

# LESSON ESSENTIALS

## INTRODUCTION TO EVANGELISM

### LESSON 10: Nature of Saving Faith

Faith comes from hearing the Word and believing in it. But Christina preaching can have errors that can confuse people. Read on to gain clarity on the concept of saving faith and to better understand how your Gospel message can be used by God to save souls.

Saving faith is a decision of the intellect, emotions and will. Find out how you can effectively communicate the Gospel in a manner that appeals to all three of these.

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People must know that the focus of our saving faith is the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:16 says 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.' In fact, the Lord Jesus invited people to come to Him, and to follow, trust and obey Him.

What was so remarkable about the faith of the woman with the bleeding problem who was instantly healed when she touched the robe of Jesus (Mark 5:25-34)? Or when the centurion asked Jesus simply to command his dying servant's healing rather than to touch him, and Jesus commended him (Matthew 8:5-13)? When Jesus walked the earth, he encountered many types of people. Some people believed that He was God and had the power to do the impossible. Others questioned the source of his power and felt threatened by Him. Still others weren't sure if He was God, but were interested in hearing more. Today, these sorts of people still exist, and we need to build up those who have faith and to encourage those who are wondering to build their faith in Jesus.

The Bible repeatedly says that we are saved through faith. Hence, asking an unbelieving friend to repeat a formulaic sinner's prayer is not going to do much good. Repeating words is different from having genuine faith. When we are leading a person to Christ, we need to realise that a person's intellect, will and emotion are all important in saving faith. Faith is in response to hearing the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, 'So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.' This verse showed that faith is founded on God's Word. In believing it is true, we commit to the Lord and submit to Him.

The apostle Paul proclaimed the testimony of God because it was the basis of saving faith (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). It is very clear that if our faith is not based on God's Word, then our faith has a weak foundation. If we are unable to believe the God created the world, that man sinned against God, that God provided His Son who became be the Saviour of the world , and how we can receive the free gift of salvation, we can't claim to be Christians.

People must know that the focus of our saving faith is the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:16 says 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.' In fact, the Lord Jesus invited people to come to Him, and to follow, trust and obey Him. As an evangelist, it is important for you to explain to your listeners that Jesus is the only way to God the Father, and that He is Lord (John 14:6, 10:9 and 20:31). Receiving Christ is not simply saying a prayer, but believing who He is – our Creator and sovereign Lord of the universe. Truly believing this leads to a changed life of love and obedience in response to what God has done and who He is.

Christianity isn't just about believing in Christ, but also being in a relationship with Him. People of other worldviews might find this confusing, which is why it is important to explain them this truth. John 15:15 teaches us that Jesus calls us His friends. This is an important aspect of the Gospel message.

Every evangelist should make a conscious effort to present the complete salvation message, instead of in pieces or avoiding certain aspects. Using Jesus as our focus, we should aim to explain His divinity as well as his life, death, and resurrection, just like the Gospel message in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. We should learn from the Apostle Paul who preached Christ fully wherever he went (Romans 15:19-20). Unless we communicate the complete truth of the Gospel, people will not be able to make a well-informed decision.

Having said that, our faith isn't just an intellectual one. Putting faith in Jesus is also an emotional act. We can tell our listeners how God who loves us so much that He gave his Son to die for us. The fact that we are so valuable to God and that He truly loves us should touch us deeply. Jesus gave his very life so that we could have a relationship with God! We need to also realize that He cares about us. Luke 12:7 tells us that God cares for us so much He even knows the number of hairs on our head! He longs for us to know Him closely as well. In our hearts, we must desire to respond to his love by loving him in return. In this, we need to teach our friends that faith is not just an intellectual consent, nor is it merely a choice to follow Him, but it is also a response of our heart for what He has done for us.

Obedience to Christ is an outcome of our faith; in other words, believing leads to obedience. While we might comprehend God's love throughout intellect and experience his love through emotions, faith enables us to experience God's love too. This experience leads us to make a decision for Christ. The fear of hell isn't enough to bring a person to Christ. But when we understand sin and feel God's love, we need to repent and accept God's salvation. Salvation is an act of obedience since God calls us to obey the gospel or face judgement if we reject it (2 Thessalonians 1:8 and 1 Peter 4:17). We can say that following God is an act of will, yielding to the God and submitting one's will to Him.

When we are explaining the Gospel to our listeners, we need to be very careful not to mislead people by using favourite expressions that may not explain salvation well. For example, Christians often urge unbelievers to ask Jesus to come into their hearts and are

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thrilled when the recipients make such a prayer. But, it is important to remember that believing is more than asking. Evangelists also sometimes explain the message of faith as receiving Christ (John 8:47), but we need to realise that this simplistic invitation does not deal with the whole teaching of salvation and faith from God's Word. The very important part of surrendering ourselves and obeying God needs to be included in both of these explanations, to help our listeners fully understand salvation. When encouraging them to pray, a person should use their own words to come before God in faith and repent.

As we preach the Gospel message, let's wait on God to sow the seed of faith in the receivers' hearts, for them to respond to Him and join with us in serving Him in love.

## IN REVIEW

- The Bible repeatedly says that we are saved through faith – a process that involves the intellect, emotion and will.
- The focus of our faith is Jesus Christ – His life, death and resurrection. The foundation of our faith needs to be the Word of God.
- The Gospel message should be preached in totality and not avoiding parts.
- Saving faith includes confessing that Jesus is Lord and God. It requires repentance, seeking forgiveness, and a commitment to follow the Lord.

## HAVE YOUR SAY

- What are some of the common phrases and jargon that you need to avoid while sharing your faith with someone?
- How can you teach the Gospel in your message, while ensuring that you don't sound threatening or accusatory?
- How can you effectively satisfy a receiver's intellect, emotions and will while preaching about salvation?

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