

# a word from Pastor Chuck

## What Pleases God?—Part 3



### HOW MUCH FAITH?

**"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" MARK 8:36**

So how much faith does it take to be saved? Jesus said that if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed or of a child, that's enough for God to account you as righteous.

Faith itself cannot save you. Many people who believe in God are not saved, tragically, because they make a work out of faith and look to their faith itself for their salvation.

If you say, "I believe in God," that declaration won't save you. The demons believe in God—and they fear and tremble (James 2:19).

If you say, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," that will not save you. The demons also believe in Jesus and said to Him, "**I know who You are—the Holy One of God!**" (Luke 4:34b). Yet demons are not saved.

Everyone believes in something. The question isn't whether you believe in something, but what do you believe?

God promised Abraham that one day He would bring from him a seed, a child, and that through this child He would bring salvation. In fact, this child would make possible the salvation of the whole world. "**In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed**" (Genesis 22:18a).

Abraham believed that God would one day bring to earth the Savior of the world through his offspring. It was his faith in the coming of the Messiah that prompted God to say, "This is a righteous man."

Do you want to be declared righteous by God? If so, you need to believe more than the fact that there is a God or that Jesus came to earth. You must believe in the promise of God that if you place your faith in Jesus Christ, you will not perish, but will have everlasting life. Salvation becomes yours when you trust that He came to die in

your place, bearing your sins and the guilt and the penalty of your sin, and by so doing purchased your salvation. When you believe in the promise of God, which is salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, God looks at you and says, "You are righteous."

Our church supports a missionary to Bolivia. His father had a tremendous burden for the Saranoy Indians, a nomadic, tribal group that lived in the wet forest—what was known as the green-hell country of Bolivia. These people had no permanent home, but would hunt out an area, get food, and move on.

When this missionary died, his son carried on the ministry. Since he grew up among the Saranoy, he knew all about them. They considered him something of a curiosity—how did this white kid know their dances, their culture, and their language? For years he remained with them under difficult circumstances, faithfully sharing the Gospel.

Eventually he and other missionaries built a village for the Saranoy. They taught them how to farm. They taught them hygiene practices, thereby cutting down the incidence of tuberculosis. They did a lot of social good for the Saranoy—but this one man's heart beat to bring them to Jesus. For seven years, he witnessed and labored among them, without a single convert. Yet he had the writer of Hebrews to encourage him:

***Do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.***

HEBREWS 6:12b

Finally, after seven years, God began to touch the hearts of the Saranoy Indians. Today a vast majority of the Saranoy are Christians—but it took years of seed planting, patience, and prayer before these faithful missionaries saw the fruit of their ministry.

***And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.***

GALATIANS 6:9

Many years ago in London, a young preacher named Caesar Milan received an invitation to a musicale at a large, prominent home, where a young lady thrilled the audience with her singing. Afterward, the preacher gained her attention, and said, "Young lady, when you were singing, I sat there and thought how tremendously the cause of Christ would be benefited if you would dedicate your talents to the Lord." He then added, "You're as much a sinner as the worst drunkard on the street or any harlot on Scarlet Street. But I'm glad to tell you that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, can cleanse you from all sin, if you will just come to Him."

In a haughty manner, she turned her head aside and replied, "You are very insulting, sir." She started to walk away, but he called out, "Miss, I didn't mean any offense, and I pray that the Spirit of God will convict you."

That night the young woman couldn't sleep. Finally, at 2:00 a.m., she knelt beside her bed and received Christ as her Savior. And then she, Charlotte Elliott, wrote these words:

*Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.<sup>1</sup>*

Faith pleases God. When we believe His promises and so declare His faithfulness, His heart rejoices. God loves to reward our faith, starting with salvation and then spilling over into all other areas of our lives.

And do you know that He will take you just as you are? When you come to Jesus Christ, believing His promise, He welcomes, pardons, cleanses, and relieves. He removes each dark spot of sin in your life. When you come to Him "without one plea," trusting in the sufficiency of Jesus' shed blood, God opens the gates of heaven for you. ☩

<sup>1</sup> "Just As I Am Without One Plea," words by Charlotte Elliott, 1835.

This article was edited by permission and taken from the book *Faith* by the late Pastor Chuck Smith of CC Costa Mesa, CA.