

Patience and Assurance of Faith

Introduction

“**1** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **2** Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. **3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, **5** Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **6** Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: **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: **8** Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: **9** Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:1-10).

It seems to me that as I read the word of God and in my own experience, that in the life of a believer, there is something more difficult than anything else. It is continuing with patience in the faith under the long race of our life in every trial, looking for the hope of eternal life with full assurance and laboring for Christ

with diligence, trusting Him as my all, seeking Him, growing in Him, and all this in light of the everyday routine of life. The mundane events and duties of life leave us wondering if there is more than hearing the same Gospel, and doing the same thing. Shouldn't we be growing more in knowledge than merely Jesus Christ and our salvation by Him? Shouldn't our lives be more eventful? Doesn't a true believer have great conquests to bolster his confidence? Are the trials I experience the result of my sin? Surely a child of God is more able than I am to have and maintain an upbeat view of life? Wouldn't a true believer rise above the thoughts and motives I have, and do better than I do? I am quick to judge others. Why? I take provocation personally with an intemperate response. Why? I can't I seem to rise above my own pride, my lack of motivation in the life of faith. I am prone to discouragement. The life of faith is thus a long walk, a life-long walk, a race in which I grow weary. I look to Christ, but my gaze seems dim. I want Him, but my desires wane. I wait for Him, but my expectation cools. I learn of Him, but I am constantly try as if to prove whether I have indeed found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and I find myself asking, "If I have found grace in Thy sight." I want to know, want to look to Christ, want to find that He is my all is, and truly all that I have! But the course is long. I grow weary in the way. And thus, I believe the greatest trial we face in life is the trial of living by faith in Christ over the long distance of our life, without anything else but the Gospel as our confidence and expectation and answer and comfort in every trial, especially the trial of the

absence of evidences of great enlightenment, great calm, great joy. Has the Lord called me? Has He saved me? Is He with me? Does He hear me? Note well, there are two things we must continually give ourselves to. By God's grace, we must find that the answer to all of these questions "about me" is not found with me, nor is it about me. The message from God and answer from God in all of life is Christ and Him crucified! "It" (my focus, life) is not about "you"; it is about Him. Look away from all that you are, and find all of God and find your all in Him! And yet, this experience that brings these questions to our mind is ever recurring. The second thing we must note well is this. Since it is not about me, it is about Christ and Him crucified, we must give ourselves to serve Him and His people, for His glory. Our problem is twofold. We are self-absorbed in our confidence, and we are self-absorbed in our labors. But grace teaches us to be absorbed with Christ: with His work in all of our salvation and with His purpose to glorify Himself in the salvation of His people by His Gospel. Therefore, we ought to give of ourselves and give ourselves for the sake of others. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it! Make it your life's aim to help your wife know Jesus Christ. When provoked, pray, then take it, and then respond in temperate measure and patience with a view, not to your own reputation, not to "be right", but to instruct your wife in Christ's love by referring her to His humility and compassion and patience to those who provoked Him (Romans 5:6-10).

"**6** When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. **8** But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6-8).

"**23** Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: **24** Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:23-24)!

And thus, we are taught by the Spirit of God to turn from our self-righteousness to find Christ to be our all, to come to God by Him, and to love Him by giving of ourselves for His people, that He might be glorified in their eyes. But this life and walk of faith is a long walk, and so this is itself the greatest trial: continuance in faith and love. John Newton wrote of continuance in faith in this hymn:

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek, more earnestly, His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer!
But it has been in such a way,
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour,
At once He'd answer my request;
And by His love's constraining pow'r,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel

The hidden evils of my heart;
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea more, with His own hand He seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this," I trembling cried,
"Wilt thou pursue Thy worm to death?"
"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for grace and faith."

"These inward trials I employ,
From self, and pride, to set thee free;
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may'st find thy all in Me."

**After the dire warning, an exhortation to patience in faith,
then on to assurance...**

“7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: **8** But that which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing; whose end *is* to be burned. **9** But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. **10** For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. **11** And we desire that every one of you do shew the same **diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12** That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who **through faith and patience** inherit the promises.” (Heb. 6:7-12).

Now, compare Hebrews 6:7-12 with Hebrews 10:32-39. The same people are addressed by the same apostle, only now, after going on to all God permitted, unfolding the fulfillment and blessings of the New Covenant in Christ's blood, contrasting them with the vain hope of that works religion under the law and the shadows of a priesthood and sacrifices and an earthly tabernacle that could not make him that did the service perfect, did not please God, we have here, after the fulfillment, another warning followed by another exhortation: warning of turning from and leaving Christ and the fellowship of believers in the congregation of the gathered body of Christ, the Church, we have the exhortation to patience of faith again.

In contrast to leaving Christ and His people, the fellowship of the Gospel, returning to shadows of OT, works religion for a refuge from reproaches, afflictions, spoiling of goods, and for a reward on earth, the apostle recalls to the mind of these Hebrew believers to endure trials of faith with patience.

“32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence¹,

¹ The same word translated “confidence” here is translated “boldly” in Hebrews 4:16, and “boldness” in Hebrews 10:19, where we are told, “having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And *having* an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

which hath great recompence of reward². 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God [ch 6:12 — run the long race, walk the long walk, endure the long trial, continue in well-doing, be patient in faith, ever looking to Christ, not forsaking the Gospel or the fellowship of believers to serve myself...³], ye might receive the promise. **37** For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. **38** Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. **39** But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:32-39).

Note well: Faith in Christ has a reward! That reward is the reward of God’s grace, not of our works, for the very nature and definition of faith is looking to Christ who has finished the work of our salvation and entered into our reward by all that He did. Faith sees what God sees, that in Christ we are now holy (Heb. 13:12) and righteous (2 Cor. 5:21), complete (Col. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 1:30) and have all things (1 Cor. 3:21-23; Eph. 1:1-23), even heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17, 32; Rev. 3:21). Faith overcomes the world (1 John 5:4-5), so that the one believing Christ shall sit with Him in His throne! What greater

² “This reward is the recompense of God's own grace: and it is a very great one; it is the fruit of great love and grace; yea, it is no other than God himself, who is the exceeding great reward of his people; it is Christ and his glory, and the riches of it; it is a reward exceeding, and beyond all deserts of men, and beyond all thought and expression” (Gill). For more on this “confidence, see document, “cast not away your confidence, which has great recompense of reward — Hebrews 10v35” in this same folder.

³ **Romans 2:7** To them who by patient continuance in **well doing** seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in **well doing**: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

2 Thessalonians 3:13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in **well doing**.

1 Peter 2:15 For so is the will of God, that with **well doing** ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

1 Peter 3:17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for **well doing**, than for evil doing.

1 Peter 4:19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in **well doing**, as unto a faithful Creator.

reward do you want than to know the Lord Jesus Christ, to hear Him say to you, “My son, thy sins, which were many, are all forgiven thee,” and to be with Him, even in the presence of His glory without fault, and to know His exceeding great joy that He has because He saved me to the uttermost, and in that salvation, gave me this most precious faith by His Spirit of life and truth in me to hang upon Him against all of my sins, against the world, against the kingdom of satan, holding fast to Him and to His redeeming work by His almighty, eternal, unfailing and faithful word, that He is all of my salvation (Psalm 35:3)?!

The different effects of the continuous ministry of the Gospel
Verses 7-8 speak of rain falling on the earth and the result of that rain. The ground that bears fruit is blessed by God. The ground that bears thorns is ready to be cursed. In this scripture, the Gospel of Christ is compared to falling rain. The ground is the heart of man. Believers, like fruitful ground, bring forth fruit to God by the continuous ministry Gospel, as the rain that comes often upon the ground. But when that same continuous ministry bears no fruit in those that hear it, those who hear face the prospect of eternal judgment! What a joy to be continuously hearing the Gospel! But what danger to continuously hear of Christ, yet never know Him or be known by Him?!

But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation

Verse 9 shows that the apostle was convinced that those people to whom he wrote this epistle of Hebrews were truly saved in Christ. “But beloved...” They were loved by him and loved by God. “We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak” (v9). The apostle had seen the things the fruit that comes only by the rain of the Gospel. He had seen the things that accompany salvation in the lives of these believers. Though he warned them of those that depart from Christ and denounce the Gospel, because they did not go further than the covenant of works under the law, yet he comforts these by telling them that he observed God’s grace in their lives, not because he could see their faith, but because he could see the fruits of their love.

God is not unrighteous to forget your work

Verses 10 says that “God is not unrighteous to forget your works and labor of love, which you have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” Jesus said that if you give only a cup of cold water to the least of His disciples, and do it in His name (by faith in Him, with an eye to His glory), that you have done it to Him! As God observes the field on which the rain faithfully comes, God also observes the fruit of His people on whom the Gospel continually comes. Note well: all fruit is the result of God’s grace, the work of His Spirit in us as He directs us to Christ in all of our coming to God, in all

of our worship. When the Spirit of God directs a poor sinner to Christ, that sinner will believe, will cry, will call, and will find Christ to be all, and that sinner will worship God in thankfulness. That faith given by God will also lead the believing sinner to serve Christ by serving His people, especially with an eye to Christ's revelation of our salvation in the Gospel. Serving others for others sake is not the end of love. But serving Christ by serving others with a view to their salvation and building up in the faith of the Gospel is. What greater love did our Lord Jesus have than His love for His Father that moved Him to lay aside His own interests as a man for the will of God, when doing that will in loving submission cost Him all! And what greater love did our Lord have than that love that moved Him to give Himself in life and death to save those who by nature were His enemies, justly condemned and helplessly ruined (**Hosea 13:9**; **Luke 15:1-7**; **23:39-43**; John 8:1-11; Rom. 1:30; 3:19-20; Eph. 2:1-4; **1 Tim. 1:13-15**; Rom. 5:6-10)?

God blesses His own work; we are His work; our fruit is the fruit of His Spirit (Gal. 5:22⁴)

When scripture says here "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have shown toward His name," He is not saying that God pays us back in reward for what we do. We know that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure" (Php. 2:13). We know that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good

⁴ "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23).

works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). And therefore, we are the fruit of His work! But we also bear fruit. This helps understand the mystery of fruit in the life of the believer. Remember, “out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh” (Matt. 12:34). Who plants the seed of the Gospel in our hearts, so that “with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness?” Is it not the work of God’s grace under the ministry of the Gospel of Christ (Acts 18:27; Rom. 10:17)? It most certainly is! Therefore, as faith is “not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8), “not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:9), so much more the fruit of faith. If the seed planted bears fruit, then it is the sower that planted it and God who watered it through His ministers that He sent with His Gospel (1 Cor. 3:6 Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase; “as the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it”), and God who caused it to grow and gave the increase of it! Therefore, all glory for fruit is God’s, for “**what do you have that you have not received?**” (1 Cor. 4:7); “**All things come of Thee**” (1 Chr. 29:14⁵); “**A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven**” (John 3:27). “**From me is thy fruit found**” (Hosea 14:8). As all fruit is God’s, so all glory for it is His. God is no man’s debtor

⁵ “**11** Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all *that* is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. **12** Both riches and honour *come* of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. **13** Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. **14** But who *am* I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things *come* of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. **15** For we *are* strangers before thee, and sojourners, as *were* all our fathers: our days on the earth *are* as a shadow, and *there* is none abiding. **16** O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name *cometh* of thine hand, and *is* all thine own” (1 Chr. 29:11-16).

(Rom. 4:2-5). But as God gives grace out of His own will, so God rewards His own work. We are recipients both of His free and gracious blessings of salvation by His Son and His Spirit, but we are also recipients of that faith that believes Christ (2 Pet. 1:1) and the labor of love that springs from faith. “Faith worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6). We labor, and if our labor is a labor of love, then it is the love of faith in Christ (1 John 4:19). If we believe the love God has for us (1 John 4:16), then that faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, and it is the operation of His Spirit by the blessings of Christ’s grace by His sovereign rights as our reigning King (Eph. 4:7-16; Rom. 15:3; Acts 3:16; Heb. 7:2; Psalm 110:1-4; Acts 26:18; Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1 — sent by Christ with His Gospel as His ambassadors to accomplish His will — Isaiah 55:11; Heb. 6:7-10).

Ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister

Love to Christ’s people is love to Christ. How much we love Christ, that is how much we will love His people. How much we love Christ, that is how much we will love our wife. Love is the fruit of faith. Love is therefore the fruit of grace! But love gives of itself. Love has an eye and makes its goal to humble itself that those who hear Christ’s Gospel might understand and believe Him.

What is the opposite of love? It is pride. It is seeking my own, either my own way or my own things or my own reputation or to

win my own arguments, to be right, to have my way. But love sets aside its own pursuits to make its one pursuit the blessing of Christ's saving work of others, and His glory in His salvation to be seen by others. As Christ gave Himself for the Church, so the one who loves with Gospel love out of faith in God's love to us in Christ (1 John 4:19), that love will give of itself. The apostle Paul put it this way to the Corinthians. "**14** I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. **15** And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2 Cor. 12:14-15). "So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us" (1 Thess. 2:8). "**19** For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? **20** For ye are our glory and joy" (1 Thess. 2:19-20). Paul's greatest joy was to be in Christ's presence with those to whom the Lord Jesus sent him to preach the Gospel.

We desire that everyone of you do show the same diligence

The result of faith in Christ is love for Christ. Since Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, therefore, love for Christ is love for His people that gives ourselves for it. Husbands are thus instructed by God. But all believers are to do all that they do out of faith towards Christ and in love for Him (1 John 3:23).

Love requires diligence. If you want to give your mother or your wife a gift, you will need to diligently plan and diligently work for it. The best things in life are free, because they cost Christ everything: our salvation, eternal inheritance and eternal glory out of our eternal condemnation, ruin and loss! From the depths of ruin untold, to the heights of glory unknown! But as the best things in life were not free to Christ, so the best that we give in life is not free to us. We must labor to give. “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28).

Now, as we, through the Gospel (2 Cor. 3:18), more clearly see Christ in His person and in His work — because His work evidences His personal character — His love, holiness, His will, His word and His work — then we will more ardently love Him. Love is the fruit of faith, and faith is the fruit of grace from which the fruit of love springs. The more we love Christ, the more we make it our life’s mission to lay down our lives for the brethren. “Love seeketh not her own”. “**4** Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, **5** Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; **6** Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; **7** Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. **8** Charity never faileth” (1 Cor. 13:4-9). “Love never faileth”, as “the flower thereof falleth away” (1 Pet. 1:24). Christ’s love is everlasting.

And we will love Him in heaven and love His people everlastingly. In heaven, we will no longer have need of faith. We will walk streets of gold — that is, the fulfillment of God’s promises and blessings to us in Christ, which faith holds (Heb. 11:1) by God’s word and in Christ’s representative life and substitutionary death. Yet in heaven, we will not only love God and Christ and His people, but we will love perfectly!

To the full assurance of hope unto the end

When we love Christ because of His love made known to us in the Gospel of His grace, this love comes from mature faith in Him. We will never love God unless we know His love for us in Christ. And we will never love our wife or brethren unless we know the love God has to us in Christ. Therefore, diligent labor of love is the result of mature faith, and faith in Christ gives assurance of His salvation and love for us. We are assured before God because God made Christ, and not us, the One from whom He required all for us! We therefore know our acceptance by God through faith in Christ. We know assurance, even full assurance, of faith (Heb. 10:22) when our hearts are sprinkled with the blood of Christ’s successful atonement for our eternal justification and salvation and blessing by Him. We rest in His love. This is faith. But faith is seen by love (Gal. 5:6). So that when we truly labor diligently in love, it is because we have full assurance in Christ by faith. Therefore, the apostle wanted the Hebrew believers to go on to perfection, to lay hold on Christ, to leave the works that produced no life and arose out of a desire to

earn blessings from God, to lay hold on eternal blessings by God's grace on the merits of Christ's obedience and blood.

When God made promise to Abraham (v13)

God called Abraham, and he left his father's house from Er of the Chaldees, to go to an inheritance God would show him. That was difficult. His father Terah went with him to Haran. Abraham buried his father there. That was difficult. God promised Abraham a son by Sarah through whom Christ would be born. It would be a birth out of impotence, a life out of death, just as our salvation is life from the dead. Christ was delivered up for our offenses. He died. But He was raised again for our justification. His death put away our sins. His blood is the cleansing of our sins. His obedience in death is our righteousness. God justified Him. And in justifying Him, He justified all in Him. We were therefore given life from the sentence of eternal death — our condemnation under the curse of God's law for our sins and our sin in Adam — in the death and resurrection of Christ. We died with Him. We rose with Him. His life is our life. Therefore, His righteousness and justification are our life. All die because of sin. None die but sinners. And none live but the righteous. We therefore are righteous by the obedience of Christ and we therefore live by His righteousness. So intimately related are we to Christ that what we did became His debt to pay, and what He did became the cleansing of our sin, the fulfillment of our obedience, the reward of His righteousness, even eternal life. **If by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they**

which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:17). **“As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life”** (Rom. 5:18). All in Adam were condemned and die for their sin (transgression) in Adam. All in Christ are justified and live for their (obedience) righteousness in Christ (1 Cor. 15:20-22)! **“As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Rom. 5:21). **“If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness”** (Rom. 8:10). **“I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”** (Gal. 2:20). Thus we have it, that life is the reward of Christ’s righteousness. Christ’s righteousness is our justification. And our life in our spirit and our eternal life is Christ’s life from the dead, Christ in us, Christ our eternal life. This is not limited to our judicial relation to Christ by God’s election, nor is it limited to Christ’s taking us to Himself in the covenant of grace, but by these relations to Him, established by God and God alone, our life, our living, we live by the resurrection and life of Christ! His resurrection is our life from the dead, and His risen and eternal life is our life. He is our life. **“1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things**

which are above, where **Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.** 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For **ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.** 4 When **Christ, who is our life,** shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:1-4). Jesus said, “**Because I live, you shall live also**” (John 14:19). “**At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you**” (John 14:20).

Now, the work of Christ and the salvation He obtained by His obedience and blood, and the reward of everlasting life for His righteousness are God’s gift of grace unto eternal salvation. Now, all of this (propitiation for our sins in the blood of Christ (Rom. 3:25), the cleansing of our sins by His blood (Lev. 16:30; Heb. 1:3; 1 John 1:7), the righteousness of Christ and the eternal life in the soul that God gives as the reward of His righteousness, all of these are freely given to us without any works of our own, but all for Christ’s sake, because of His work! And God gives these to us in the gift of His Spirit, in His gift of Christ by His Spirit living in us. And with this life, Christ gives us faith, the “faith of the Son of God.” Christ’s righteousness, our justification by it, and eternal life from the dead in our soul and in glory with Christ, are the promise of God that He gave to Abraham consists in His promise of Isaac and in His promise that God would bless all nations in Abraham’s Seed. The LORD had said to Abraham, “**In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed**” (Gen. 12:3). And again, “**In Isaac shall thy seed be**

called” (Gen. 21:12). All who believe Christ as Abraham did, are blessed with Abraham, are given the same blessings (Gal. 3:6-7; John 8:56). Those blessings are eternal life, the Spirit of Christ in us, justification by Christ’s righteousness, our eternal election, and all made known to us in the Gospel when by the Spirit of God He gives faith in Christ to us! **“The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed”** (Gal. 3:8). **“So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham”** (Gal. 3:9).

Thus, Abraham and Sarah’s impotence to bear, the deadness of their own bodies to childbearing, and the fact that they did not consider their own bodies because they were dead, but rather, believed God who quickens (gives life to) the dead and calls those things which be not as though they were (Rom. 4:17), and justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5), all therefore, that was true physically of Abraham, was also spiritually true of him and is spiritually true of us to whom God has given this precious faith in Christ (Rom. 4)!

When God made this known at first to Abraham, he left his father’s house. **“The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran”** (Acts 7:2). This began Abraham’s and Sarah’s walk of faith. It was a very difficult thing for Abraham to do, to leave his father’s house. But what proved more difficult was the rest

of his life, especially that period of time until Isaac was born. I say that that time proved more difficult for him and Sarah, because it was during this time that Abraham faced many dangers. And he succumbed to many temptations. He as much on two occasions, out of fear for his own life, put Sarah's life and the life of his own yet-to-be-born son Isaac in perilous danger (Gen. 12:11-20). First with Pharaoh (Gen. 20:15), then again with Abimelech, king of Gerar (Gen. 20:1-2-18). Abraham had instructed Sarah before they left Haran, "This *is* thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He *is* my brother" (Gen. 20:13).

But more than these temptations and dangers, Abraham was tempted to doubt God's promise concerning Isaac and Christ through him, because the time was very long and he was a stranger in the land God promised. So that there was no evidence that God would fulfill His promise except the bare word of God concerning Christ given to Abraham in promise! Abraham and Sarah wandered in the land of Canaan, facing dangers for 25 years. And yet, through all of the temptations in all of that long sojourn, God preserved their faith in His promise to them in Christ through Isaac.

Now, this is precisely what we face in our present lives. At our conversion, we are elated to hear the Gospel, as Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day (John 8:56; 1 Pet. 1). Yet at present, by the will of God, we face many temptations, many dangers

and the way is desolate of evidence, and the time is long since we first believed. The OT Israelites had visible, tangible objects of worship. They even saw a physical land. Their enemies were also physical. But we have no such visible or tangible objects of worship. Nor can we see our inheritance with our physical eyes. We hear by faith in the beginning, and we walk by faith until the end. All dangers, all blessings are yet future. All we have is the word of God concerning Christ. And all we have to hang on that word as our evidence of the truth of God's promise and of God's faithfulness (in comparison to others in the world) is this precious faith (1 Pet. 1:1-9)! And we also, as Abraham (and the Hebrews in ch6, ch2, ch10, ch11, ch12), the "father" of faith (because he was first given these promises and faith in Christ), we, like him, find the way long and are tempted to give up and slip back. We are tempted to not diligently press on in faith. How? The Gospel of Christ, Christ Himself most precious (1 Pet. 2:7). To know Christ in eternal life dims compared to the cares of life and things of the world. Long intervals between blessings of Christ make us think God must not be with us. Persecutions suggest our enemies may overtake us. Temptations and falls in sin shake our confidence in Christ, because we lean on our own strength, and doubt that Christ is truly able to deliver us from every sin and bring us to Himself and present us without spot and blameless in His sight when we know from day to day how truly wretched we are (Rom. 7:24-25)! And we are tempted to even think that we have fallen so as never to return, have committed the unpardonable sin, and that there is no forgiveness

for us in Christ. But! All of these assaults and accusations are intended to disrupt and shake and make weak our view and confidence, that God has spoken of Christ, that Christ is our all, and that our salvation and eternal life are in Him! Therefore, God comes to us and exhorts us to continue, to abide in Christ, to lay aside every weight, to run with patience the race set before us, and to do all this with diligence, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2; Php. 1:6; 2:12-13; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; Heb. 13:20-21).