

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 30 June 2019. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

“The End of Your Faith”

1 Peter 1:8-11

In the beginning of human history, our father Adam sinned against God; and in doing so, he brought sin and death upon himself, and upon all his descendants. However, God, in His mercy, gave Adam and Eve the promise of redemption. God promised Adam that through his wife, Eve, there would one day come a Seed (a Descendant) who would make war with the old Serpent, Satan, and defeat him.

Of course, Adam and Eve’s sin did not take God by surprise. God knew, from eternity past, that they would rebel against Him: and He was already prepared with His plan of redemption. Before Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, God promised them that a Saviour—a Messiah (“Anointed One”)—was coming.

As the centuries unfolded, God revealed more and more about the promised Seed. He raised up prophets, and He gave them revelations concerning the coming Messiah. As the time drew nearer, God gave specific revelations about the time and place of the Messiah’s arrival. To the prophet **Micah** He revealed the *place* of His birth: Bethlehem Ephratah (**Micah 5:2**). To **Daniel** God revealed the exact amount of *time* that would pass from the day when the king of Persia would make the decree to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem until the day when the Messiah would be “cut off” (killed). God said that it would be 69 weeks of years (483 years) between these two events; and that is precisely how long it turned out to be!

Finally, the fullness of the time came; and Jesus Christ, the promised Deliverer, came into the world. He was born of a virgin, and was placed in a manger. Meanwhile, hundreds of miles away, a group of men had been studying the prophecies of Scripture; and they believed that the Messiah’s coming was near. Seeing an unusual star in the heavens, and remembering that it had been foretold that a Star would come forth from Jacob, they made their way to Israel to find Him, and to pay Him tribute. With their hearts full of faith, they finally came to the house where the young child was: and they *looked* upon the face of the one in whom they had believed, and for whom they had waited for so long. At last, the Object of their faith was realised!

We who know Christ as Saviour have never seen our Saviour’s face; but one day, we *will* see His face. In the mean time, we can rejoice with unspeakable joy. That is what we will be talking about today. The title of my message this morning is ***The End of Your Faith***.

Read 1 Peter 1:8-11.

Very few people understand what faith really is. This morning, I would like to examine two aspects of true, biblical faith: and I will also show what true faith produces in our lives.

I. The object of biblical faith (v. 8)

What is the object of biblical faith? In other words, in *what* (or “whom”) must we place our faith? Peter answers that question in **verse 8**. The object of our faith is a Person; and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ. (**Read verses 7 and 8 again.**)

Most of the Jewish Christians to whom Peter was writing lived outside the land of Israel. Furthermore, by the time Peter wrote this letter (sometime around 60 A.D.), it had been three decades since Jesus’ ascension back to heaven. Obviously, most of these Christians had never seen the Lord

when He was on earth. Yet, even though they had never seen Jesus, they still loved Him, and believed on Him; and their hearts rejoiced at the thought that one day, their eyes would finally behold Him. Jesus Christ was the object of their faith.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the *only* kind of faith that pleases God. Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone, must be the Object of our faith. God will not accept a “faith” that is placed in anyone other than His Son; *and*, He will not accept a faith that demands *sight*. (Such a “faith” is not faith at all.) The wise men that came to see Jesus had never seen Him before; yet, they believed on Him. Most of the believers in Peter’s audience had never seen Jesus; yet, they still believed on Him. **You and I** have never seen Jesus: yet, if we desire to have eternal life, we *must* believe on Him. This is the kind of faith that God requires of every one of us—the kind that believes on Jesus without seeing Him.

Now, Peter had a privilege that none of us have had: he actually *saw* Jesus! Not only did Peter see Jesus, but He walked with Him, talked with Him, touched Him, and embraced Him. He wept with Jesus, and suffered alongside Him, for three years of his life. He witnessed the thousands of miracles that Jesus did. He witnessed His love and compassion. For three years of his life, he beheld the God of Creation in human flesh, on a daily basis! On a mountain in northern Israel, he, James, and John even had the privilege of seeing a small glimpse of Jesus’ divine glory. Peter watched in astonishment as Jesus’ whole being was transfigured, and as His face and garments glistened with a radiance like that of the sun! As if that weren’t enough, Peter saw and touched Jesus many times *after* His resurrection, and then watched Him ascend back into heaven forty days later. Peter saw all these things with his own eyes! How amazing, then, must it have been for Peter to see multitudes of people come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, *without* seeing Him!

Hebrews 11:1 says, “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*” **Hebrews 11:6** says that “*without faith, it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” Faith is the only thing that can please God! However, not just any faith will do. The kind of faith that pleases God is not merely an intellectual acceptance of the existence of God. Nor is it not an acceptance of just any belief about Jesus. *True faith*—the kind that pleases God—must be grounded upon the revelation that God has given us concerning His Son, in His Word. *True faith* must be grounded upon the claims that Jesus made about Himself—the claims that have been given to us in *this* Book.

The world tells us that there are many ways to God, and that it really doesn’t matter what path one takes to get to Him. They say, “Well, you need to have faith in *something*; but it really doesn’t matter *what* you have faith in, as long as it gets you through the hard times in your life.” However, there is something drastically wrong with this idea. Jesus said, “***I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.***”

Have you ever noticed that the world has a problem with Jesus? Most people are bothered by the very mention of His name. Even multitudes of people who claim to be “Christians” do not like to hear His words. Why? Because if Jesus of Nazareth be who He claims to be, then we cannot ignore Him, or shove Him into a corner of our lives, where He doesn’t affect the way we live. If Jesus be who He claimed to be, then we *must* surrender our hearts and lives to Him! (And precious few people are willing to do that!) Jesus’ claims about Himself are exclusive. His claims about Himself cannot be compromised to any degree, and still be true! Let’s take a few moments and examine His identity.

What does the New Testament claim about Jesus? First of all, it tells us that Jesus is God in human flesh!

Read John 8:48-59.

Jesus said, “***Before Abraham was, I am.***” Now, if Jesus had said, “Before Abraham was, I *was*,” we might have had reason to think that Jesus is a merely an important angel who existed *before* Abraham’s time, but not from eternity. However, that is *not* what Jesus said. He said, “*Ego emi*” (“***I***

am”). Jesus’ meaning couldn’t be clearer: He is everlasting. He has “*neither beginning of days, nor end of life,*” as Paul said in **Hebrews 7**. Jesus was claiming to be *Jehovah*—the one whose name means “I am.” He was claiming to be the everlasting God.

Now, if Jesus be *Jehovah*—the everlasting God in human flesh—then there is something else we know about Him: He is the only one who can save us. In **Isaiah 43:11** *Jehovah* said, “*I, even I, am the LORD (Jehovah); and beside me there is no saviour.*” *Jehovah* God is the only one who can save us from our sins. Well, guess what? That is precisely what the New Testament says about *Jesus*. In **Acts 4:12** Peter said about Jesus, “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*”

Now, think about what Peter said. He said, “*Neither is there salvation in any other.*” Because Jesus is God, He is the *only* one who can forgive our sins! Jesus isn’t merely someone who can *help* to atone for our sins: He is the *only* one who can atone for our sins. The salvation that He provides is complete. No one else can add to it. Jesus isn’t merely “in the mix” of saviours, along with a bunch of other saviours. (I once talked with a lady who said those exact words—that Jesus is “in the mix” of salvation, along with Mary and the saints!) Nothing could be further from the truth, my friends. Jesus is the *only* Saviour! The Lord Jesus Himself, and the prophets, and the Apostles, all testified to this truth.

As Jesus hung on the cross, He paid our sin debt in its entirety. Just before Jesus died and went to Paradise, He said, “*Tetelestai*”—“*It is finished.*” Those are powerful words, my friends! Jesus was saying that salvation’s price was paid *in full*. In **Hebrews 1:3**, Paul said that Jesus “*by himself purged our sins,*” and has now “*sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*” Jesus has done everything that is necessary for our salvation. It is finished, and complete!

Now, this is exactly the opposite of what most of professing “Christianity” says about salvation. Most of professing Christianity denies that salvation is a done and finished work. For example, in the year 1540, the **Council of Trent** made this pronouncement about salvation: “Should anyone say that in order to obtain the remission of sins it is necessary...to believe with certainty, and without hesitation,...that his sins are forgiven him, let him be anathema (cursed). Should anyone say that after the reception of...(God’s) grace...the guilt is so remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out,...that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged...before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema (cursed).” In other words, the Catholic Church says that *no one* can say for sure that all his sins are forgiven. They say that *no one* can say, with certainty, that he is justified before God, and on his way to heaven. But is that what the Bible says? No, it is not! Jesus said, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life*” (**John 5:24**).

Read 1 John 5:11-13.

What else does the Bible tell us about Jesus of Nazareth? The Bible says that Jesus is the only Mediator between God and men. Because Jesus is both God and Man, He is the only Man who can intercede between men and God. **First Timothy 2:5** says, “*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*”

Our world is filled with religious leaders who claim to be able to do the things that only Jesus Christ can do. Many religious leaders claim to have “new” revelations from God, which completely contradict or replace the Scriptures. These men are what Jesus called “*thieves and robbers.*”

Read John 10:1-11.

Billions of people in our world have been deceived by religious thieves and robbers—people who claim to sit in the place of God, or to speak in His name: yet, they shamelessly exploit and make

merchandise of their followers. They take their followers' money and possessions. They steal the innocence of their wives and their children. They take their followers' labour and toil, but give them nothing in return. They promise their followers great things; but they cannot give them true peace, or a clean conscience, or the assurance that they are reconciled to God. They are like clouds that never deliver any rain. They take, but they give nothing in return (nothing that satisfies the soul, that is). Jesus, on the other hand, took nothing from His followers. Instead, He unselfishly *served* them, and *gave* of Himself to them. Jesus never minced His words, or contradicted Himself. He never took up arms against His enemies, either. In fact, when Peter began to take out his sword to defend Jesus against the men who had come to arrest Him, Jesus *rebuked* Peter. Jesus lovingly, willingly laid down His life to purchase our redemption—even though we have all rebelled against Him. What a contrast to the “thieves and robbers” of this world, who serve themselves!

My friends, it *does* make a difference who, or what, the object of your faith is. The stakes couldn't possibly be higher! On the one hand is eternal life with God; and on the other hand is eternal death in the Lake of Fire! There is only one Object of true, biblical faith: and that is Jesus Christ. He is the only One to whom we may safely entrust our souls.

Now, multitudes of people in this world *claim* to be followers of Jesus. Yet, if they reject Jesus' words, they are rejecting Him. Jesus said, “***He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day***” (John 12:48). Jesus is inseparable from His Word! You cannot say that you “believe in Jesus” if you do not believe what He has spoken. For example, many people who claim to believe in Jesus reject what Jesus said about the new birth. Oftentimes, when I challenge people with Jesus' words in **John 3** (“***Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God***”), I get a response like this: “Well, I'm a Christian, but I'm not one of those ‘born agains.’ I'm not into these ‘new’ religions. That's just a bunch of evangelical American stuff.” My friends, the Bible wasn't written in America! The words “***Ye must be born again***” have been in the Bible for almost 2,000 years. *Jesus* said that those who are not born again will not *see* the kingdom of God! To reject the need to be born again is to reject Jesus' words, and to reject Him!

What is the Object of *your* faith? What (or whom) are you trusting in order to get to heaven? The object of your faith *does* make all the difference in this world, and in the next! You *must* place your complete trust in the God-Man, the Son of God, Jesus Christ!

Now, when the Object of your faith is Jesus Christ, Christ will produce certain qualities in your life. Here in **verse 8**, we see two of these qualities. (**Read verse 8 again.**) In this verse, we see, first of all, that faith in Christ produces ***love for Christ***. Peter said, “***Whom having not seen, ye love***.”

To most people, the idea that a person can *personally know and love Christ* is a foreign concept. Most people can't understand it; and the reason that they can't understand it is that they themselves *do not* personally know Christ, nor love Him. They have never been placed “in Christ.” They do not have a relationship with Him. Only the presence of Christ in a person's life can produce true love for Him, and a desire to serve Him. On our own, we *can't* know God, or love Him. In our natural, sinful condition, we are all rebels against God. We are estranged from Him, and are His enemies. It is only when we heed Jesus' call to believe on Him, and trust in His saving work on the cross, and surrender our hearts and lives to Him, that we begin to find the power to *love Him*. After we receive God's gift of salvation, the Spirit of God takes up residence inside us, and imparts to us a new nature, which is able to love God. God places His love in the heart of believers, as they daily submit to Him.

Read I John 4:7-19.

Read Romans 5:1-5.

Those of us who have received God's gift of salvation understand what it means to love Jesus, because we have *experienced* His love in our hearts; and we have loved Him back. However, I would

ask this: *How much* do you love Jesus? As a child of God, you know Him; but how *well* do you know Him? Has your love for Christ grown lukewarm—or even cold? Do you, for the most part, live a self-centred life? Do you go through most days without so much as picking up your Bible to read it, or spending time in prayer? Do you often neglect God’s House on Sunday and Wednesday because you are “too busy”? Do you, perhaps, *do* all these things (reading your Bible, praying, and going to church) *mechanically*, but treat it merely as a “duty” that you must perform? Does God really have your *heart*? Do you really *love* Him with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength? Paul said in **Ephesians 6:6** that we should serve God “*not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.*” Christian, should your love for Christ be growing lukewarm, let Peter’s words here in **1 Peter 1:8** convict your heart: “*Whom having not seen, ye love.*” How *much* do you love Him? Is your love for Him manifesting in *obedience* to His commands? Are you serving Him from the heart, as you longingly wait for His appearing?

Now, what else does Christ produce in the hearts of those who trust in Him? Let’s look again. (**Read 1 Peter 1:8 again.**) Not only does faith in Christ produce *love* for Him; it also produces *unspeakable joy*. Peter says that “*Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable.*” When the object of your faith is Jesus Christ, there will be an unspeakable joy in your life. It is a joy that the unsaved world cannot comprehend. In spite of sorrow, the believer can have joy unspeakable, *because it is a joy that is full of the hope of heaven*. Peter says that this joy is “*full of glory*” (the glory of heaven).

Do you know why I am joyful this morning? I am joyful because I know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that I have been **justified** in the sight of God. I have been **saved** from God’s wrath. I have been **reconciled** to God. My sins have been **atoned** by Christ’s blood. I know that if a lorry were to wander into my lane and hit me head-on on my way home from church this morning, I would immediately be in heaven with God!

For the Christian, words such as “love” and “joy” are not mere words. They are spiritual qualities which every true Christian can have, because they are given by the Holy Spirit of God, who dwells within every believer. They are part of the “*fruit of the Spirit,*” which is “*Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,*” and “*temperance*” (**Galatians 5:22-23**). By the way, Christian, you *can* lose the joy in your life when you start disobeying the Lord, and doing your own thing. If you want full joy in your life all the time, then you must submit to the Lord continually, and be filled with the Spirit.

We have seen that the Object of true, biblical faith is the Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen what Christ *produces* in the lives of those who trust in Him. Now, let us see what the *result* of biblical faith is.

II. The result of biblical faith (verse 9)

In **verse 9**, Peter tells us what the result of biblical faith is. It is the **salvation of your soul**. (**Read verse 9 again.**)

More times than I can remember, I have asked people this simple question: “Do you know that you will go to heaven when you die?” The answer that I usually hear is this: “No one can know this for sure! We won’t know until after we die.” Yet, here in **verse 8**, Peter is telling the Jewish believers that the end of their faith—the salvation of their souls—was already theirs, in this lifetime. This is an important statement! Let’s examine this verse carefully.

First of all, *what* are Christians receiving? Peter said that we are receiving “the *end*” of our faith. What does this mean? Well, the Greek word for “*end*” is *telos*; and *telos* means the “conclusion” or “end result” of something. So, then, what is the “end result” of faith in Christ? It is “*the salvation of your souls.*”

Now, let's look at this statement even more closely. Not only have Christians received the "end," or "conclusion" of their faith (which is their salvation), but they are *continually* receiving it. In Greek, the word "receiving" is in the present, progressive tense, just as it is in our English Bible. This means that our receiving of salvation is a present, *continual, unceasing* action! It means that salvation is something that we have received, and are still receiving, at this very moment.

Isn't this a wonderful promise? Not only does God *save* sinful men: He *keeps* them by His power! Jesus didn't merely give us the gift of salvation in the past: He is *continually* giving it to us. That is why the last verse of one of our hymns says, "Not at death I shrink, nor falter, for my Saviour *saves me now.*" Salvation is a permanent condition, which begins at the moment when a person places his faith in Christ; but it continues throughout life, after death, and into eternity in heaven with God! In God's sight, His children are already seated in heavenly places with Him!

Read Ephesians 2:4-7.

Salvation is not a far-off, fearful, uncertain thing. It is a present, eternal reality for every child of God. For true believers in Jesus, there will be no unpleasant surprises about their eternal destiny. The true believer in Christ knows *exactly* what he will receive when he passes out of this life. He will receive an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away! Christian, aren't you glad that you are saved for eternity? Isn't it wonderful to wake up every morning, knowing that, in spite of your sin and failure, you are still reconciled with God—that you are no more under condemnation?

Now, before we close this morning, let's see what Peter has to say about *how* salvation is made possible. (**Read 1 Peter 1:10-11 again.**) According to these verses, salvation has been made possible by two things. First of all, it has been provided through "*the sufferings of Christ*" (His death on the cross).

The prophets of the Old Testament did not understand every detail of how God's plan of salvation would unfold; but there is no question that many of them (such as Abraham, David, Isaiah, and Daniel) understood that Christ would suffer greatly, and that He would die. Throughout the Old Testament, God revealed to His prophets that the Messiah would suffer and die for our sins.

Read Isaiah 53:1-12.

By shedding His precious blood on the cross, Jesus paid the full penalty for our sins. As Jesus hung on the cross, He "*bare our sins in his own body on the tree.*" All these things were foretold centuries in advance; and although the Old Testament saints may not have fully comprehended how it would all work out, it wasn't for lack of trying. Peter says that the prophets of old searched into these things "*diligently.*" They wanted as much light on the subject as God would give them. They pored over the Scriptures to try to find out what manner of suffering the Messiah would go through, and when it would happen. God had given them more than enough revelation for them to realise that the Messiah would suffer and die.

However, it wasn't merely the *sufferings* of Christ that they wanted to understand. There is something else about salvation that they wanted to know. They wanted to know about "*the glory that should follow.*" (**Read verse 11 again.**) What is the "*glory that should follow*"? It is the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ! Christ had to suffer first; and *then* came the glory of His resurrection. The prophets of old may not have understood all the details about Christ's resurrection; but they did know enough to be aware that in some way the Messiah would die, and then rise again.

It was necessary for Christ not only to die for our sins, but also to rise from the dead. Without the power of the resurrection, salvation would not be complete. In **1 Corinthians 15**, Paul said that "*If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*" If Christ had not risen from the dead, we would be "*of all men most miserable,*" because we would have no hope of bodily resurrection, and of standing in God's presence in heaven. Because Christ has paid the price for all

our sins, *and* has sealed that purchase with His resurrection, the free gift of salvation is now available to all who will receive it. **Romans 4:25** tells us that Jesus “*was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*” Because Jesus rose from the dead, salvation’s work is done. We, as sinful people, can be justified before God—“declared righteous.” This, too, the prophets of old desired to “look into”: and God gave them great light. Let’s look at one more Scripture.

Read Psalm 16:8-11. (Obviously, David was not speaking about himself when he said, “*thou wilt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption.*” He knew full well that his own body would decay!)

God gave David great revelation about the resurrection of His Son. David knew that Messiah would die; but He also understood that Messiah would not remain in the grave. He understood that the Messiah would rise again. David placed his faith in this great Redeemer to come. And what was the result of his faith? The salvation of his soul!

Conclusion: Salvation has been completely bought and paid for. All that remains is for it to be received by the sinner. How does the sinner receive it? Through good works? Through self-reformation? Through baptism? No. It can be received only by faith in Jesus Christ, and in His completed work on the cross, and His resurrection. If you have not placed your complete trust in Jesus Christ, you can do so today. The Bible says, “*Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*” If you will believe on Him today, you will receive “*the end of your faith, the salvation of your soul.*”

If you have already placed your faith in Christ, then you have received the “salvation of your soul.” However, are you keeping your *love* for Him, and the *joy* of your salvation, hot and alive? Do you delight to search out the wonderful truths of your salvation, as the ancient prophets did? The Old Testament prophets had only *part* of the Scriptures; but we have it all! Are you delving into the depths of God’s Word, and seeking to know these things? Are you sharing it with others? If your love for the Lord have grown cold, please get right with Him today!