

# Session Six – Trusting God

## A Life Of Faith

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### Warm Up Quiz

How many books are in the bible?

How many are in the Old Testament?

How many are in the New Testament?

Martin Luther (1483-1546) described John 3:16 as the whole bible in miniature. What do you think?

Why do we need the rest of the bible if that verse says it all?

### Let's talk

What does *faith* mean? What are some synonyms for faith?

## Introduction

One of the most crystal clear moments in the NT is when Paul writes these words:

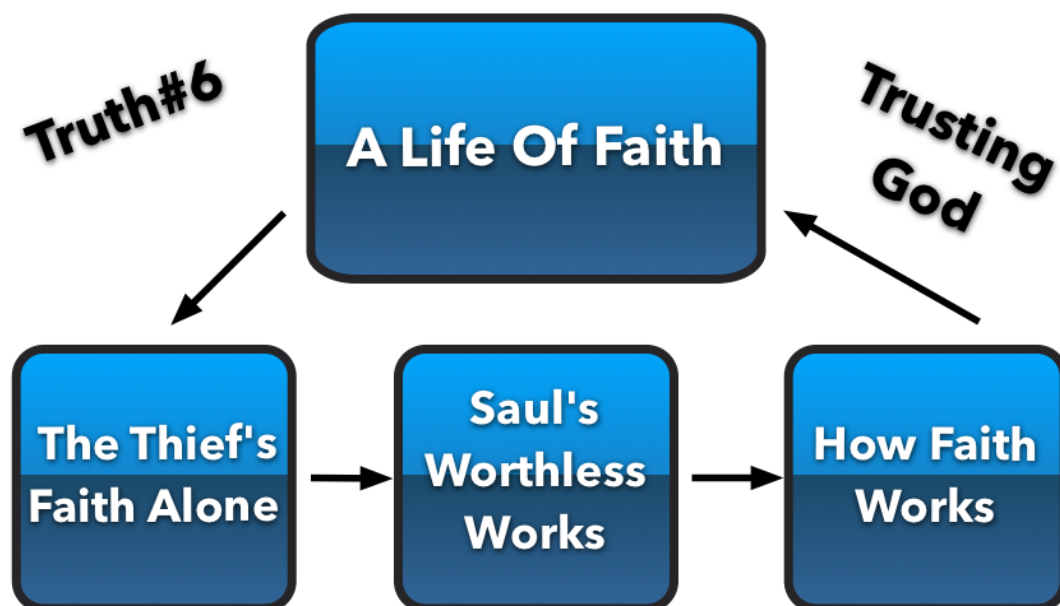
*"For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

*Ephesians 2:8-10*

What is the message of these verses?

Does grace simply mean a free ride? Or should we expect something to come of it? Are *good works* what comes after faith? Wouldn't that undo grace? How are we to walk by faith? What does that look like? **How do you do faith?**

## Overview Of This Lesson



Let's start with the relationship between faith and works - between trust and obedience.

## The Thief's Faith Alone

### Read Luke 23:32-43

The thief died with the assurance that he would be accepted in heaven. Not because of what he had done but because he had turned to Jesus and called him LORD.

He was saved by grace through faith and not by works.

*If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

*Romans 10:9*

**How does this formula in Romans match the thief's confession?**

What if, after professing Jesus as LORD he had been taken down off the cross and given opportunity to live out his faith. What would that have looked like? Would he have to prove that he was saved? What would have changed in his life? Could he be disqualified from salvation by returning to criminal ways? Would he have to go on living a good life in order to stay saved?

## Saul's Worthless Works

The thief illustrates for us that even death row criminals can be saved by grace. A man known as Paul illustrates that good people are on par with the thief. It's not just that faith will save us when we have no good life to offer but that we cannot be saved by works at all!

### Read Philippians 3:4b-6

How did Paul (who became Saul) describe his life before?

*Saul was once a hater of Christians until he was dramatically confronted with the truth that Jesus is LORD. You can read about how that happened in Acts 9.*

### Read Philippians 3:7-11

What does he think of his old life now?

Paul considered all that energy and effort that he had spent before as a complete waste. It was garbage - see in verse 8 - the word 'garbage' there could be replaced with 'dung' - so bad that you just don't want to step in it. The things that he once smothered his life in, he now considers refuse.

What does he consider important or valuable now? (see verse 10)

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Salvation is not about the get out of jail free card. It is about meeting a person. A get out of jail free card is just a token that sits in front of you as you play a game. You only need to pull it out when the time comes to use it. It's an object. A thing.

But meeting a person is the beginning of a relationship.

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Paul tells us what is worth spending the rest of our life doing and it is getting to know Christ more and more - to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...

## How Faith Works

What should we expect as a result of being saved?

### Read Colossians 3:1-4

Discuss what the message of these verses is.

Christ has a new life for us that our old selves must give way to.

We are to shed our old selves like an old lizard skin.

### Read Colossians 3:5-10

What is the message of these verses?

Whatever we do, whether the things we say or the things we do, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Again, the list given to us here is not a checklist as if we can work on all of these with all of our hearts and that will make us Christian. No, those who have been won over by Christ will spend eternity thinking on him - loving what he loves and matching their character with his.

## Picture It!

## Describe It!

*Faith is about where we place our trust and confidence.*

*I have been saved in order to live a life of trusting my LORD and Saviour.*

## Apply It!

Complete these sentences based on the studies so far and reflect on each of them.

I am saved by grace through \_\_\_\_\_.

Prayer is \_\_\_\_\_speaking.

I choose to put my \_\_\_\_\_in Christ and his kingdom instead of myself and this world.

My \_\_\_\_\_is in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

My \_\_\_\_\_is informed and strengthened by the word of God – the bible.

I am saved through \_\_\_\_\_for a life of \_\_\_\_\_fulness.

## Listen To A Sermon



James 2:14-26 has been a dividing passage on the topic of faith and works. This sermon addresses the issue by treating faith and works as one and the same thing.

## Read Something Great

A follow-up book on his small classic, *'The Pursuit of Holiness'*, Jerry Bridges offers, perhaps, a better-rounded approach in his book *'The Discipline of Grace.'* Not as widely read as the former, this book helps to see how the Christian life is not about being good, but about responding to grace. This chapter is titled, *'We Died To Sin.'*

