examine and see whether what I was trusting for was something in accordance with His promises in His written Word. If I found it was, the amount of the difficulties would be no hindrance to my trust. Fifty-one years, and God has never failed me! Trust Him for yourselves and find how true to His Word He is.

May God's richest, choicest blessings rest upon you now, and upon all who do now feel encouraged to put their whole trust in Christ hereafter. Then will peace, sunshine and happiness begin with the beginning of the exercise of the grace of faith, which is always found united with love.

Müllers is a working name of the
The George Müller Charitable Trust is a limited company registered in England and Wales
Registered Charity no 1066832 Company no 3471812
Registered Office: Müller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol BS6 6DA
Tel: 0117 924 5001 Email: admin@mullers.org