

## I. Faith is the Functional Point of the Gospel

### A. Faith and the Righteousness of God

1. Why does the gospel reveal the righteousness of God's person? For faith
2. Why does the gospel reveal the righteousness of God required of us? For faith
3. Why does the gospel reveal the righteousness of God offered to us in Jesus Christ? For faith
4. **Faith is the functional point of the gospel.**

### B. Faith and the Majority

1. Majority desire the gospel to reveal pragmatic instruction, not for faith but for works.
2. Examples
  - a. How to have a happy marriage
  - b. How to raise successful children
  - c. How to overcome burdensome addictions
  - d. How to advance in my career
  - e. How to contribute to world peace
  - f. How to support social equity
3. Many will say, "Tell us less of this gospel and the theological Jesus and tell us what we have to do to be healthy, happy, and wealthy."

### C. Faith and Paul

1. Paul responds with the word of God given through the prophet Habakkuk:  
***For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."***
  - a. Habakkuk
    - (1) The prophet Habakkuk lived during the Babylon invasion.
      - (a) This book begins with Habakkuk pouring out his heart to God, begging God to do something with his defiant and ungodly people.
      - (b) The charges that Habakkuk brings against God's people are serious:
        - i) they defy God's law and the wicked are ruling over the nations (Habakkuk 1:4).
        - ii) Does any of this sound familiar?
    - (2) God answers Habakkuk by telling him not to worry because he has a plan:
      - (a) the Babylonians will soon capture God's people and this will put an end to this problem.
        - i) Habakkuk is stunned and horrified.
        - ii) He pleads with God to spare his people.
        - iii) He tells God that the Babylonians are far worse than them.

- iv) He questions God's divine wisdom.
    - (b) God then explains to his prophet that he is using the evil Babylonians to teach his people that the "just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4).
  - (3) Through trial and confusion and heartache and pain, Habakkuk learns what it means that the just, the righteous, shall live by his faith.
- 2. Paul
  - a. According to the gospel, **faith is the key and context for a life redeemed by God through His Son, Jesus Christ**
  - b. **Faith is the functional, practical point of the gospel**
  - c. For those who are believing the gospel, for those to whom God continually reveals His righteousness through the gospel, faith is the point.
    - (1) How can you have a happy marriage? Through faith in Jesus
    - (2) How to raise successful children? Not through indulgence and appeasement but through faith in Jesus
    - (3) How to overcome burdensome addictions? Not through denial and rejection but through faith in Jesus
    - (4) How to advance in my career? Not through selfish pursuit that sacrifices others for your benefit but through faith in Jesus
    - (5) How to contribute to world peace? Not through negotiations and compromises but through faith in Jesus
    - (6) How to support social equity? Not through rioting or politics but through faith in Jesus.
  - d. **Faith is the expectation of the revelation of the righteousness of God in the gospel.**
- 3. Application
  - a. What should we do about the gospel?
    - (1) What should we do about the righteousness of God we are created to share but do not?
    - (2) What should we do about righteousness of God that rightly judges the deficit of righteousness in us?
    - (3) What should we do about Jesus whom God puts forth as the means to reconcile us to Himself and through Whom the righteousness of God is imputed to us?
  - b. **Put your faith in Christ and live your life by faith in Christ.**

## II. Primary Question: What is faith?

### A. Question 1: What is faith?

- 1. Piper - *Faith is the initial window of the soul that lets the light of the revelation of righteousness in. And when the light of God's gift of righteousness comes in by faith, it powerfully works to awaken and sustain and engender more and more faith for the years to come.*

2. Doctoral Dissertation Project
  - a. Assumptive Worldview -
    - (1) the facts and perceptions and assumptions out of which we live our daily lives without fear.
    - (2) Earthquake vs solid ground
  - b. In the world of the gospel, faith is our assumptive worldview.
    - (1) Faith accepts as truth the facts revealed in the gospel
    - (2) Faith believes the truth revealed in the gospel
      - (a) That God is holy and righteous and just and worthy of utter devotion and continual worship
      - (b) Man's sin, in which we all participate by nature and by choice, separates us from God and subjects us to God's wrath
        - i) **Romans 3:23 (ESV) *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,***
        - ii) **Romans 6:23 (ESV) *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***
      - (c) God, in wisdom, love, righteousness, and mercy sent His Son as Savior, to live and die as our substitute, resolving in His life and death our conflict and reconciling us with God for His glory and our eternal joy.
      - (d) The benefits of saving grace come to us through faith alone in Christ alone
      - (e) Faith is the gift of God Himself to those He chooses for salvation.
        - i) **Ephesians 2:1-10 (ESV) *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in***

*kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

## B. Faith

1. Summary: Having faith means
  - a. Knowing the facts revealed in the gospel
  - b. Accepting the facts revealed in the gospel
  - c. Trusting God as expected by the gospel
  - d. Acting accordingly as empowered through the gospel
2. God creates faith in us, through the Spirit-empowered gospel, so that faith in Christ becomes the means and method of our daily life.
  - a. **Galatians 2:19-20 (ESV)** *For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. 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.*
3. Faith says to God
  - a. I hear you in the gospel
  - b. I understand the gospel
  - c. I trust you
  - d. I live my life for you

## III. Invitation

### A. Billy Graham story

1. A huge crowd once gathered on the edges of the great waterfalls at Niagra Falls, New York.
  - a. They watched a man with a wheelbarrow course back and forth on a tightrope over the falls.
  - b. They marveled when, after several trips back and forth, the man added 200lbs of dirt to the wheelbarrows and successfully pushed it several times back and forth on the rope across the raging waters of the falls.
2. After his final successful trip across the falls with the loaded wheelbarrow the man queried the audience: “Who believes I can wheel a man across the falls in this wheelbarrow?”
  - a. One gentleman was exceedingly enthusiastic in his affirmations.
  - b. “I do! I do! I believe it! You are amazing! Yes, sirree, bob, you can do it!”
3. The man with the wheelbarrow turned to the confident observer with a great smile of satisfaction on his face and said, “Wonderful! Thank you, sir. You can be first!”

4. Graham says, “All they saw was dust as the man made his way away as fast as he could.”

**B. Believe**

1. To say we believe is one thing.
2. To entrust ourselves to Christ, to get into the wheelbarrow, to put our faith in Him to carry us and our sin and our guilt over the dangers of the wrath of God and into the wonders of grace and glory
3. This is faith.

**C. Get in the wheelbarrow!**

1. Do you believe the gospel?
2. Do you believe in sin and guilt and righteousness and grace?
3. Do you believe in God’s mercy embodied and delivered in Christ?
4. Do you believe?
  - a. Then get in the wheelbarrow.
    - (1) Confess your sin
    - (2) Trust God to forgive your sin on account of Christ
  - b. Keep believing, keep living by faith in Jesus