

## Declaring Our Faith

Happy Sabbath to all.

Tonight is the final planned part of the “Faith” series. We have examined Defining, Developing, and Defending our faith, and tonight we are going to look at Declaring it.

The purpose of faith, which is effectively the combination of Biblical truth with genuine conviction, is – simply stated – to bring forth the perfect life of Yahshua in a human being. This is the “end” of our faith, in the sense of its completion. It is the “end” of the Law, and the “end” of Grace, because this is the purpose for which these things were provided to mankind.

The Law was given because of transgression, (Gal 3:19) so that the transgressors would know they are not in harmony with Yah’s will, and so that the faithful would know that they are righteous. For neither the just nor the unjust are feelings sufficient to determine holiness; therefore, even though we all have consciences, the Creator has not left this distinction to private interpretation. The Law that defines “goodness” is, in effect, a written description of the Personality of the Father and Son.

Grace was given so that sinners would have an opportunity to repent, and be brought back into harmony with the principles of Heaven. (Ezra 9:8) It is an undeserved opportunity, which Adventists have historically called “probation,” for those who recognize their need, and accept the desire to be righteous, to receive Yahshua as their substitute under the Law. In so doing, they make Him their Savior, and His life becomes a replacement for theirs. Grace, then, allows an individual to reckon himself “dead” to sin, so that Christ abides within.

As I pointed out last time, in this last generation, those who reject the Son of Man – either verbally or by their actions – crucify the Son of Yah afresh. Those who accept Him resurrect the Son of Yah afresh, because He lives again on earth through the lives of those who make themselves His. This is a powerful doctrine, subject to misunderstanding and abuse by the unconverted (as are all doctrines), but in the hands of the 144,000 it is key understanding for entering the Kingdom.

Now, faith is the method by which this all works. It is by faith that the sinner sees himself guilty of violating the Law. It is by faith that the repentant sinner grasps the invitation, the promises of the Father and Son, to be laid in the grave without violence, and to rise to new and everlasting life. It is by faith, finally, that the new life, the life of the resurrection of Yahshua afresh, is lived in daily holiness, the saint drawing closer to Heaven each day.

With this understanding of faith, which works only with knowledge of truth and the conviction to pursue that truth, the life of Yahshua emerges. Some might say, “I have the mind of Christ,” but if they do not do the works of Christ, can this possibly be true?

It is the mind that determines the actions, and this is the reason behind the statement that “faith without works is dead.” (James 2:20, etc.) This is a verse that every Adventist already knows, but with our new understanding of what faith is, and how it works, we should see a deeper meaning here. Faith without works is dead, because true faith gives us the “mind” of Christ. If have this mind, we have Yahshua’s knowledge of truth, and conviction to accomplish the desires of that mind. Since those are the

components of faith, we literally have the Faith of Yahshua. Thus, we always act according to the “mind” that we have, either the mind of the flesh, or the mind of Christ.

Now, we cannot “learn” faith. Last week, I mentioned that even though we cannot learn to “do” victory, we still teach it, because we need to declare it as a reality. We do not say, “Learn how to live victoriously.” Instead, we say, “Receive the victory; claim the victory given to you at infinite cost.”

Similarly, we do not tell people, “Learn to have faith.” This is impossible; it is no more possible to learn to develop faith than it was for the darkness to bring forth light of itself. Light came forth when the Father said to the void, “Let there be light.” Similarly, faith can only enter the heart of fallen man when the Father says, “Let there be faith.”

But if that is the case, and if Yah loves everyone, why do not all have faith?

The answer is, “Because of resistance.”

Darkness did not resist the instruction, “Let there be light.” When Yahshua was healing the sick, blindness, lameness, and madness did not resist the command of the Son. Demons, from the moment they were cast out of Heaven, were already defeated foes. They had no power to resist the command of the express Image of the Almighty.

But mankind, because we are created in the image of the Creator Himself, and because our Father has covered Himself in thick darkness for our sakes, (Deu 5:22; Psa 18:11, 97:2) we have the ability to resist. As Moses veiled himself after coming down from the mountain because of the brightness of His face, (Exo 34:35) so the Father veils Himself from us by distance, and the Son veiled His glory from us by dwelling in the likeness of sinful flesh. (John 1:14, Rom 8:3)

All this was for our sakes, so that we would have a true and meaningful choice, to serve the Almighty or not. Some Christian groups teach that the Lord’s glory is irresistible, and the reason why not all are saved is that some were created solely for destruction. This is clearly a false, and very unfortunate, view of the All-loving Father, but it arises because of a misunderstanding of freedom, and of the measures that the Father and Son have taken to ensure that our love, worship, and obedience are truly motivated by the righteousness we receive, not from fear or compulsion.

We are truly free. We are truly responsible for our choices. We are truly loved, and truly have the ability to love. This is Good News; this is the Gospel in its undiluted fullness, and... this is something worth sharing with others.

What I have done so far is describe why the Bible and its message of faith present good news to humanity. These are things we all know, have heard taught – perhaps much of it even before we became CSDAs – but have not been convicted to live it out before that point of conversion. Of course, CSDAs are not the only sincere Christians in the world; but saving faith requires that sincerity, that conviction, to exist within the context of the truth as it is in Yahshua. What this means, as we have been looking at throughout the course of these studies, is that we have a most serious obligation to declare our faith.

Now, those who have the mind of Christ may well ask, “Why is this called a ‘most serious obligation?’ Why isn’t it called ‘a great privilege, and a great joy?’”

That is a truth. Therefore, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” (2Cor 13:5) And I say this not merely for those assembled here tonight, but for any who may read this transcript thereafter. I hope that, of all the studies I have given recently, this series of four studies will be shared, examined further, talked-about, meditated-upon. What is your conviction regarding the work that the united, victorious, Church of Christ Yahshua has been given to do?

It is the mind of Christ to spend one’s life sharing this Gospel with others. It is the mind of Christ to be convicted to follow truth, whatsoever the cost; whether it be houses, friends, employment, former churches, and so on. It is the mind of Christ, which arises from an acceptance of the Gospel in genuine faith, and through the process of repentance, faith, and baptism, to now say, “I want others to have what I have found.” This is the “first love” that the Scriptures warned the Ephesians to seek out. (Rev 2:4, 5) It is the “first” time we have experienced Agape-love, and as long as we dwell therein, or as long as we have returned there if we seem to have forgotten it, then we will do the works of Heaven.

It is only in this mindset that salvation can be experienced. This is the mind that “sees” the Son of Man returning in His Glory, and does not look away in fear, or in shame. This is the mind that can speak the Word of Yah with confidence that is free of both arrogance and fear, for these are ditches on opposite sides of the road that are designed to cover up the “self” like fig leaves.

We speak of faith, and victory, because the world must be convinced that these things even actually exist, and that they are available for the asking.

There is life in the Word of Yah. In saying that, I do not just mean in Yahshua, who was the Word made flesh. I mean the Word of Yah as it is written in the Bible, and as it is in the words that those who have received the Word speak. There is life in conversation about the Gospel, life in the declaring of our faith.

If we will “see” the truth about this, then we will naturally speak it. This is why Yahshua tells the world, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” (Rev 3:8)

There we see three things, which perhaps will require their own studies to examine, but they are gold (representing faith), white clothing (representing righteousness and purity) and eye salve (representing the ability to recognize truth). Look carefully at the wording. The gold and raiment are “bought,” while the eye salve is merely to be used. Yah has already given to mankind all that they need to know and recognize the truth. We need the indwelling, ongoing power of Yah to act on the truth in faith, and to be righteous, but sinners who have never known the power of Christ are punished, and the unrighteous are destroyed justly... because even they have no excuse for failing to see.

It is our work, as a Church, as the born-again believers, to show men what they are supposed to see. It is our work to say, “Look at how much our Father has loved us. Look at what He has done, and how He has saved this soul from death.” We give a testimony, a sign, that those who are looking will indeed see.

We present, like the Bible, an honest record. We do not deny obstacles; we do not ignore challenges. We speak of these things in our testimonies, but in the context of faith, that death (and all that leads to death) is swallowed up in victory, (1Cor 15:54) that challenges placed in our path are overcome, and difficulties serve only to refine our faith, and deepen our trust in the promises of our Father.

Should the people of Yah speak always like this, with a testimony made invincible by truth and conviction, then those who have anointed their eyes with salve will take notice, and become convicted to buy from Yahshua that gold, and that white raiment.

They will see that there is something different about the Children of Heaven, for while those who love sin make the obstacles and the challenges the defining elements of their lives, those who love Yah have their eyes fixed on the character of the Savior.

Even in the reading of the Bible we see this distinction made manifest, between those who declare faith, and those who do not. Those without faith see, even in the Word of Yah, excuses for failure and sin, reasons to put aside conviction. They point to the errors of Moses, the sins of King David, the downfall of Israel, and they say, "Who is able to obey the Law? Who is able to bring forth the perfect life of Christ? Who can fulfill what Heaven demands?"

It is Satan who first asked those questions, mocking the Almighty... and asks them today still, through those whom he has captured.

We who declare faith are the answer to these questions. We say, "We have overcome the world through the Grace of our Father." We say, "The life of Christ fulfills the Law in us, so that we shall not fail, nor be discouraged. We have learned from, and shall never repeat, the transgressions of the past, even the transgression of our first father, Adam."

For those who are seeking righteousness, this will awaken in them hope. It will be a savor of life to them, for they will be convicted to say, "This must apply to me as well!"

These honest seekers are our brethren, and we dare not leave them in ignorance and darkness. We are the sign of the coming of the Son of Man, the "little cloud" on the horizon that prompted Elijah to say, "Prepare your chariot, and get back to your house... it is about to rain." (cf. 1Kings 18:44)

By faith, those who have awaited the truth shall have it, because we declare our faith to the world. By faith, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled, for we are the ones called to facilitate the answer to their prayers. By faith, we do always "those things" that please our Father, and these, brethren, are "those things."

There is life in the understanding, and in the acceptance, of these things. Therefore, as I said before, I hope that these studies on faith, and the principles within them, will be shared with all in our various circles. Even if one cannot speak about the depth of doctrine, or give a sermon, one can share a word of salvation, because these things have been revealed to us, and point out the way to our everlasting Home. Let us thank Yah that we have been convicted of His truth, and then share it with all who have ears to hear.

David.

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