

THOSE WHO ARE PEOPLE OF FAITH ARE BLESSED

Faith is the substance, the proof, the certainty, the conviction of reality of things not seen. It was by faith that the patriarchs were sustained and served the Lord. Faith walks on water, it moves mountains, no matter the size. It brought life to lifeless bodies as in their resurrection from the dead. Few have experienced the reality of faith that way. Although not manifested often, it happens to those people of faith. It goes to the extreme between death and life and conquers the physical death. Although, death will come to all when life comes to its end. Faith smiles at any problem with confidence of its strength, for those who are people of faith are truly blessed with the reality of things they hoped and prayed for. In faith. Arise and shine, the Lord tells us even in times of trouble, because the victory has been won, when on the cross YAHSHUA declared, *It is finished! O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? (1 Cor. 15:55)*. This is a song of victory echoed through eternity from the time YAHSHUA fought it with His own life.

What does the word of God says concerning faith in relationship to Him? "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Without faith man is alienated from God, for it is by faith that he can come near to God, for whoever comes near to Him must believe that He exists and that He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). Many of us are guilty of that and as a result, we live a life without experiencing God's blessings that come from exercising faith. Faith in action is like walking on water facing the storm raging against us without fear and anxiety, because we have been made perfect in the love of God and are protected from these tormenting spirits. Where there is fear, faith is non-existent in one's life in whatever circumstance we are facing. Fear does not bring us blessings, but torment according to the Bible: *There is no fear in love, but full- grown love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror. For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love (1 John 4:18)*.

Today's people of faith are those who have little of this world and yet are content with what they have, for they are spiritually blessed with peace, joy, hope - a hope based on the promise from God Himself. They have what the world is looking for, but are empty of it, for these blessings are not found in riches, but in faith that springs up from the love of YAHSHUA shed on the cross, when He gave up His life to give the world life, although rejected by the majority. YAHSHUA offered us peace, the peace that emanates from Him, not from the world, from the things that the world offers. He said, *Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you, for I am going away to prepare a place for you. And when I go and make ready a place for you, I will come back again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also...Peace I leave with you; My peace I now give and bequeath to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid (John 14: 1-3,27)*.

The secret for peace in the heart of man is found in the belief and practices of God's word. The strength of faith clears the mind and establishes peace in times of trouble we all face. When we embrace fear instead of faith, the consequences are detrimental to the physical body. God has never promised us an easy life, but He promised to be with us. He said, *In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer! For I have overcome the world (John16:31b)*. Paul said, *Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God. And God's peace which transcends all understanding shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds (Phil. 4:6-7)*. What does anxiety do to a troubled heart? Separates it from faith and from the blessing of peace. YAHSHUA said, *Do not worry, but instead, seek first of all His kingdom and His righteousness, and then all these things taken together will be given you besides. So, do not worry or be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries and anxieties of its own sufficient for each day is its own trouble. We are not to take our burdens on ourselves, but cast the whole of your care on Him, for He cares for you (Matt. 6:25-34; 1 Pet. 5:7)*.

The strength of faith comes from experiencing difficulties. If life always smiled for us, there would not be strength for us to overcome the trials that come our way. The challenges of life strengthen faith in everyday living, if we do not give up. Victory is certain for those of strong faith. *If you will not believe and trust and rely on God and on the words of God's prophet, surely you will not be established nor will you remain (Isaiah 7:9b)*. Life's battle is only won through faith - a shield that protects when it is lifted up, quenching all the flaming missiles of the wicked one (Eph. 6:16). Sometimes, we must stand alone in faith, when the crowd will not accept God's message; when we are persecuted for our faith. Abraham was told to sacrifice his son, his only son, when God had promised him, He will be the father of many nations through that son he was asked to sacrifice. He did not hesitate to do so, because faith in the promise of God sustained him. He was told to leave his family and move to a place where God had for him; Abraham, again obeyed and was honored by God Himself with blessings of His promises.

"Today, you will be with Me in Paradise," YAHSHUA told the thief on the cross; he believed and faith carried him to Paradise, where YAHSHUA promised him. The word of God is filled with promises for all, beginning with the gift of salvation available for whosoever will. Our corrupt body will someday be laid low in the ground, in order for us to receive our uncorrupted one. That's in eternity not too far, for the uncertainty of life has no respect for age. It takes seconds for life to turn its destination and be found in heaven or hell. The thief on the cross didn't have to be baptized in order to be saved; he didn't have to do good works; he had to have faith to believe in YAHSHUA, repent of his sins for heaven's door to be opened to him; his faith saved him.

So, it is for everyone who has faith applied to his salvation. The Bible tells us that there is no longer any sacrifice to atone for sins, where there is absolute remission of them through the blood of YAHSHUA. That thief on the cross was the first one to benefit from the redemptive sacrifice of our Lord; he was the first one before YAHSHUA'S death to confess verbally to believe in Whom He was at that hour when YAHSHUA was atoning for his sins. He took a stand for

YAHSHUA, when rebuking *the other criminal, who was railing at YAHSHUA saying, Are You not the Christ? Rescue Yourself and us! He reproved him, saying, Do you not even fear God, seeing you yourself are under the same sentence of condemnation and suffering the same penalty? And we indeed suffer it justly, receiving the due reward of our actions; but this Man has done nothing out of the way. Then he said, to YAHSHUA, Lord, remember me when You come in Your kingly glory! And He answered, him, Truly, I tell you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise (Luke 23:39-43).*

Yes, indeed, eternal salvation is the reward to people who are of faith in YAHSHUA'S redemptive sacrifice offered to all who will believe. Blessed are those who are people of faith!