

## Sabbath School Lesson #11 – Jesus, Author and Perfecter of Our Faith – 5-11/03/2022

**C**hrist is our only faith. “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2). We are saved by the blood of Christ, and it is free for all. His love can reach the vilest sinner as easily as if to one whose life has apparently been upright. Abraham was called the “friend of God” (James 2:23), not that his disposition was better than that of others, but because he believed God; and Cain was rejected solely on account of his lack of faith. We have no business to look at ourselves or others, or to compare ourselves with others. We have only one on whom to fix our eyes; this is the faith that gives us the victory. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). Christ is the author of the faith. “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). There is no faith except in Jesus Christ; faith put in any other is presumption.

**Sunday: The Righteous Will Live by Faith** – In Romans 1:17 Paul says: “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” The work of righteousness we read about in the Bible must be manifested in our lives. But this is wholly a work of faith, – the righteousness of God is revealed from “faith to faith,” – faith in the beginning, and faith to the end, – as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

There are too many who try to live the Christian life on the strength of the faith which they exercised when they realised their need of pardon for the sins of their past life. They know that God alone can pardon sins, and that He does this through Christ; but they imagine that having once been started they must run the race in their own strength. If they ever have anything to say, they tell only of a past experience, of the joy they had when they first believed. Of the joy of living for God, and of walking with Him by faith, they know nothing, and he who tells of it speaks a strange language to them. But the apostle carries this matter of faith clear through to the glorious kingdom, in the following most forcible illustration:

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 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” (Hebrews 11:5-6).

Enoch was translated because he walked with God, and had the testimony that he pleased God; but without faith it is impossible to please God. That is enough to prove the point. Without faith not an act can be performed that will meet the approval of God. Without faith the best deeds that a man can do will come infinitely short of the perfect righteousness of God, which is the only standard. Wherever real faith is found it is a good thing; but the best of faith in God to take away the load of the sins of the past will profit a person nothing unless it is carried right through in ever-increasing measure until the close of his probation.

**Monday: By Faith, Abraham . . .** – By faith, Abraham “obtained the promise.” Hebrews eleventh says of Abraham and all his posterity, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises” (verse 13), and still later, “These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise” (verse 39). Yet in Hebrews 6:15, it is said of Abraham, “And so, after he had patiently endured, he received the promise.” How is this? – it is easily reconciled, when we consider that, “in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Isaac was the child of promise, born of the Spirit. His birth was life from the dead (Romans 4:19). So when Abraham was tried he offered up Isaac; “and he that received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Hebrews 11:17-19). Christ is the Seed, and He could come only through Isaac’s line; yet so firmly did Abraham’s faith grasp Christ as the One “who is, and who was, and who is to come” that he calmly proceeded to offer up Isaac, assured that the Christ who was to come from him was already alive from the dead, with power to raise Isaac from the dead so that the promise that He should be born of his line might be fulfilled. Truly Abraham had the promise, even as do a Christian who for a surety knows the promise of God that he shall be “heir of the world,” already has tasted “the power of the world to come” (Hebrews 6:5).

**Tuesday: Moses: Believing in the Unseen** – The unseen “Spirit of Christ” which was in all the prophets (1 Peter 1:11) was in Moses: “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (Hebrews 11:24-26). Was Moses’ choice a wise one? We think of his life of trial and leading a host of murmurers and fault-finders, but also of his unparalleled communion with the Lord, as with a friend, face to face. And then, too, we think of him as he is now – for he was raised to life (Jude 9) – and as he appeared on the mount of transfiguration with Elijah who never died; and how small do the glories of Egypt, which he might have held for a few years, appear in contrast with the eternal glories which are his! It is so always, but when Christ and His truth bring us to the choice now, how large seems a little fragment of this world’s possessions or prospects, and how far off seems the Divine inheritance. It is because the devil blinds the eyes, and men do not believe the Lord. The “Spirit of Christ” in prophet Moses led him to set a proper value upon this world, and the same “Spirit of Christ” (Romans 8:9) will lead us to escape from the world’s ways.

**Wednesday: By Faith, Rahab and the Rest . . .** – The apostle records that “by faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Hebrews 11:31). This case has been a cause of stumbling to some who have not given careful thought to it. It is well known that Rahab lied to the men sent by the king of Jericho to seize the spies (see Joshua 2:2-6), and they imagine that in saving her God placed a premium on lying, and that it is right sometimes to lie. Neither is true. Rahab was saved, not because of her lie, but because of her faith. She, in common with all the people of Jericho, had heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea, and how He had led the Israelites; but she alone, of all the inhabitants of Jericho, believed that the hand of the Lord was in the matter, and that He had given the land of Canaan to the Israelites. She had simple faith, but was totally ignorant of God’s law. In the code of heathen morality, lying was accounted a virtue, and she knew nothing better. But her faith made it possible for her to be saved, and brought her into a place where she could learn righteousness. As a natural consequence her faith in God would increase when she learned more of Him. In her case we have a clear instance of the revelation of the righteousness of God from faith to faith.

**Thursday: Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of Our Faith** – “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Hebrews 12:1-3). What was the joy that was set before Christ? Although Christ was in the form of God, He “thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:6-7). Christ by His Son-ship was equal with God, sharing His Father’s glory (John 17:5). Before Him all the hosts of angels He had created (Colossians 1:16) bowed in adoration. But when Christ looked upon the world of men who were “dead in trespasses and sins,” treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, all this glory seemed to fade away. He did not count it as a thing at all to be desired, so long as men were perishing before His eyes without help. And so He divested Himself of all His glory, and submitted to degradation and death, in order that He might win a still greater joy. And yes, even the joy of heaven could be increased, and that by removing the Joy of heaven to earth, that earth’s misery might be turned to joy. Who can estimate the depth of love that could count the immeasurable bliss of heaven as nothing compared with the joy of bringing, through reproach, ignominy and death, fallen men to share it with Him? And this is the goodness of God toward men. Ought it not to lead them to repentance? Yea, verily; and such will be its effect upon everyone who will but steadfastly look at it. Oh that men would indeed look to “Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith,” and not look once nor twice, but continually!