

There is a sad shortage of faith in our world because there is a sad shortage of knowledge of the word of God. Romans 10:7, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Surely this is significant because without faith, God cannot be pleased (Heb 11:6).

1. The Word of God must be heard. How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard (Rom 10:14; Prov 29:18). The Word of God produces faith in the matter of salvation (1 Cor 1:17-18). Hearing the word of God supplies us everything we need (2 Tim 3:16-17). Hearing God's word helps a person to be approved to God (2 Tim 2:15). Hearing God's word produces spiritual nobility (Ac 17:11). So we begin with the word of God and we end up with faith.

How does one get from the written word of God all the way to real faith? **Hearing is the way by which faith comes to men** Rom 10:17).

**1. Not by Genetics or hereditary descent.**

One is not a Christian because his parents are. Those who are born again into Christ were born not of blood (Jn 1:13).

2. Faith comes by hearing; **not by feeling** or emotions. Our hope is built on the blood of Christ via the Gospel message, not our own warm and fuzzies.

3. Some suppose that faith comes **by dreams, visions, or voices** in their heads. But things seen nor things imagined can save.

4. The text does not say that **faith comes through the eloquence, earnestness, or any other good quality of the preacher.** The word of God is the substance of faith-creating preaching; it is by the hearing of God's word and not the speakers abilities.

5. Faith **does not come by hearing anything other than the word of God.** Only the hearing of revealed saving faith can convert the soul. We preach the word; but we are not to add to it, take from or conceive that we can improve it. My thoughts are nothing; God's thoughts are everything. The truth of God cannot allow

any embellishments or tricks of oration.

Now, positively: "Faith cometh by hearing" but not any old kind of hearing will do. We can exclude the type of hearing done before the stoning of Stephen (Ac 7:54). We can exclude the hearing of many Pharisees (Jn 12:37-40). We can exclude the hearing of many who find it too difficult (Jn 6:66).

While faith comes from hearing; not all hearing of the word of God produces faith! What kinds of hearing produces faith?

1. Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God in **hearers that want salvation.** If a man is willing, he shall know (Jn 7:17). Often, we don't understand the Bible because we don't want to! Many cannot come to salvation because they do not want it! The hearer whose study produces faith is the one who longs to be saved. How many really personally ask the question, "What must I do to be saved?" (Ac 16:30).

2. The **hearer who is convinced that he is lost.** This hearer says, "The gospel is sent to those who are lost, guilty, and without God." And I am one of those! We have tried and failed to convert people while trying to keep them content, even in their sins! That does not work. Peter indicted his audience as the killers of Jesus (Ac 2:36). Was every one of those three thousand at the cross? No, But all of them were guilty of being sinners? Therefore, they were the reason Jesus was on the cross! The Gospel of Christ is not comforting to the guilty sinner! It is only comforting to the forgiven sinner! Their reaction was that they were pierced in the heart and desired forgiveness (Acts 2:37). The desire for salvation comes from the conviction of sin! Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the word of God when the hearer is convinced of his own sin.

3. Again, similarly, **faith comes through hearing of the condescending pity and the melting love of Jesus.** The love of God leads men to repentance (Rom 2:4).

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Jesus died for the ungodly (Rom 5:6). The love of Jesus has the appeal in it to win souls.

4. Sometimes, faith has come **from hearing of its authority**. We may believe because the facts look like truth. Or we may accept what is said because of the person who tells it. I may accept the gospel because I accept it as the testimony of God. Those of Thessalonica heard the message and accepted it for what it really is... the word of God (1 Thess 2:13). The going, preaching, baptizing, and teaching of the "Great Commission" is based on the "all authority" of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18-20). Sometimes people become hearers ... and then gain faith to be obedient from hearing the proper concept of His "all authority."

5. Again, faith comes by hearing in another way because they are **willing to have the gospel explained** (Ac 8:30-31). Some need an explanation of "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved" (Mk 16:16). Jesus said that men would be drawn to him by the cross (Jn 12:32). "The cross" is where faith begins. Explaining the plan of salvation in terms of the cross produces the obedience to the faith (Rom 16:25-27).

Consider first the facts of the gospel; specifically, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Rom 6:3-5). Note that baptism is into His death! (Rom 6:3). We have been buried with Him through baptism (Rom 6:4); and we are also raised (from baptism) in the likeness of His resurrection (Rom 6:4-5). Baptism in order to free from sin is obedience to that form of teaching -the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Rom 6:17-18). False teachers explain away faith and baptism; the one who comes to faith and to be baptized is one who has had baptism explained in view of the cross.

6. **The one who comes to take the message as personal and pointed** is the hearer who comes to faith. The Samaritan Woman at the well in John 4, after she was confronted with her marriages said "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" The revealing of the state of her life woke her up to who Jesus was. The Word of God pierces to the dividing of soul and spirit, and lays bare the secrets of the

soul. The word of God is the mirror of the soul. The soul exposed motivates obedient faith. Those on the day of Pentecost were pierced to the heart (Ac 2:37). Then they said "what shall we do?" The Gospel preached (Peter's sermon) and their obedience (repentance and baptism) involved taking of the message as personal and pointed.

Consider **the role hearing played in the cases of conversion**.

1. On the day of Pentecost, the people listened and heard and were convicted (Acts 2:22, 37).

2. Others of Jerusalem who heard the message believed (Acts 4:1-4), Others from Jerusalem at the gate called Beautiful.

3. Those of Samaria gave attention to the message spoken and they believed Philip and were baptized (Acts 8:5,6,12).

4. Cornelius heard the words commanded of God and was baptized (Acts 10:32-33,48).

For all these cases of conversion, it was necessary to hear in order to believe (Rom 10:17). Have you heard? Do you believe? Have you obeyed the gospel?