Genuine Faith

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1 Pet. 1:7

1 Pet. 1:7, "*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*"

Genuine faith is a strong faith. You do not get it from a box, like instant potatoes. It is developed like growing the potatoes in a garden. It takes time and work. Its rewards are tremendous.

In our text Peter commends his Christian readers for their genuine faith. Their faith was genuine and unwavering even in persecution.

The genuine faith is a faith led by truth. It is constant and strong. Since it is commended by the Holy Spirit, Christians should desire to have it. With it, we will stand the test of time, and our reward will be heaven. Without it, we have no hope. The genuine faith is a must to acquire.

Let us see what we can learn about genuine faith.

Genuine faith is based on truth.

Genuine faith comes by hearing truth.

Rom. 10:17, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*"

The word of God is truth. John 17:17, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*"

Faith can be faulty when it is not truth-based. Example: Satan with Eve.

Only truth makes us free. John 8:32, "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"

Faith keeps the soul purified. 1 Pet. 1:22, "*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:*"

Our soul is not pure if we fill it with all sorts of garbage, worldly or religious.

Genuine faith comes by arduous study.

If we have genuine faith we have spent some time in acquiring it. We have taken the time and surrounded ourselves with helpful tools that help us glean the knowledge of the scriptures (Bible, concordance, etc.).

Our study should be daily, as it was with the Bereans.

Acts 17:11, "*These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*"

A weak faith cannot be a genuine faith. These brethren had acquired the truth — it was genuine.

Genuine faith is lived.

When we fill ourselves with the word of God it must express itself.

Jer. 20:9, "*Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*"

Young Christians are like that when they learn the truth and join the Lord in baptism. They are full of fire for the Lord.

Knowledge brings a love for God.

1 John 4:19, "*We love him, because he first loved us.*"

Love expresses itself in serving the One loved.

- John 14:15, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*"
- 1 John 2:5, "*But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*"

Without a knowledge of God's word, with cannot know that we are "*in Him*".

Genuine faith is active in service.

When we have genuine faith there is a noticeable change in the way that we live.

Rom. 8:5-6, "*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*"

When one has a genuine faith when it sees the truth he will want to change his life to live the truth. There is a visible change in one's morality.

Col. 3:1-5, "*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*"

Mortify — kill, no longer alive or active, put away.

When the truth of God's word tells us that we are to change it affects our heart. 2 Tim. 2:22, "*Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*"

The change will be so visible that your worldly friends will think you are strange. 1 Pet. 4:4, "*Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:*"

When we have a genuine faith having learned the word of God, then we will desire to live in the fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22-23, "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*"

This is the type of life to which a genuine faith will lead us. Because of a genuine faith, one will want to go about doing good just as the Lord did.

Acts 10:38, "*How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*"

Although we are not endowed with the powers Jesus had, there is much that we can do, nevertheless. Our devotion is to God; glorifying Him by acting on His truths. 1 Cor. 6:20, "*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*"

Genuine faith is strong (unwavering).

A genuine faith is unwavering during stressful and troublesome times. Early Christians lived faithfully during very severe persecution.

A genuine faith focuses on God and His promises more than the earthly troubles that we may have to endure. Paul wrote concerning the things that he endured for the cause of Christ:

Rom. 8:18, "*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*"

Such faith will stand any test.

With a watchful eye, we should try to maintain a strong faith through study and prayer. If our faith dies, our hope and love will die with it.

Mark 4:16-17, "*And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.*"

Genuine faith has the spirit of love.

Genuine faith performs the works of God with the right spirit. All that we do must be done with the spirit of love.

1 Cor. 13:1-3, "*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*"

A person may have the truth of God, but if he doesn't have the love for others when he delivers the truth to them, they may be turned off from that truth. Paul said that faith works <u>through</u> love.

Gal. 5:6, "*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; <u>but faith which worketh by love</u>.*"

Genuine faith not only does what God requires, but also with the right motive.

Conclusion.

We have seen the basics of a genuine faith. A faith that is commended by the Holy Spirit. It is the example for the Christian to follow.

The sincere Christian should say, "I want this faith." It is the faith that will produce great things in the service of God and Christ. The rewards at the end of life are great.

Christians: Without this genuine faith we will not please the Lord nor pass the test of life. We should be willing to put in the time and energy it takes to have this genuine faith. We need to repent if we are neglecting this.

The unsaved: You need to answer the Lord's invitation and become a Christian.

This will start you on your spiritual journey in acquiring the genuine faith that will take you steadfastly through this life.

Are you a Christian? Or are you almost a Christian?

How a person become a Christian? The following are the steps necessary to make that happen:

- **Faith.** Heb. 11:6, "*But 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.*" When I was in high school (I was about 17 years old), a neighbor boy my same age told me he was an atheist. Since I had been baptized, I took the opportunity to talk to him about the scriptures. He told me that he could see that living the life of a Christian was good, but he wasn't sure if he believed there was a God. But to be on the safe side, maybe he should go to church, and when he dies and stands before God (if there is a God) on the day of Judgment (if there is a Judgment), maybe if God sees that he has gone to church and lived a good life that God would send him to heaven (if there is a heaven), and not to hell (if there is a hell). I told him, "It doesn't work that way. You have to believe in Him with all your heart or you cannot please Him."

- ·**Repentance.** Acts 2:38, "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" Acts 11:18, "*… Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*" If while you were sleeping, you heard a noise in the other room, and you think to yourself, "There's a burglar in my house!" So you reach for your cell phone, and as quietly as you can, you call the police, tell them there is a burglar in your house, and you give them your address. Soon, you heard them arrive and capture the thief. He yells, "I'm sorry; I'm sorry!" What is he sorry for? He is sorry that he got caught; not that he stole. In true repentance the thief would be sorry that he ever stole and wants to change his life so that he would never steal again. That is true repentance. It is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. That is what we have to do before we can become a Christian.

- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, "*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*" What do we confess? That we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Note that in the above scriptures that faith (believing), repentance, and confession are "**UNTO**" righteousness, life, or salvation. "Unto" means toward something; not that one has already attained.

- **Baptism.** It is baptism where righteousness, life, and salvation are attained. Jesus, himself, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, "*But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" (Matt. 3:14-17). Jesus was baptized because God said it was the right thing to do. Did you see how pleased God was about Jesus being baptized? Jesus also said "*it becometh **us** to fulfil all righteousness.*" We are baptized because it fulfills His righteousness, not because it is of our righteousness.

  In fact, if we are not baptized, we are still in our sins. "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" (Acts 2:38). Peter, what did you say the reason of baptism is? "*for the remission of sins*". Why would anyone want to leave out the step that removes our sins?

  Jesus commanded that to reach salvation we must be baptized. "*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth **and** is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" (Mark 16:15-16).

  Ananias told Saul (before he was rename Paul) the very same thing, "*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a requirement given by God.

  Baptism is called a burial. "*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" (Rom. 6:4). Our old man is to be dead to us. "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be*

also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism is God's blueprint for applying the blood of Christ in our lives by baptism. We are free from our old sins only when we are baptized.

This doesn't mean "sprinkling. The scripture above says baptism is a burial. We don't take a dead body to the cemetery and sprinkle a little dirt over it; we bury the body.

If you have not become a Christian, won't you consider it today?