

On Faith

The power of faith is enormous. It is so great that it not only saves the believer, but thanks to one person's faith others are saved also. The paralytic at Capernaum lacked faith; but the men who brought him to Jesus and let him down through the roof had it. The soul of the sick man was ill as well as his body. That is made clear in the Gospel: "And when Jesus saw their faith He said . . . , 'Rise, take up your pallet and go home.'" The Gospel does not speak of 'his' faith, but of 'their' faith. The stretcher-bearers believed, and the paralytic had the benefit of healing because of it [Mark 2:1-11].

Then there is the death of Lazarus. Four days had passed. His dead body was already decomposing. How could one who had been dead for so many days believe and himself ask for the Deliverer? He could not possibly do so, but his sisters provided the faith for him. When they met the Lord, one sister fell down at His feet. He asked, "Where have you laid him?" The other sister said, "Lord, by this time there will be a bad smell." Then the Lord said, "If you believe, you will see the glory of God." As if to say, "As regards faith, you must take the place of the dead man." And the faith of the sisters succeeded in calling Lazarus back from the hereafter [John 11:1-44].

So if these two women, by believing in place of the other, were able to secure his resurrection, how much more certainly will you be able to secure it for yourself by your own faith?

Perhaps your own faith is feeble. Nevertheless, the Lord who is love will stoop down to you, provided only you are penitent and can say sincerely from the depths of your soul: "Lord, I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief" [Mark 9:23].

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Faith is the assent of the soul to a truth. If you want to know what advantage the soul gains from it, listen to what the Lord says: "Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" [John 5:24]. How truly great is the goodness of God to the human race!

In order to find favor with God, the righteous in ancient times had to struggle for many years. They achieved it after having served God with heroic efforts for a long time. But Jesus grants it to us in an instant. It is true. If you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Jesus on the cross on Calvary welcomed the thief to Paradise. He will welcome you also.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Someone may say, "I have faith, and faith suffices for salvation." St. James gives him the answer: "Even the demons believe, and shudder. Faith without works is dead" [James 2:17-19].

How can we speak of having faith in God and believing what He promises about the future when we do not even believe what He teaches us about the present, about our existence in time? We have been ensnared by earthly things, and we live absorbed in the flesh which makes war on the spirit.

True faith in Christ is what they had who welcomed the whole of it into their lives by means of the practical fulfillment of the commandments, saying in effect, “I live, yes, but it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me” [Gal. 2:20].

St. Maximus the Confessor

“Look at the birds of the air,” says Jesus [Luke 12:24]. What a splendid example for our faith to follow! If God’s providence bestows an unfailing supply of food on the birds of the air who neither sow nor reap, we ought to realize that the reason for people’s supply running short is human greed. The fruits of the earth were given to feed all without distinction. . . . The birds do not know famine because they do not claim anything especially for themselves, and neither do they have envy of others.

“Consider the lilies of the field: not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these. If God so clothes the grass which is alive today and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe one of you!” Listen to these stupendous and uplifting words.

With this parable of flowers and grass the Lord urges us to hope that God will be merciful also unto us.

Nothing is more persuasive than a glance at unthinking creatures who have received such beautiful dress from providence. Surely we should be all the more ready to believe that human beings, if they entrust themselves completely to God and free themselves of all their worries, will not lack anything.

St. Ambrose

Saint John of Kronstadt on Faith.

Faith is the key to God’s treasury: *Al things are possible to him that believeth*. Faith is a spiritual mouth, and the more freely it opens, the more freely may the divine streams enter in. Let it open freely, then, as does your bodily mouth; let not your lips be closed by doubt—if they are, the treasury of God’s blessing will be closed to you.

Nothing is impossible to those who believe. Lively and unshaken faith can accomplish great miracles in the twinkling of an eye. And even without it miracles are wrought, such as those accomplished in the Mysteries. For God’s Mystery is always accomplished, even when we are lacking in faith, when it is celebrated.

Men have fallen into unbelief because they have either completely lost the spirit of prayer, or never had it—in short because they do not pray.

If from time to time we do not stir up the fervor of faith in our heart, eventually faith may become entirely extinct in us. The enemy takes pains to attain this end, which is why we see men who are Christian only in name, while their actions are quite heathen.

C. S. Lewis on Faith.

Now Faith, in the sense in which I am here using the word, is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods. For moods will change, whatever view your reason takes. I know that by experience. Now that I am a Christian I do have moods in which the whole thing looks very improbable: but when I was an atheist I had moods in which Christianity looked terrible probable. This rebellion of your moods against your real self is going to come anyway. That is why Faith is such a necessary virtue: unless you teach your moods 'where they get off,' you can never be either a sound Christian or even a sound atheist, but just a creature dithering to and fro, with its beliefs really dependent on the weather and the state of its digestion. Consequently one must train the habit of Faith.

The first step is to recognize the fact that your moods change. The next is to make sure that, if you have once accepted Christianity, then you hold some of its main doctrines deliberately before your mind for some time every day. That is why daily prayers and religious readings and churchgoing are necessary parts of the Christian life. We have to be continually reminded of what we believe. Neither this belief nor any other will automatically remain alive in the mind; it must be fed. And as a matter of fact, if you examined a hundred people who had lost their faith in Christianity, I wonder how many of them would have turned out to have been reasoned out of it by honest argument? Do not most people simply drift away?