

Current Affairs # 11– Faith Redefined

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The people of God have been poorly served by many of their religious leaders. That is why confidence in religion is at an all-time low. Many of the actors saw the opportunity, by focusing on a particular aspect of the Scriptures, to monetize it to their great, substantial, and ongoing gain. Many of these people are by no means schooled in the understanding of the Scriptures, so they have an ordinary, what I choose to call a domestic approach to the Scriptures. Let me explain. The New Testament, in particular, is written in Greek—in the common language of the Greek civilization at the time of the Apostle Paul, at the time certainly of Christ, so the Greek of the time of the first century called Koine Greek or ordinary/common Greek. Now, you must understand that there was an existing language, the Greek language, that was used by the writers of the New Testament under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to present things to the Greek world. It was the language that was used. Every time these divinely inspired authors would use particular words in the Greek language, they would, in fact, create a new meaning to that word that did not exist before, within either the vernacular of the Greek language or the cultural and societal norms of that time.

A good example would be the word: *baptizó* (Strong's Greek 907). It was an ordinary Greek word. Let's say, for example, a house wife or a person wishing to clean a surface, say in the kitchen (an ordinary thing), that person would take a piece of natural sponge, dip it into a container of soapy water, and would then apply the mixture with the sponge to clean up whatever mess they were working on cleaning up. That action of dipping the sponge into the container of soapy water would be referred to as baptizing the sponge, and you would use the word *baptizó* for that. What was not common in the Greek language was the concept of baptizing a person into Christ, because that is a new concept—inherently new, intrinsically new. But, the old word would be used to convey something that it had never been used to convey before, because this was a new thing. Until Paul wrote the words, “baptized into Christ” (cf. Galatians 3:27), that usage was not commonplace in the Greek language. But there would be the understanding that, like the person who would dip the sponge into the water to become permeated with the solution, that in turn would be used to cleanse, the notion of one thing being inserted into another existed. But the idea of inserting someone into Christ—thereby filling the person's being with the Spirit of Christ, making him or her effective in living a righteous life in the earth—that was a whole new and very different concept. Of course,

by now we use those concepts in a commonplace fashion, and almost the reverse is true. We would not talk about baptizing the sponge today, but we would talk about baptizing a person.

That said, a domestic understanding of the use of the term relies upon how we have come to view those terms historically, and not necessarily on their original and intended usages. One such example is the term, faith. That is what I want to talk about today—the word “faith.” Many bad actors, poorly educated teachers, poorly educated in the Scriptures, have convinced an entire generation of people that the word “faith” is related to things *you* want God to do in your life and the way to trigger the response from God that you desire; that process has come to be defined as faith. Needless to say, the opportunity to monetize that has become commonplace. You probably can name, right off the top of your head, a half a dozen of the more popular teachers who teach that, and they never look under the corner of the rug, so to speak, they never actually look into what the Scriptures mean by the word “faith.” My quarrel, if you like, with such persons is not that the Scriptures actually say something. I would never argue with anything that the Scriptures actually say, that any person with the ability to read, could read. What I want you to understand is the spin they give to the thing that we can all agree is what the Bible says.

If you take the book of Hebrews 11:1, here is what it says. *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV). And verse two says, *“This is what the ancients [or the fathers] were commended for”* (Hebrews 11:2 NIV). So, we all know that is what it says. There is no disagreement. It does say, *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* We are all in total agreement, that is what it says. Now, what does it mean?

A domestic approach is that which has been seized upon to build, literally, empires. When you tell people who by culture are orphans—who have no fathers, neither in the natural nor in the spirit, or whose fathers are not functional in the natural or in the spirit, and therefore these people have only themselves to rely upon—and you tell them that if you have faith in God for certain results, the results *you* want, those results typically are categorized as results relating to money and health, whether money is sought after by a better job, the more magical appearance of better financial services and circumstances, and/or health. Anybody who is sick wants to get well. So in a sense,

it is a calloused exploitation of people in their weakened conditions. But, the orphan knows nothing other than finding a way to tease these results out of God. What these actors have managed to do is to cobble together Scripture to elucidate some kind of a message that desperate people cling to, but only manages to enrich the proponents of these ideas and leave the ones who desperately cling to these hopes, more desperate than ever before, because these theologies do not work. Telling God what *you* want, and then acting like you really, really believe that God is going to do what *you* want for you, does not work. But the fellows would say, “Look, we fly jet airplanes based upon this message. It works for me.” Of course it works for them, because the funnel that gives a flow of the results they are propagating, flows into their bank accounts. And the hapless folk who believe the deceptive things, over time, are absolutely no better for it. But, the norm is for them to get on television, or whatever media they employ, and read letters from the handful of people, selected letters, who write in to say, they sent in a “seed faith amount” and a certain return on investment was granted. God is merciful to people, so He will give you things you need, but He will give to you, whether or not you believe this gospel, which is indeed no gospel at all because it is not the truth. It is not based in what the Scriptures actually say. That is why it is not the truth. It is a con job. If you fall for it, it will enrich the ones who have propagated the message and it will impoverish you. But overall, it does not work because it is not the truth.

Let me tell you what the truth is. So let’s take the words and let’s deconstruct them. Faith—that is the Greek word, *pistis* (Strong’s Greek 4102)—means an unshakeable belief in a thing. It is not a religious word. It just means anything you believe in. If you believe in the state, as ancients were taught to do, believe in the good of the state, you would have faith that the state would ultimately act for your good. The word for “citizen” is the same word for “city”—it is the word *polis*. We have borrowed that term in English in certain cities like, *Indianapolis* or *Minneapolis*. *Polis* is the word for city. People in ancient times were identified by their residence in a city. Citizenship was not just where you lived, it was who you were. It was nearly necessary to have faith in the institution of city, because it was a definition of your own understanding of yourself. So, I use that as an example of faith. *Pistis* is the Greek word for “faith” and it has a meaning. Faith is not defined as, “the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen” (cf. Hebrews 11:1). Those are intended consequences to the existence of the notion or the concept of faith. *Pistis* means unshakeable belief in a thing; it is where you have a conviction.

When this was used in the New Testament, it was used in conjunction with God, so “faith toward God” is one of the elementary doctrines spoken of in Hebrews 6. We are, of course, talking about Hebrews 11, so there is a cumulating effect of what was said before, now in reference to what is said subsequently. So, he had already defined that an elementary doctrine is: faith toward God. What, then, would be defined as this unshakeable belief in God? It goes on to say in this very same chapter that there are two principles that underwrite the term, *pistis*. They are: 1) Whoever comes to God must believe that He is, and 2) He rewards those who diligently seek Him (cf. Hebrews 11:6). Now, what is meant by the first element of faith—the unshakeable belief? In what do you have an unshakeable belief when it comes to faith toward God?

- 1) You have the belief that God exists. (I will come back to that.)
- 2) He rewards you if you will diligently seek Him.

What is meant by, “Whoever comes to God must believe that He is”—further unpacking that means that God exists as He is. In other words, it is not the theory of whether or not there is a God. There is a presumption that there is a God who exists as He is. For our purposes, all of the Scriptures speak of the existence of God in relationship to *us* as our Father, so God exists as our Father. Our first article of faith—*pistis*, the unshakeable belief—must be:

- 1) That God exists as our Father.

That is why you could say, “Our Father who art in heaven” (Matthew 6:9). That is why Jesus came to show us the Father. That is why, when you are born again, your first cry is, “Father! Father!” (Romans 8:15). It puts you into a relationship of sonship. So, your first belief is that, because God exists as your Father, the outcome is that you may be His son—not in the sense of male or female, because He is not the Father of our flesh; He is the Father of our spirits. *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6).

The second element, then—the first being: God exists as our Father, and opens to us the possibility of being His sons—the second element is:

- 2) He rewards those who diligently seek Him.

Now, here again is where the actors have gotten us off track, because their idea of a reward is whatever *you* determine the reward ought to be, and they are generous in supplying the idea that the reward needs to be that God gives you money and God gives you health. If that is all God gave

us, then when we died, so would our reward. Because, we typically die because our health fails, and when we die we cannot carry anything with us of a material nature from this earth. So, it could not possibly be that. God does not exist as our Father, primarily, to make sure we have a good life. This life is not about “living your best life now” in terms of the acquisition of money and goods and the maintaining of your health. It has to do with your purpose as a son. God rewards us with His presence in an ever-expanding, ever-increasing way, so that when He chooses to appear in the earth in the darkness of human existence, He does so through us.

There is a word that goes with that. It is the word, *oikonomia* (Strong’s Greek 3622), comprised of two words: *oikos* and *nomos*. We get the English word “economy” from *oikonomia*. It literally means, how God fixes the brokenness of a particular age when it descends into darkness, when it descends into debauchery, as our present age. We are living in these dark times that require a response from God that is intimately connected to the element of faith that has to do with God rewarding us with His presence. The word *oikonomia*, as I said, is broken down into two words: *oikos* and *nomos*. The word, *oikos* (Strong’s Greek 3624), means: house—like a family line, like a family of generations; *nomos* (Strong’s Greek 3551) means: order—it speaks to inheritance, the administration of grace. So, *oikonomia* is how God dispenses to the age that has come into darkness, another order of His House to remedy it. Whenever things go off track, whenever things go crazy, God gives another order of His House to bring it back on track.

So, faith—*pistis*, is predicated on the two principles: 1) God exists as our Father; and 2) God rewards us with an ever-increasing measure of His presence. That is the definition of the word, faith—*pistis*. What does it mean when it says, “*Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for...*”? The word for “substance” is the word, *hupostasis* (Strong’s Greek 5287). I hope you look these things up. The compound word *hupostasis* is the word for substance, and it does not mean material. What it does mean is:

- 1) *hupo*: (from Strong’s Greek 5259 – *hypo*) — means "under"
- 2) *stasis*: (from Strong’s Greek 2476 – *hístēmi*)— means "to stand"

So, it is the posture you take, the way you stand under the truth that God is our Father and He will reward us with His presence when we diligently seek Him. So, what ought we to seek? Him. We are to seek Him, and while we are seeking Him, we should *rest* under Him—under these two

realities. It is tied into a word called, *tithēmi* (Strong's Greek 5087), and that describes the posture in which you stand. It is actually not a standing, but a lying down, a repose. It is the synonym for and it encapsulates the idea of rest. So, you lie down under the truth that God is your Father. You come to rest in the truth that He rewards you who diligently seek Him. Now, when you stand in that condition of rest, or when you lie in that condition of rest, it triggers the presence of God in a fashion that is described by yet another word, which is the word: *hístēmi* (Strong's Greek 2476). It is where we get the English word "histamine" from.

Literally, this is what it says: If you lie down in an environment of trusting God, you are extremely vulnerable. Just like when the body lies down in an environment of allergens, it is vulnerable; but it is designed to produce a rising up within the body of fluids to cushion the vital organs and to prevent damage to them in an environment of adversity. So, God rises up in you as the histamine, the *hístēmi*. God arises inevitably. It is designed to produce the rising up of God in you. Paul, when he captured this idea, said, "When I am weak, then I am strong, because in my weakness, I am given to understand and to experience the working of His mighty strength." So he said, "I will boast in my weakness" (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

What, then, is faith? And what is the substance of things hoped for? It is what God shows you, what God tells you, is true. While you wait for God to reveal the truth of these things in your circumstance, you lie down under the truth that He is your Father and He will reward you with His presence. When you are in that condition of reliance, and vulnerable as you are, inevitably God arises in your circumstance, and it is His presence that changes everything. This is a way of life. The just shall live by faith, not by some hoped for understandings.

I am Sam Soleyn. I will unpack this further for you. Thank you and God bless you. Bye.