

Who is Jesus Christ

This is our final lecture on the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

V. What are the effects of faith?

We many divide the effects of faith into the following four points.

1. The effect of faith is our justification before God.
2. The effect of faith is a joy and delight in God with peace of conscience.

Rom 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The effect of faith is our conversion, regeneration and universal obedience.

Acts 15:9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

4. The consequences which belong to the effects of faith, such as an increase of temporal and spiritual gifts and the reception of these gifts by faith.

Therefore, the first effect of faith is our justification after which all the other benefits follow and are made over unto us. These benefits are given to us because we received faith: justifying faith.

If we work upwards in the chain of causality, we see that our justification is caused by justifying faith, which is caused by the Holy Spirit, which is caused by Jesus Christ's suffering and resurrection, which is caused by God the Father who decreed that it should happen in this manner and only to those whose names He wrote into the book of life.

It is evident, then, that man has no role in causing faith and the chain of causality occurs completely within the Godhead. It is the Father that is the First Cause of our justification. It doesn't mean that the Second and Third Persons were not present or involved in the process because there is only one God and what the Father does the Son also does. But by their offices, the Son and the Holy Spirit obeyed the Father: The Son willingly gave himself to be tortured and killed, used His own power to raise himself from the dead, ascended into heaven all for the sake of this justification that is obtained through justifying faith. The Holy Spirit is the final

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minister of God's Word, revealer of His will, and the administrator of justifying faith. The perfect harmony that exists in the hypostatical union of the Godhead ensures that the effects of justifying faith are exactly as the Father decreed them to be.

So, if faith is the last cause of our justification, it is likewise the cause of those things that follow our justification.

Luk 8:48 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

Also, the effects of faith is only begun in this life but it will be perfected in the life to come, which proves to us that we will enjoy the benefits of Christ's sacrifice for eternity.

VI. To whom is Faith given.

Justifying faith is given to the elect and them alone. That immediately raises the question 'what about infants?' They receive it as it respects their inclination to faith. We know this as a certainty because nowhere does Scripture speak of age or race or gender as the deciding factor who receives justifying faith. Rather, Scripture is clear on this.

Joh 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

Mat 13:11 Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.

Act 13:48 When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Rom 8:28 - 30 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

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2Th 3:2, 3 and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. ³But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

Temporary faith is given to those who are members of the visible church only, that is, to hypocrites. (Matt 7:22). The faith of miracles, however, which many had in the primitive church, has now disappeared from the church because the doctrine of the gospel has been sufficiently confirmed by miracles. Claims of miracles performed by men in our time should be viewed with extreme suspicion since the natural order of things, that is, coming to the faith by the preaching of the gospel (Rom 10:17) is the manner in which the elect would receive justifying faith and the manner in which the reprobate would reject it leaving them without any excuse in the Day of Judgment.

Historical faith may be given all, even to those who out of the church and also to devils. Without justifying faith, however, they reject the gospel, and hence, they reject Christ.

Objection: Historical faith is a good work and the devils possess historical faith, therefore, they have good works.

Answer: Historical faith is only a good work if it is connection with justifying faith. The latter will, without fail, produce the glory of God, while, without justifying faith, historical faith is incapable of producing it.

But if historical faith is given by the Holy Spirit, then in itself it is a good work, even unto devils. We agree historical faith is of itself a good work as it is produced by the Holy Spirit, but it becomes evil by how the devils and unbelievers apply it, which to not apply to themselves those things which they know to be true, but they rather despise and reject them.

Objection: Many infants are included in the number of the elect and yet, they have no faith. Therefore, all the elect do not possess faith.

Answer: Infants do not, indeed, possess actual faith as adults do, but they have a power or inclination to faith which the Holy Spirit works in them according to their capacity or condition. We know this because the Holy Spirit is promised not only to adults, but to

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infants also and if He is given to infants also, it is impossible for Him to be inactive in them. Therefore, justifying faith is granted to all the elect, regardless of who they are, where they are, or in what condition or what age they are.

Joh 10:28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

Joh 10:29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

Mat 21:16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these children are saying?" And Jesus *said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'OUT OF THE MOUTH OF INFANTS AND NURSING BABIES YOU HAVE PREPARED PRAISE FOR YOURSELF'?"

Mar 10:14 But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Mat 18:10 "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

Justifying faith is necessary for all the elect, and not only faith but also a profession of that faith in those who have reached the age of understanding, ...

1. Because of the command of God. "You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain..." (Ex 20:7) which means that we should revere it and profess it.

Mat 10:32 "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.

2. Because of the glory of God.

Mat 5:16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

3. Because faith is not inactive but like a fruitful tree it manifests itself by profession. (Mat 10:32).

4. Because of our safety.

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Rom 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

Rom 10:10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

5. Because that brings others to Christ.

Luk 22:31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;

Luk 22:32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

We may know that we have faith from the following:

1. From the testimony of the Holy Spirit and by the true and unfeigned desire which we have to embrace and receive the benefits that Christ offers us. He that believes is conscious of the existence of his faith.

2Ti 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

2Co 4:13, 14 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak, ¹⁴knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.

1Jn 5:10 – 12 The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. ¹¹And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹²He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

2. We may know that we have faith by the doubts and conflicts that we experience. Those who have justifying faith will be

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persecuted by evil men and our own evil natures which will resist its destruction.

3. We may know that we have faith by the effect of faith, which is a sincere purpose and desire to obey all the commands of God.

Objection: Those who may fail and lose the grace of God before the end of life cannot be certain of eternal life, because to be certain of our salvation, and yet not be raised above the possibility of losing the grace of God, involves a contradiction, therefore, we cannot be certain of our salvation and say that having justifying faith, that it is an assured confidence of righteousness and eternal life, is false.

Answer: The objection is guilty of confusing cause and effect. It is true of those who will finally fall away and we agree to be able to finally fall away is inconsistent with the certainty of salvation. It is, however, impossible for those in whom God once produces justifying faith to fall away. Once again, the First Cause of justifying faith cannot give it and then take it away again. If God gives it, there is eternal certainty, and He gives it to all of those whose names have been written in the book of life, the elect.

Objection: All those who are weak may finally fall away. We are all weak, therefore, we may all come short of the grace of God.

Answer: If the righteous were sustained by their own strength, they might indeed fall and lose the grace of God, but their faith, in the first instance, is founded on the integrity and power of God himself. In addition, the elect are continually supported by divine grace applied by the Holy Spirit.

Psa 37: 23, 24 The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights in his way. ²⁴When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, Because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.

John 10: 27, 28 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

Rom 8: 38, 39 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing,

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will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But, what about 1 Cor 10:12, which says, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall"? Doesn't this make our salvation dependent upon ourselves or at least make it doubtful?

No it does not. The question contains a fallacy regarding the cause of salvation. God, by this exhortation, wishes to nourish, to preserve and perfect the salvation of believers by urging them to their duty and not to commit their perseverance to their own strength and will.

The good works of the elect are not always perfect and during the sanctification process, through prayer, obedience and repentance, the believer more and more becomes like Christ. The believer may fall into sin and for a time remain in that state during which his works may look no different than that of the unbeliever and while his outward appearance is that of an unbeliever, this passage serves as a warning for him to repent and obey. (Consider David before he realized his sins.)

To the believer who has not fallen into sin this also serves as a warning clearly showing the signs that lead to falling into sin, such as pride ("thinks he stands").

Pro 16:17 The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches his way preserves his life.

Pro 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.

Pro 29:23 A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor.

Isa 23:9 The LORD of hosts has planned it, to defile the pride of all beauty, To despise all the honored of the earth.

These are the warnings that are given in this passage and not one that threatens the believers' salvation.

But what about Ecc 9:1 For I have taken all this to my heart and explain it that righteous men, wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God. Man does not know whether it will be love or

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hatred; anything awaits him? Does this mean we cannot be certain of the present grace of God and, consequently, cannot determine anything in reference to that which is still in the future?

No it does not. While it is true that no man can truly know or judge with certainty things that are from second causes or from events whether good or evil, for the external condition of man furnishes no safe criterion either of the favor or disapprobation of God, it is clear from Scripture and the effects of justifying faith, as we have proven, that our assurance is not founded on ourselves, or as the passage quoted confirms, "Man does not know..." There is overwhelming testimony in Scripture to this fact and that our certainty is in God alone.

But what about Rom 11:34 "For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?"

No man knows the mind of the Lord before it is revealed but after God has revealed it, we may know as much as is necessary for our salvation.

2Co 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

But what about 2 Cor 6:1 and Matt 26:41?

2Co 6:1 And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain--

Mat 26:41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

These and other similar passages have been given to prevent carnal security, such as 1 Cor 10:12. It is to excite the faithful to watchfulness and prayerfulness in order that the certainty of their salvation might be preserved.

Objection: Saul fell away finally. He was one of the godly. Therefore, the righteous may finally fall away.

Answer: Saul was not a truly pious man but a hypocrite with great historical faith but no justifying faith.

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But Saul had the gifts of the Holy Spirit, how can he be a hypocrite?

He had only those gifts that are common to both the godly and the ungodly but he did not have the gift of regeneration and adoption, which is given only to the elect.

After having studied the doctrine of faith as part of our larger study of who is Jesus Christ, we may ask, "What is necessary for a Christian to believe?"

Answer: All things promised in the gospel, which the articles of our universal, undoubted Christian faith, teach us.

Finally, what is the object of faith and what is the sum of those things that we are to believe.

Faith, in general, embraces the entire Word of God. Justifying faith, however, has particular respect to the promises of the gospel or the preaching of grace through Christ. The gospel is, therefore, properly the object of justifying faith. It is for this reason, properly called the doctrine of those things that are to be believed, as the law is properly the doctrine of those things that are to be done.

Human traditions, the ordinances of people, popes, and councils of men, are, therefore, excluded from being the object of faith for faith cannot rely upon anything but the Word of God, and an immovable foundation.

The decrees of men are uncertain inasmuch as every man is deceitful and false. God alone is true and his word is truth. It is, therefore, not proper for Christians to frame or construct for themselves the matter or contents of faith. It is not proper for them to embrace what has been conceived and delivered by others.

Christians must receive and believe the gospel alone and nothing else.

Mar 1:15 "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

1Co 2:5 ... so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

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The sum and substance of the gospel, or of those things that are to be believed, is the Apostle's Creed.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilot, was crucified, dead and buried and He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from where he shall come to judge the quick and the dead; I believe in the Holy Spirit; the Holy catholic church; the communion of the saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and life everlasting.