

BELIEVERS OBEDIENTLY TRUST GOD

The First-Century Gospel Church / Philadelphia

#S232R

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(REF/JOHN 3:16-18)

For those who are thirsting to know God's Word, and to have the Spirit of 'righteousness' within themselves, God's inspired Word informs the Christian, that only those who believe or trusts in His Son, will inherit Eternal Life. (John 3:16-17, says), "For so greatly did God love the world that He gave His only Son, that every one who trusts in Him may not perish, but may have the Life of Ages. For God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved, through Him."

Our final judgment by the Son of God is pushed back to the end of one's life on earth, because the Son came to save the world from sin and death, and to give everyone the opportunity and privilege, to place their trust on Him for things in this life, and thus, ... "be saved through Him", (as verse 17 says).

The Bible reveals that death is always followed by judgment (Hebrews 9:27-28), says, "And since it is reserved for all mankind once to die, and afterwards to be judged; so the Christ also, having been once offered in sacrifice in order that He might bear the sins of many, ... will appear a second time, separated from sin, to those who are eagerly expecting Him, to make their salvation complete."

Jesus justified His authority to judge mankind for their actions in this life, (John 5:21-23), "For just as the Father awakens the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life to whom He wills. The Father indeed does not judge any one, but He has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."

Jesus then explained, that obedience to the Son, leads to Life, (verse 24), "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me", (or, "obediently trusts in Him", as John 3:16 says), ... "has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."

Jesus then concluded (verses 28-29), "Wonder not at this. For a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear His voice and will come forth—they who have done what is right, to the resurrection of Life, and they whose actions have been evil, to the resurrection of judgment." (resurrection of condemnation)

So, the faithful believer wants to correctly define what it means to be a true believer, and to always remember, that God's love for mankind is always there for the obedient believer, as Jesus said, (John 15:10), "If you obey my commands, you will continue in my love... as I have obeyed my Father's commands and continue in His love."

Even though we may sin and be led astray from the life of Christ, and make wrong choices and decisions in our life, the love of Christ is still there for us to return to. The door is left open for one to

return through confession and repentance to the life of Christ, to obedience and trust, and thus, to Christ's love, which is waiting for each one to return, and "continue in My love", (as Jesus said).

Jesus' words, confirm what God spoke through the prophet, (Malachi 3:7 says), "Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances And have not kept them.... 'Return to Me, and I will return to you,' Says the Lord of hosts."

It is because of Christ's love for us that He wants us to return to trusting in Him after we sincerely confess our mistakes, and to be found to be trusting when we part from this life, or when He returns to take those HE finds obediently trusting, to be with Him in glory.

To be found trusting to the end of one's life, is most important, as Jesus emphasized to His followers, (John 6:29), "This," replied Jesus, "is above all the thing that God requires—that you should be believers in Him whom He has sent." From these verses in the gospel of John (chapters 3: 5: & 6:), we can realize that God only puts one condition on His Salvation Plan for people on this earth. That one condition is, to be trusting in His Son for things in this life, instead of placing our trust on other persons or things. (Savings accounts, insurance and pension plans, the medical profession, avenging wrongs done to us, safety devices, etc.)

The Bible reveals that Jesus has ascended and is at the right hand of His Father in Heaven, (where He pleads for the Father to bring us back to trusting in Him). (Hebrews 7:25), "Hence too He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, seeing that He ever lives to plead for them."

God's only Son (resurrected from the dead to Life Eternal) is pleading to The Father, for us to be brought back to trusting in Him, so that we may also be resurrected to Life, because He loves us. In His great and never-failing love for us, God even promises to chastise= the Christian believer, who has strayed from, His will and plan for our life of obedient faith and trust in the Son of God. It is because of His mercy and love, and because He does not want any soul to perish, that God chastises the believer. (Hebr.12:5-6) "My son, do not think lightly of the Lord's discipline, and do not faint when He corrects you," (meaning do not lose your faith and trust in the Son of God in time of temptation, and begin placing trust in other places), (vs. continues) "for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines: and He scourges every son whom He acknowledges."

The believer in the Son of God is chastised by God when they stray from a sincere love and trust, because He loves us and He wants to perfect our love for Christ, and He wants our love for our fellow man to be perfected, (even toward our enemies), as Jesus told us. (Matt. 5:44-45), "But I command you all, love your enemies, and pray for your persecutors; that so you may become true sons of your Father in Heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the wicked as well as the good, and sends rain upon those who do right and those who do wrong."

Jesus concluded in verse 48, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

So, as these verses reveal of our Father in Heaven, we are to be just like Him, Who sends His rain on the good and the bad. We are not condemn in our heart, those whom the devil and his agents have led astray and led into unbelief and misplaced trust. Rather, we are to show compassion and love, by praying for them and treating them with a Christlike love, when we happen to be in their presence.

In the same respect, we are not to seek the company of those who have been led into unbelief and misplaced trust, for the Bible classifies unbelievers as idolaters. Rather, we are to come out from among unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14), "Do not come into close association with unbelievers", (15) "Or what participation has a believer with an unbeliever?" (16) "And what compact has the Temple of God with idols?" (17) "Therefore 'Come out from among them And be separate,' says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

[Trusting in other persons, things, and policies and plans of man, are all 'forms of idolatry'. God is the only One who can convict a person of 'misplaced trust'.]

So, we are to show compassion and love, by leaving them in God's hands, and praying for God to bring those who are led astray, to return to a life of obedience and trust, for God wants every soul to repent and to be found trusting in the end. (As the Scriptures reveal, Jesus followed up the assurance of John 3:16 ("Every one who trusts in Him may not perish"), by giving a 'solemn admonition' (John 3:18), saying, "He who trusts in Him does not come up for judgment. He who does not trust has already received sentence, because he has not his trust resting on the name of God's only Son." [Jesus did not leave any middle ground for one to dilly, dally, with the Truth that He was giving to us from His Father in Heaven.]

What the Bible reveals to us, is, that God's Salvation Plan is offered to every true and faithful believer, of whom each one has the free-will choice, to trust in His Son. It also reveals, that for everyone who believes that it was the Son of God who died on Calvary's Cross, and that He died to set us free from the temptation to sin or to misplace our trust (as the Holy Spirit empowers us to resist),... that each one will be given the opportunity and privilege to trust in God's Son, instead of other places of trust. God's Salvation Plan was predicted by His prophets many years before Jesus came to this earth to die for us, (Joel 2:32 says), "And it shall come to pass, That whoever calls (which means to believe or trust) ... on the Name of the Lord, Shall be saved."

So, the Christian needs to understand that it is a true belief or faith, in what the Son of God has accomplished for us on Calvary's Cross, (that is spoken of in these verses). It is getting rid of the self-life from our heart, and having a total faith in unseen things, believing we have received before we can actually see the answer to our prayers. Or to be fully trusting without compromise, on the

written promises of the God inspired Words of Jesus and the Prophets, as we are taught to heed by Christ's Apostles.

Jesus warns us not to be lukewarm in our faith or belief in Him (Rev. 3:16), "or I will spew thee from my mouth." He does not leave room for us to strain out the assuring verses that tickle one's ears and disregard His admonitions and warnings to remain in obedient faith to the end. Romans 8:1 (a verse that is many times twisted and misinterpreted), assures that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ, (that means trusting)... not speaking of those who have believed... and then fell away from faith and into the sins of unbelief. (We should ask God to reveal to us, if we are unaware and unknowingly trusting in something or someone else, besides God.)

And Jesus warns those living in the sins of unbelief, not to be a hindrance to other believers, (Mark 9:42), "And whoever shall occasion the fall of one of these little ones who believe, he would be better off if, with a millstone round his neck, he were lying at the bottom of the sea."

As we consider this important truth of Believing (which is the key to receiving the fulfilment of every written promise in the Scriptures), it is necessary that we consider some basic truths of Scripture, to fully understand what it means to be a believer and be worthy to inherit that promise of Eternal Life.

We really need to define the words believe and faith, as well as the words obedience and actions. We cannot confuse faith and its corresponding actions with "outward works",... which mean nothing in the true Christian life. However, our freewill choice to obey or to disobey God's Word is essential in the true Christian's life of faith and trust, and this freewill choice cannot be confused with outward works the Apostle Paul spoke of.

The Apostle Paul, being raised as a Pharisee, was aware of (after he was convicted), just as Jesus was aware of, all the outward works, adornments, and pious acts that the Pharisees depended on to make them feel righteous. (As the late Pastor mentioned in a sermon lesson, (paraphrase) Some people think they have to have some outward experience in order make them feel righteous in themselves). However, the Holy Spirit's presence is within the heart of a person. Their life of trust is controlled by that Spirit in their heart and mind, and the results of the Spirit's work within, can be seen by their fruits (as Jesus said), or by their decisions and actions.

Paul could have used many examples to condemn the Pharisees many outward acts under the old law, to make them realize that their salvation in the new Gospel plan, could only come through the grace extended by Christ. However, he used circumcision as an example of their outward works because that was one of the most common and main arguments of the unbelieving Jews against the new faith (or believers) in Christ at that time.

In Romans 2:29, the Apostle Paul says, "But the true Jew is one inwardly, and true circumcision is heart-circumcision not literal, but

spiritual; and such people receive praise not from men, but from God." The Apostle said, (1 Cor.7:19), "Obedience to God's commandments is everything." (Not a dependence on any of the outwardly religious adornments or customs that the Pharisees of that day, or that anyone in this day may depend on to make them simply feel righteous.

The true believer's 'choice of the will' (as inspired by the Spirit), to obey God's Word and follow His plan, instead of one of the many plans of man (the seen things in life),... comes as a result of true faith and trust, or, true believing in God. This faith or hope in the unseen, is counted as faith righteousness for the true believer now, just as it was for Abraham.

Abraham obeyed God and departed from Haran, because He believed that God would bless and prosper him in the land to which He was sending him. (Genesis 15:6), "And he believed in the Lord, and God accounted it to him for righteousness." Thus, we can see from the life of Abraham (who lived even before the Law was given to Moses), that obedience, and faith to believe or trust,... always run hand-in-hand in the true believer's life.

The Bible does not separate obedient actions from faith, and neither can we. (James 2:17 says) "So also faith, if it is unaccompanied by obedience, has no life in it--so long as it stands alone."

Faith righteousness or faith to obey God and believe on His promises, as Abraham did, instead of staying in the land of Haran and trusting on the plans of the self-life, is brought out in Romans 4:16, All depends on faith, and for this reason — that, acceptance with God might be an act of pure grace. (Verse 24), "Faith, before long, will be placed to the credit of us also who are believers in Him who raised Jesus, our Lord, from the dead." Trusting on the Son of God (instead of following and relying on the many plans of man), is the only requirement (or condition) that God places on His Salvation Plan for people on this earth.

Blind faith in the words of Jesus (faith in the unseen promise) brought victory for the man we read of in John 4:50-51), "You may return home," replied Jesus, "your son has recovered." He believed the words of Jesus and started back home; and he was already on his way down when his servants met and told him his son was alive and well.

The faith to obey and believe God's Word to trust on His Son, not only carries with it the blessing in this life, but the promise of Eternal Life. (As John 5:24 reveals.)

Abraham's obedience to God's directions and his faith to believe God's promises, (regardless of the human (or seen) circumstances), was not considered as efforts of the flesh, but rather it was counted unto him as righteousness.

In just the same way, as we cannot confuse faith and its corresponding actions with outward works. A true believer's faithful obedience to God's Word, cannot be confused with self efforts or outward works of the flesh.

The Israelites who lacked the faith to obey God's directions through Moses, also lacked the faith to believe (or trust) in God's promises. (Hebrews 3:17-19) "And with whom was God so greatly grieved for forty years? Was it not with those who had sinned, and whose dead bodies fell in the Desert? And to whom did He swear that they should not be admitted to His rest, if it was not to those who were disobedient? And so, we see that it was owing to lack of faith that they could not be admitted."

(Rom. 11:20 says), "It was their unbelief that cut them off, and you only stand through your faith."

The true believer would want to strive for the faith to believe and remain obedient to God's Word, no matter what temptation or circumstance confronts them, and strive for the faith to believe and be counted righteous in God's sight. As God sees our sincerity of heart, He will empower us through His Holy Spirit to reject every plan of man that Satan devises, and not accept any plan of Satan's that could be trusted in, and possibly become an idol between us and God.

Paul said (Phil. 3:9), that he craved to "win Christ and be found in union with Him, not having a righteousness of my own, derived from the Law, but that which arises from faith in Christ—the righteousness which comes from God through faith. I long to know Christ and the power which is in His resurrection."

(In summary) a Christlike love in our heart will in itself, include an obedience and trust on the Son of God, and it is the only requirement that God puts on His Salvation Plan for the true believer.

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SOME MAIN POINTS OF "BELIEVERS OBEDIENTLY TRUST GOD":

1./The Son of God came to save the world, and to give us every opportunity to be found trusting in Him, before we are judged by Him in the end.

2./Because of God's love for us, He chastises the true believer, to bring each one to perfection in Christ (not just a lukewarm faith).

3./Obedience and faith are not 'works', and the Bible never separates them, rather, it is counted as righteousness unto the true believer today (just as for faithful Abraham).

4./Obedient 'trust' on the Son of God, is the only requirement that God put on His Salvation plan for 'true believers'. "All depends on faith," says Romans 4:16.