

Sermon Series: "Lasting Faith" — Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN—4/14/2002

Title: "Faith's Source"

Text: Romans 10: 8-17

Intro.: *Ills.: Where do babies come from?*

Theme: You can get saving faith from only one source---that is through God's Word. So if you know where it comes from and what sustains it, what is keeping you from accessing God's free and saving gift?

Where does faith come from? (PRINT AND READ VERSES 8-13)

?? It's a God thing

1. You and I no more chose to be in the faith then we chose to be born

?? **Ills.: Making Faith to Hard**

?? *"For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God." 1 Peter 1:23*

2. Holy Spirit placed God's authoritative Word (8) in your mouth as a faith expression and in your heart as a passion
3. Basics of saving faith---straight from God's own word: Confess Jesus as Lord/Believe in Jesus' Resurrection

?? It's a God thing at work in you and me

4. The **result is** that you believe and God verbally remind yourself of your living faith thru your words so you are saved
5. *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph. 2: 8-10*

How to come to and stay in the saving faith (PRINT AND READ VERSES 14-17)

?? The upside down/backwards approach of God's saving grace through faith

1. Notice that Paul is stating the reverse of what at first glance looks obvious

1. Not mistaking what Paul is saying, *"For out of the words of your mouth comes faith which brings salvation" (13)*

?? Confessing, believing, hearing, preaching, sending (**human-centered perspective**)

?? calling on Lord: believing, hearing, preaching, sending (**God-centered perspective**) (vss. 14,15)

2. The pressure and focus is off me and how I perform but on God and what he is doing to make/keep faith in me

?? **THE URGENCY IS TO BE IN THE WORD AND SHARE THE WORD** so we can "simply" believe

?? **Ills.: Pastor's Prayer**

?? **THE JOY IS THAT GOD GIVES US THIS PRECIOUS TREASURE AND TASK** (vs. 16)

2. Notice that God does not promise that everyone will believe and thus will be saved

1. *"However, they did not all respond to the good news; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our report?'" (vs. 16)*

2. **Ills.: Zone of Silence**

3. God promises universal grace--not universal salvation when his Word goes out

3. *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Matt 7:13-14*

?? So what does this mean? — **GET INTO THE WORD WITH EACH OTHER!**

4. Faith comes from **HEARING**

1. What are you doing to hear God's Word on a daily basis?

2. What are you doing to incorporate family devotion/couple devotions/personal devotions into your daily schedule?

3. What are you doing to build small group, Sun. Family Ed study, monthly/weekly Bible study times into your life?
5. Faith comes from **HEARING THE PROCLAIMED/PREACHED WORD OF CHRIST**
 1. Faith is not a privatized moment but a corporate event — letting others teach you the Word
 - ?? Lone ranger faith is both dangerous and short changes the work of God
 - ?? Corporate listening/sharing of the Word of God assures that we hear the whole counsel of God for us
 2. *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” Col. 3:16*

Making Faith to Hard:

Two longstanding church members were in a boat fishing with a new Christian. Fishing is a great time for conversation and each was proclaiming his fervent faith and devotion to God. As they were discussing their faith, one's hat blew into the water. So he stood up, calmly stepped onto the water, walked over to his hat, picked it up off the water, and walked backed to the boat. The new Christian was amazed how this Christian could seemingly walk on water. As the new Christian was pondering this, the other church member's hat blew into the water. He also very calmly stepped onto the water, walked over to his hat, picked it up off the water, and walked backed to the boat. The new Christian was overwhelmed at how spiritual these men must be to have walked on the water as they did. Then the new Christian thought to himself, "Well, if these guys can do it, so can I", and he "helped" his hat blow into the water. He very calmly stepped out of the boat and was inhaling water instantly. As he fought his way to the surface, gasping for breath, the two long-standing church members turned to each other and said, "I think we should have told him about the sand bar on this side of the boat."

Zone of Silence

May 18, 1980 is one of those dates on which many of us can remember where we were and what we were doing. That was the day Mount St. Helens erupted. The explosion, like a nuclear bomb, was heard as far away as 600 miles. It killed 57 people. Can you imagine being right next to it? Standing near, as many did, at the head waters of the Toutle and Cowlitz Rivers which in short order flooded with debris from the mountain's blast? A number of men and women were rescued within a few miles of the mountain, and they testified to the most amazing thing. They did not hear the explosion! Some, a mile or two away, thought that the darkened sky from the immediate blast was cloud cover and rain. How could that be? They were in a "zone of silence." Scientists explain that the incredible upward thrust of the exploding mountain also sent the sound of the event upward into the atmosphere where it bounced back to earth (several times), but in intervals outward and away from ground zero. So although people like old Harry Truman were right next to the disaster (on Spirit Lake's shores in the volcano's shadow), they wouldn't know of the eruption unless they were looking at the mountain at that moment. This reminds me of when Jesus quoted the prophet Isaiah: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand" (Matthew 13:13). It was possible to stand right in front of Jesus and yet not hear his words. Likewise today it is possible not to hear the gospel message that is being preached far and wide.

Pastor's Prayer

Lord, as a pastor sometimes I feel like I'm in sales and promotion. Help me remember that the idea, at the heart of it all, is not to "get" the word out, but to "let" the Word out.

Romans 10:8-17

But what does it say? "*The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart*"-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ⁹that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; ¹⁰for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹For the Scripture says, "*Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.*" ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; ¹³for "*Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.*" ¹⁴How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "*How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!*" ¹⁶However, they did not all respond to the good news; for Isaiah says, "*Lord, who has believed our report?*" ¹⁷So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. [NASB]