

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.*

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

TUC #10-1620

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December 22, 2016

## ***The Faith***

In Christian circles, the word *faith* is used to describe believers as people of faith and their leaders as faith leaders. However, there is a much greater faith called *the* faith, which has profound spiritual meaning, especially when we discover its source and its very essence. Before launching into *the* faith, let us briefly consider faith in general as defined in Hebrews 11.1 from two translations: **Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see** (Hebrews 11.1 NLT). **Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see** (Hebrews 11.1 GW).

Faith, hope, and love go hand-in-hand. As Paul wrote: **But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love** (1 Corinthians 13.13). With the consummation of the ages, faith and hope will give way to love that will fill all of God's creation. However, until then, faith and hope are paramount to us. Simply, faith is an expectation, not a dream, a wish, or a maybe, but a knowing that what the Spirit of God has revealed to us through God's *rhema* will actually happen. See <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/tuc/tuc654.pdf>. Faith is based on fact, not, as some would have us believe, fiction, imagination, superstition, fear, doubt, or any such thing. Faith always remains in the realm of what we cannot see. Although we do not see things expected, we have full assurance of their existence and expectation of these things one day manifesting.

Now, an article was posted in 2009 titled *The Faith* to make the point that, in scripture, there is another dimension to faith. Preceded by the definite article *the*, the expression *the* faith is used, depending on the translation, nearly 50 times. *The* faith is more than the basic doctrines held by believers; rather, it has everything to do with entering the Kingdom of Christ. See <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art20.pdf>.

Since writing this article, I have come to see another dimension of *the* faith; one that does not dispute what was written seven years ago, but actually is foundational to understanding all aspects of faith. *The* faith speaks of the very faith of Jesus Himself, a faith that He gives to all so that they may believe and enter His Kingdom. In other words, Jesus is the source of faith when it is called *the* faith. It is His faith that we receive, and our whole life in Christ commences and continues on this ground alone. Once we are given His faith, we believe and His faith becomes our faith. To make the point, let us consider some scripture from various translations. Translations with similar but not always exact renderings are included in brackets to reveal there is agreement on this point among some of the translators.

**Turning [our] eyes away from other things and fixing them (looking away) into Jesus, the Inaugurator (First Leader; Prime Author) and Perfecter (Finisher; the Bringer to maturity and fruition) of the faith, Who, in place of (over against) the joy continuously lying before Him, remained under a cross -- despising shame (disgrace) -- and has sat down, remaining in the right (hand or part) of God's throne.** (Hebrews 12.2 JM-NT)

Jesus is where faith begins and is perfected in the believer. He is the Author or Inaugurator of faith, which means it starts with Him. Jesus required faith when He came to earth to face the cross. His faith looked beyond the disgrace that He would endure to the joy that was on the other side. Though He knew He would face the agony of death, He also knew or had the faith that His Father would raise Him from among the dead. And, now that He is seated at the right hand of God, He gives this same faith as a free gift so that those called and chosen may believe.

**By that favor [by grace], indeed, you have been saved through the faith; and this not from you; it is God's gift [a gift of God] ...** (Ephesians 2.8 Diaglott [NASB])

Most translations, not all, leave out the article *the* and simply state *through faith*. It seems that many, if not most, commentators do not see *the* faith as part of the gift of God. They see grace alone as the free gift and faith as the channel through which grace flows. In other words, man must still muster up faith on his own in order to believe. Under the New Covenant, which solely relies on God and not on man, this cannot be correct. Grace through *the* faith of Christ is the full gift. It is His grace and His faith that saves. Any other way and man has to do something, that is, a work, to be saved and consequently man has a boast in himself. This is not the gospel. Fortunately, there are other verses that support that His faith saves.

Consider Paul's testimony. Take note that, for Paul's conversion, *the* faith came from Christ: **He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus [which is in Christ Jesus]** (1 Timothy 1.14 NLT [ASV, BBE, Darby, DRB, JUB, KJV, Murdock, NASB, Webster, WNT]). *The* faith was in Christ. By the way, this is not the same thing as saying: "I have faith *in* Christ." It is faith which is in Christ, meaning Jesus is the source of faith called *the* faith.

Paul also testified that God's righteousness came to him through *the* faith of Christ: **And may be found in Him, not having my righteousness, which is of law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God for faith** (Philippians 3.9 CLV [KJV, LITV, Webster]). Paul did not say faith in Christ.

Again, Paul exhorted the Corinthians to test themselves to see if they were in *the* faith, not that they had faith. Notice how Paul connected this to *Christ in you*. He comes into believers with His faith. **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?** (2 Corinthians 13.5 NASB [ASV, Diaglott, KJV, Numeric, YLT]).

Consider the testimony of Peter and John in defense of the healing that took place: **And, by faith in his name, his name has made this man strong whom ye behold and know; and the faith which is by him [the faith which He has given; the faith through Him] has given him this complete soundness in the presence of you all** (Acts 3.16 Darby [WNT, ASV, BBE, CLV, Darby, Diaglott, DRB, JUB, KJV, LEB, NASB, YLT]). Notice how Peter linked *by faith* to *the faith* that was given to him, that is, came through Christ.

Then, consider the angel's proclamation to John: **Here is the patience of the saints: those keeping the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus [the faith belonging to Jesus – JM-NT]** (Revelation 14:12 Numeric [ASV, BBE, CLV, Darby, Diaglott, KJV, LITV, Murdock, Webster, YLT]). The saints are to hold *the* faith of Jesus. Other translations use the expression *their faith in Jesus*, a possible rendering, but perhaps simply interpretative bias.

Finally, back to Paul: **According to a plan of the ages which he made in the anointed Jesus our Lord,— In whom we have our freedom of speech and introduction with assurance, through the faith of him [His faith]** (Ephesians 3.11-12 Rotherham [Darby, Diaglott, DRB, LITV, KJV, Murdock, Webster, YLT]). Again, it is not faith *in*, although this is true, but *the* faith of Him, Christ's faith that gives us boldness (freedom) and confidence (assurance) to see our part in the plan of the ages made in the Anointed Jesus.

For believers and eventually all of mankind and creation, everything, without exception, comes from, through, and to the Anointed Lord Jesus, the Creator of all things. Life and salvation are totally dependent on Him alone, and through Him all things will return to God the Father. **For from Him [God] and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ages. Amen!** (Romans 11.36). Our boast, even the boast of faith, is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Consequently, Jesus is the very source of *the* faith that is now ours. Just as there is only one Lord, there is only one faith – the faith of Christ (Ephesians 4.5). Now, the life we live, we **live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loves us (Galatians 2.20 KJV [BBE, Darby, DRB, JUB, Webster]).

But there is possibly a much greater meaning to *the* faith, for the *Mitchell New Testament* offers an alternate rendering: **In and by that [faith] which is the Son of God. Jesus is the faith**, which leads us back to Hebrews 12.2 where He is the Author and Perfecter of the faith. We begin with His faith, we live by His faith, and we reach the goal for the prize with His faith, which is Jesus. The faith is a Person, not a set of ideas or hopes. Jesus is the Faith and the Expectation! For our part, we are to continue in *the* faith, that is, Jesus, not looking back but looking to Him and the joy that is now His at the right hand of the throne of God. *The* faith says that we will soon enter into the Kingdom of Christ, into His Anointing and Presence, fully transfigured into His image. This is *the* faith!