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## Christian Foundations

By Stuart Pattico

These are the notes that accompany a teaching I gave on Christian Foundations. It is recommended that you also listen to the free audio recording if you are able. You can do this by clicking on the following link, and selecting 'Christian Foundations':

<http://www.stuartpattico.com/audiomessages.htm>

Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptures are taken from the NKJV of the Holy Bible.

In this teaching, we will be looking at the foundational truths we are to build our Christian lives upon.

As a newborn baby desires milk, we are to desire the milk of God's word.

<sup>2</sup> as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby  
(1 Peter 2:2)

What is the milk of God's word?

<sup>12</sup>In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!  
(Hebrews 5:12 NIV)

The milk of God's word is also called "the elementary truths of God's word" in this verse. In chapter 6 verse 1 it is also called "the foundation".

<sup>1</sup>Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death,<sup>[a]</sup> and of faith in God, <sup>2</sup>instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup>And God permitting, we will do so.  
(Hebrews 6:1-3 NIV)

The nutrients of the milk of the word are listed in Hebrews 6:1-3 as follows:

- Repentance
- Faith in God
- Baptisms
- Laying on of hands
- Resurrection of the dead
- Eternal judgement

Let's briefly look at each, one by one.

## **REPENTANCE**

“not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death”  
(Hebrews 6:1 NIV)

<sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”  
(Matthew 4:17)

The word translated repent means “to change one’s mind” (Thayer’s Greek Definitions).

Example: imagine you are going to drive to work, but then change your mind and decide to walk instead. The act of changing your mind is called repentance. Repentance then, is a change of mind that result in a change of action.

When we came to Jesus, we had to decide to change direction. We decided to no longer live like the world lives, but to instead serve God. This is repentance.

However, even after we are saved, repentance is still necessary if we find ourselves backsliding or falling into sin. Jesus said to the church,

<sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.  
(Revelation 2:5)

We must never become complacent. If we find ourselves slipping, or lacking passion, we must repent.

## **FAITH IN GOD**

... and of faith in God  
(Hebrews 6:1 NIV)

### **What is faith?**

<sup>1</sup> Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.  
(Hebrews 11:1)

The Greek word translated “substance” conveys the idea of a substructure being put underneath an object, so that the object is firmly and confidently set in place (see Thayer’s Greek Definitions). Faith then, is the spiritual substance that God places in our spirits, which enables us to be confident about what we hope for.

Faith is also described as “the evidence of things not seen”. “Evidence” suggests proof. You can tell me a story, but I might not believe it is true until you show me some physical evidence. When I see the physical evidence, I will then be convinced that what you told me is true. Physical evidence is needed because we are dealing with a visible world. However, there is also a spiritual invisible world, and God is a Spirit. In order to relate to this invisible world we need to do so by the spiritual evidence/knowledge that God gives our spirits. Faith is spiritual evidence/knowledge that God imparts to our spirits, so that our spirits are absolutely convinced that what we cannot see exists.

This is not something that occurs in the realm of theory. It is something that is a real experience in our spirits.

So then, faith is a real spiritual substance - a knowing - imparted to the human spirit that causes our spirit to be firmly confident in what we hope for, and spiritual evidence/knowledge that causes us to be absolutely convinced that what we cannot see exists.

### **How do we get this faith?**

So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.  
(Romans 10:17)

Although this verse is found in the wider context of gospel preaching, its principle is nevertheless true: we get faith when we hear what God speaks to us.

The Greek noun translated “word” in this verse is “rhema” which denotes a spoken word (Thayer’s Greek Definitions).

Faith is contained in the words that God speaks. When we hear His words, faith is imparted to our spirits.

For example, as I am reading about God’s faithfulness in the Bible, my spirit may all of a sudden be assured that God is going to get me through whatever difficulty I am presently facing. Faith has come to me by hearing what God is speaking to me. As Smith Wigglesworth said, the Word of God is faith’s food.

Also, God may speak personally to me about taking a specific course of action. Because God has spoken to me, I will now have confidence to do it, knowing that God will be with me because He Himself has given me the command. Again, faith (confidence) has come to me because I have heard what God is speaking to me.

## **Types of Faith**

There are at least six kinds of faith:

### **Saving faith**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.  
(Ephesians 2:8-9)

### **Every day faith**

... the just shall live by faith  
(Romans 1:17)

On a daily basis we are to live a life of trusting God. The Greek translated “by” is “ek” which means “out of” (Thayer’s Greek Definitions). We are to live out of what God has spoken to us. This includes obeying all that God has and is speaking to us by His Word and by His Spirit.

### **Prayer faith**

<sup>6</sup> But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.  
(Hebrews 11:6)

Faith not only causes us to believe in the existence of God, but also causes us to believe that He will hear and respond to us as we seek Him diligently.

### **Ministry faith**

<sup>3</sup> For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.  
(Romans 12:3)

Each of us has at least one ministry gift from God. With that gift comes a measure of faith, which acts as the spiritual backbone for us to operate in that gift.

### **Prophetic faith**

<sup>6</sup> Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith  
(Romans 12:6)

When we move in the gift of prophecy, the Spirit will give our hearts a certain awareness in our spirit (faith) that we are hearing from God, and that God is speaking through us. We should not prophesy beyond this faith. When the faith to prophesy lifts, we should stop.

### **God's faith**

<sup>22</sup> So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. <sup>23</sup> For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.  
(Mark 11:22-23)

The original Greek for "Have faith in God" is "have the faith of God".

Furthermore, in the original Greek, this is not a command; it is an offer. It is like you coming into my home and me saying, "have a seat". I am offering you a seat. Even so, in this verse, Jesus is offering us the faith of God. The faith of God is spontaneously given to us by the Spirit as occasion demands:

<sup>8</sup> for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8-9)

When the Spirit puts God's faith into our hearts, we can do with it whatever God wants done, even if that is moving a literal mountain!

### **BAPTISMS**

<sup>2</sup>instruction about baptisms  
(Hebrews 6:2 NIV)

God requires all who would follow Jesus to be baptised in water

<sup>15</sup> And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. <sup>16</sup> He who believes and is baptized will be saved  
(Mark 16:15-16)

When we are baptised in water, we bury our old life and come out of the water in newness of life.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.  
(Romans 6:4)

However, notice that Hebrews 6:2 referred to “instruction about baptisms (plural)”. It is not enough just to be baptised in water. We must also be baptised in the Holy Spirit. After His resurrection, Jesus said to His disciples,

<sup>5</sup> for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”  
(Acts 1:5)

It is important to realise that before Jesus said this, the disciples already had the Holy Spirit living in them. Before Jesus said the above, the following event occurred:

<sup>21</sup> So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” <sup>22</sup> And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.  
(John 20:21-22)

That was the disciples’ initial reception of the Spirit, which resulted in them being born again. However, subsequent to this, they were to receive another aspect of the Spirit’s ministry called being baptised in the Holy Spirit. Jesus explains the purpose of the Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 1:8,

<sup>8</sup> But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...  
(Acts 1:8)

The Holy Spirit baptism makes supernatural power available to the believer. All believers have the Holy Spirit living within them:

...Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.  
(Romans 8:9)

However, further to this we must also receive the Spirit-baptism so that we can be filled with the Spirit and be clothed with supernatural power. Let’s see what happened to the disciples when they received the Spirit-baptism:

<sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.  
(Acts 2:4)

Speaking in tongues is the common sign that will occur when someone receives the Spirit-baptism, as shown in the following verses:

<sup>44</sup> While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. <sup>45</sup> And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. <sup>46</sup> For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.  
(Acts 10:44)

the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.  
(Acts 19:6)

“Tongues” just means languages, and it may be an earthly language, or a heavenly one (see 1 Corinthians 13:1). Tongues can be used as a supernatural prayer language, enabling us to pray on another level. As we do so, we also build up ourselves:

<sup>14</sup> For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays...  
(1 Corinthians 14:14)

<sup>4</sup> He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself  
(1 Corinthians 14:4)

In order to receive the Spirit-baptism we just need to ask. Jesus is the One who baptises us in the Spirit. We just need to get into His presence and ask to be filled with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not force us to speak in tongues. But we as open our mouth and speak the syllables that come to us, He will give us the utterance. Notice that Acts 2:4 says that “they” began to speak in tongues. As you are filled, **you** must begin to speak the syllables the Spirit gives you.

### **LAYING ON OF HANDS**

the laying on of hands... (Hebrews 6:2 NIV)

In the Old Testament, the laying on of hands was used to impart authority, blessing, and spiritual graces. We can still do this today as God leads.

In the New Testament, the laying of hands was used for four reasons:

1. To impart the Spirit-baptism.

<sup>17</sup> Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.  
(Acts 8:17)

2. To heal the sick

<sup>17</sup> And these signs will follow those who believe... <sup>18</sup> ...they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.  
(Mark 16:17-18)

3. To impart spiritual gifts

<sup>6</sup> Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.  
(2 Timothy 1:6)

#### 4. To commission and appoint ministers

<sup>2</sup> As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”<sup>3</sup> Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away. (Acts 13:2-3)

Also see Acts 6:1-6.

#### **RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**

the resurrection of the dead (Hebrews 6:2 NIV)

When Jesus returns, all believers will be given a new body. The spirits of dead believers will be reunited with their bodies as the body is resurrected.

<sup>42</sup> So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.<sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.<sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

The above verse describes our new body as:

- Incorruptible (we won't die or get sick)
- Glorious (we will be beaming with light)
- Powerful (we will all be fit and strong)
- And Spiritual (we will not be subject to physical limitations)

Our new body will be just like Jesus'

<sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body (Philippians 3:20-21)

Later on, unbelievers will also be resurrected before they are judged. However, they will not have the same glorious body that believers will receive:

<sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books...<sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:12-15)

## ETERNAL JUDGMENT

... and eternal judgment. (Hebrews 6:2 NIV)

There is coming a time when God will judge all flesh by Jesus Christ

<sup>22</sup> For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son (John 5:22)

<sup>42</sup> And He [Jesus] commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead. (Acts 10:42)

As long as we abide in the faith, we do not need to fear condemnation on that day.

<sup>24</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. (John 5:24 KJV)

But we must **remain** in the faith, otherwise we will be cut off.

<sup>22</sup> Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. (Romans 11:22)

We must be very careful of how we conduct ourselves in this lifetime, for we will all have to appear before the judgement seat of Christ.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. <sup>11</sup> Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men... (2 Corinthians 5:10)

We will be rewarded for the good things we have done (but notice the above verses also mention receiving for the bad we have done). There will be various levels of rewards, and some will receive greater rewards than others according to what they have done.

‘Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over **ten** cities.’ (Luke 19:17)

‘You also be over **five** cities.’ (Luke 19:19)

The decisions made on that day will be eternal; they will last forever.