

2020

Believing as an Aspect of Love

Love
believeth

all things

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10.06.2020



Becoming a Blessing to Others

"...and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." (Genesis 12:2b/KJV).

Today I am moving on to the next phrase in 1 Corinthians 13:7: **Love "believeth all things"**. Earlier in the chapter Paul has been pointing out that faith without love was nothing great in God's eyes. Now he is going on to say that believing is an aspect of Christian love.

Early in the book of Genesis we read of Abraham and how God had called him. God had some good plans and intentions for Abraham. God wanted to bless Abraham and to make him a blessing to others.

Abraham only needed to trust God. In his case he was called to leave his home country, his relations and his father's house to go for a land that God would show him. (Cf. Genesis 12:1).

Whenever God is calling men today, he has good plans for them. He wants us to become an uplifting influence to others. Jesus has called his disciples to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Cf. Matthew 5: 13-16).

Some may object and say they know many people who call themselves Christians, but they cannot see how these men and women are a great benefit to the world around them. Well, I am afraid in our Western countries we just are taking for granted too many blessings we enjoy because of the historic Christian influence within our civilisation.

Still as we read the New Testament we get the impression, there must be more to the Christian life than merely occasionally attending a church service and perhaps speaking a prayer every now and then when in trouble. So what has become of God's good intentions for our lives?

When Abraham was called by God he was not told he would become a blessing automatically. Abraham was challenged to trust God. He was to follow God into a land he would be shown.

By our nature we are somewhat unreceptive to God's word to us. We cling to our own ways and we tend to adhere to things that the bible clearly calls sinful. ***"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."*** (Romans 3:23/KJV).

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." (Isaiah 59:1+2).

Yet still there is hope: ***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*** (John 3:16/KJV).

Our sins do separate us from God. Yet Jesus has built a bridge for us. He has even laid down his own life at the cross to open up a new way to experience God's blessings in our lives.

"Lord Jesus, thank you that you have died on the cross for my good. You have carried all my sinful inclinations. You have born my dullness as far as understanding your word is concerned. Lord, I want your forgiveness. I want that new life. I ask you to be my Lord and my God. Please guide me in your ways so that I may experience your blessing, and that I should become a blessing to others too! Amen."

Some Basics concerning the Christian Faith and Christian Love

This is a blog about Christian love. Faith and faithfulness towards God is at the heart of Christian love.

Love “believeth all things”. With regard to God this means Christian love believes God without reserve. Christian love would not believe God only as long as faith seems to be advantageous.

Christian faith begins with accepting what God says about our lives. God says we are sinners and our sins separate us from God. Any violation of one of God’s commandments hinders a trustful relationship between God and me.

Faith knows about a way out provided by God. Jesus has come to bridge this abysmal gap between God and us. Jesus has carried our sins on the cross so that we trusting in him can be forgiven and restored into a loving relationship with God.

This is a free gift of God. Yet everything depends on whether we accept this gift.

Suppose you were in great need and hungry and somebody was inviting you to eat an adequate and healthy dinner. Just imagine you were taking a quick look at the meal but never stretch out your hand to take and eat! The best food would not be of much use to you, if you don’t accept it and take it.

Suppose you had done wrong to some other man. Just imagine this person was stretching out his hand to you and telling you he was prepared to forgive you. Yet I tell you, unless you accept this outstretched hand you still will not be at peace with this individual.

God is offering you his peace today. How will you react on that?

Why not accept God’s invitation? Why not yield to Him just now?

You can simply pray to God. You can do so in your own words. Just tell him about your sin and sinfulness. Thank him for his readiness to forgive you. Decide to partner with God and to henceforth live with him!

You can also place every aspect of your life before him. Think of your finances and your ambitions. Think of your family. Think of your hobbies and of your private goals. Invite him to be the Lord of your life and to guide you and teach you how to be a Christian with all your heart.

Please note: There are certain fundamentals to Christian faith and to Christian love without which you neither will experience God’s love nor his blessing in your life.

Commit Your Way to the Lord

“Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.” (Psalm 37:5+6/NIV).

Again I am dealing with the words: **Love “believeth all things”**. (1 Corinthians 13:7b/KJV). The Greek word translated “believeth” can mean “to have faith”. It also can take the meaning “to entrust”. We are called to entrust our lives to Jesus Christ.

The word also could be translated “to commit”. In the above quote from Psalm 37 we are invited to commit our ways to God.

In the following I am sharing the words of a song to be prayed. Those words were written by Frances Ridley Havergal (1837-1839). You are invited to read and to pray the following words:

“Take my life, and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee; take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of Thy love; take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King; take my lips and let them be filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold; take my intellect, and use every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine; it shall be no longer mine; take my heart, it is Thine own; it shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord I pour at Thy feet its treasure store: take myself and I will be ever, only, all for Thee.” Amen.

“Words of Eternal Life”

“From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. ‘You do not want to leave too, do you?’ Jesus asked the twelve.” (John 6, 66+67/NIV)

Love “believeth all things”. Here we read of people who had been following Jesus in order to hear all his teaching and to learn from him. Yet at one stage many of them disliked what he said:

“On hearing it, many of his disciples said, ‘This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?’” (Verse 60/NIV).

In the beginning of the chapter we read of Jesus feeding the five thousand. People were marvelling at this sign. They came to think that Jesus was the prophet that one day would be sent by God.

Yet Jesus went away from them. He understood they intended to force him to become their king. They wanted to make him a king according to their own understanding of the Holy Writings. They wanted to make him a king after their own preferences and liking. (Cf. John 6:1-15).

On the next day they found him on the other side of the lake near Capernaum. Jesus told them they had come because they had been satisfied with earthly food. Yet there were more important things than eating and drinking.

They would need a different kind of food that would strengthen them for eternity. He began to point them to the fact that he was going to lay down his own life for them.

Similarly as we know it from celebrating the Eucharist Jesus told them they would need to eat his flesh and to drink his blood. Only in utter dependence on his sacrificial and vicarious death they – and we – would attain unto the kind of life which is acceptable to God.

You may think you are not that bad. You may even rely on practices of the Christian religion. Yet what really counts is whether you receive Jesus and the forgiveness he offers to you.

You may have enjoyed some church services. Perhaps you have liked listening to some lively preaching. You could also be a fan of modern Christian music.

Some even might get excited about some miracles as the Jews had been impressed by being fed from five loaves and two fishes. Yet all these outward experiences do not make you acceptable to God.

We need to accept Jesus himself into our lives. He in His divinity and holiness wants to become your Lord and saviour. We need to receive the new life He offers to us. We must always remember how much we need him. That is where real faith begins!

Are you willing to believe all things that Jesus intends to teach you? Are you eager to learn from Him?

“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Verses 68+69/KJV).

Dangers, Faith and Good Friday

“And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?”
(Matthew 8:26a/KJV).

The disciples were in a boat together with Jesus on the Sea of Galilee. Due to sudden, strong winds there were dangerous waves on that lake.

The disciples were fortunate to have Jesus with them in that boat. They did the right thing in waking him up and asking him for help.

Those who do remember these bible stories will know that Jesus then did rebuke the wind and the waves. We read: ***“and there was a great calm.”*** (Verse 26c/KJV).

Currently on this site I am dealing with *“faith”*. Faith in 1 Corinthians 13:7b is described as an aspect of the kind of love Christians are to pursue: **Love *“believeth all things”***.

As they called on him, Jesus told his disciples, they were lacking in faith. Fortunate is, whoever is close enough to Jesus to hear him say these words: ***“Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?”***

First of all we need to have faith to believe that Jesus would forgive us our sins. We need this forgiveness and new life from Jesus because one day God will righteously judge all of us.

You may say: But what if some great difficulties should arise that make me lose that faith? A small anecdote from the life of Corrie ten Boom has come to my mind.

Corrie was talking to her father. She was fearful lest in some difficult situation she might deny Jesus.

Her father asked her: When you travel by train to this or that place, when will I give you the ticket? – Corrie answered he would give it to her just before the journey begins. Her father said to her, God would be doing just that. He would be giving her the necessary strength to be faithful just in time when needed.

You get to read this post two days before Good Friday. This is the time when we also remember how Peter three times said he did not know Jesus. He denied to have been one of Jesus’ disciples.

Then he heard the rooster crow. Peter remembered the Lord’s words. He went out and he wept bitterly. No matter in what way we might fail being faithful to God, as long as we will regret this and return to the Lord, there is hope for us.

On Good Friday we remember that Jesus has carried all our sins and failures on that cross at Calvary. He took upon himself the punishment we would have deserved.

As we seek to learn faith and love, the cross of Jesus is the right place for us to go. Here, where Jesus has carried our sins, we can receive any blessings of new life in Jesus!

A Believing Heart

“He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!’” (Luke 24:25/NIV).

Two disciples were walking to a village some miles away from Jerusalem. A stranger joined them. Only in the end of the story they realised that it was their master.

Jesus did not mean to offend or to ridicule them by calling them foolish. Presumably, this was a figure of speech sometimes used in rabbinical teaching. He wanted to tell them: There are some important things you have been overlooking. I need to teach you something important, which you are unaware of.

Only a few days before Jesus had been apprehended and finally crucified. They had put great hopes in Jesus. Now this seemed to be the end.

These two disciples also related to that stranger that some of their women had visited the tomb, where Jesus had been laid, early on Sunday morning. They had found the tomb empty. Some of their friends had also gone there and they found it was just as the women had said. They too did not find Jesus' body.

At this point the supposed stranger set in. He wanted to point them to some important issues.

In fact Jesus had told the disciples earlier, that he would have to die and to rise on the third day. Yet they did not know what to make of these words. Now after Jesus' crucifixion they were fairly downcast.

The stranger did not tell them who he was. Yet he began to explain from the books of Moses and all the prophets, what was said about him. He pointed out that it was evident from the holy writings that the Messiah would have to suffer these things.

From the verse quoted above it is evident Jesus did not primarily criticise his disciples for a lack of theological or exegetical knowledge. He was concerned about their lack of believing words that they occasionally would have had read out to them in synagogue services.

Jesus was not demanding excellent academic skills. He was looking for an attitude of heart.

How would a believing heart react to prophecies and promises of scripture? I guess a believing heart would rejoice with amazement, when hearing of the wonderful plans and intentions God has for his people.

Walking together with them, Jesus explained the scriptures. After they had recognised him, and after he had disappeared from them, they recalled their hearts had been burning within them while he had been speaking to them.

How do you react to hearing the bible taught to you? Does the bible stimulate you to trust God?

Currently Christians may tend to feel despondent about closed churches. At present, in many countries, we cannot attend church services. Gatherings of people are discouraged or forbidden due to health precautions.

How would a “believing heart” react to this situation? I guess, a “believing heart” might recall some of the words the bible says about God’s great plans and intentions for his church.

Put Your Trust in God

“For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” (2 Timothy 1:12/KJV).

When Paul was converted to believe in Jesus some extraordinary experiences were involved. He saw an overwhelming light, he heard an audible voice, he fell to the ground and he was blind for three days. He was healed from his blindness when Ananias, a believer in Jesus laid his hands on him and prayed for him.

Some who get converted to believe in Jesus do experience great joy. Others maybe weep as they become aware of their sinfulness. Several appear not to be particularly moved emotionally.

As you live with Jesus, as you spend time in prayer, as you read the bible, as you attend services and as you fellowship with other believers you may become emotionally aware of God’s love.

Yet in Christian life there also may be days that are less pleasant. At times you may have many things to be unhappy about. Some would refer to such days as desert experiences.

When Paul was writing the above words, he was a prisoner. He had been preaching Jesus Christ. There were those who disliked his preaching.

Certainly Paul would have experienced many happy days in his Christian life and in fellowship with other believers. That was great.

Yet he did not rely on emotional experiences. He did not put his trust in his feelings.

When you experience high emotions you may think God is near you and God is with you. Yet Paul had learned to trust in God rather than in his emotions.

He had given his life to God for God to be his shepherd. He did trust God in the same way as David praying in Psalm 23: ***“Yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”*** (Psalm 23:4/KJV).

Apart from emotions and spiritual experiences there are other things people tend to rely on. Some tend to be very aware of their religious activities or achievements. Others may be proud of having sat

at the feet of some great preachers. Some may put their trust in having grown up in a good Christian family.

Paul had been suffering a lot at the hands of other people. He was concerned about what would really carry him through when things get tough.

He exclaims: ***"...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."***

Paul had come to know God. He did not need great faith. Rather he trusted in a great God.

Paul had committed all his life and his faith to God. He was fully convinced that God would be able to keep him in faith. God would be able to carry him through even unto the day of divine judgment.

One Day God Will Judge Quick and Dead

"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light, because their deeds were evil. Everyone, who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed." (John 3:18-20/NIV).

This site has been set up to focus on Christian love. As I have stated earlier, Paul taught that loving your neighbour is a way to fulfil the whole law of God. (Cf. Romans 13:8).

Today there are people in the Christian world who put much time and effort in social activity to help and support others who are in need. This is good and desirable.

On the other hand the New Testament also clearly stresses the importance of faith. In God's light our good deeds may be found wanting. It is possible to be busy helping others but at the same time to (perhaps even intentionally) overlook some of the real needs of these individuals.

Jesus has come into the world as a light. He wants to shed light on our real motives, which govern what we do.

The bible says that those who believe in the Son of God will be acceptable to God. Others refuse to believe in Him and will not escape God's judgment.

In the quote above we are given one reason why several do not believe in the Son of God. Their deeds are evil. They try to hide some wrongdoings. They do not like the light. In the light all things can be seen so clearly. They prefer darkness. They hope to remain undetected, even by God himself.

There is a challenge to all of us today: Will you allow God's light to penetrate your soul? Will you admit him to expose any evil deeds, habits or attitudes? If you should be prepared for this, this is the path to real faith in God!

Re "There is nothing I can do for you!"

"...and though I had all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing... Charity ... believeth all things..."

1 Corinthians 13:2c+7b).

Earlier in chapter 13, we have learned that miraculous faith without love amounts to nothing. You may put great efforts into performing what seems impossible. Yet you may feel so strained and exhausted in doing so, that you fail to really listen to what those you are supposed to help are saying about their needs.

On the other hand, now in verse 7, we are taught that charity or love "believeth all things". Love would not lightly tell a needy person: "*There is nothing I can do for you!*" Maybe love would at least think or believe that a kind word or a smile could be helpful and encouraging to that person!

Going for Gifts or Seeking after the Giver of Good

Gifts

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12 Paul has been dealing with spiritual gifts by which individual believers can contribute to the welfare of the whole body of believers. In concluding this chapter he encourages to go for the best gifts. Then he says he wants to point to an even better way.

This leads up to chapter 13, which is St. Paul's great chapter on Christian Love. This chapter is somewhat lyrical in wording and form. It is something of a song to magnify the kind of love Christians are encouraged to aim at.

In verses 1-3 Paul lists a number of spiritual gifts and states that the value of these, if accompanied by a lack of love, is very limited. In verses 4-7 the apostle is listing aspects of the love he is referring to. Currently I am dealing with the second phrase of verse 7: **Love "*believeth all things*"**.

Earlier in verse 2 Paul has been referring to faith that can move mountains. Charismatic or Pentecostal scholars would link this up to the gift of faith mentioned in chapter 12.

'*Faith that can move mountains*' makes us think of ways to overcome certain obstacles. Faith here seems to be something of a means to an end. It is the faith required to see certain problems solved.

Here in verse 7 we again read of faith. Faith now is described as an aspect of love.

People tend to pray and believe only when facing difficulties. God then is kind of reduced to a helper in need or a giver of good gifts. Yet when the problems have been resolved, or the desired gifts received, there is a tendency to forget about God.

You may have faith to receive some blessing from God. Having achieved what you wanted, you may end up celebrating these gifts for the rest of your life.

In contrast to this attitude Christian love would focus on cultivating relationship with God. This implies listening to God's word and heeding his instructions. It involves lining up with God's intentions and purposes for our individual lives.

The prodigal son did claim his inheritance and then left his father. After some time he lost all these riches and became very poor. Finally he began to think of returning to his father just as a hired servant.

Had he stayed, he could have shared in all the possessions and affluence of his father. He also could have learnt how to keep and to increase the goods available to him in the father's house.

Love "believeth all things". If we choose to focus on a love relationship with God, many other divine blessings may become available to us more easily.

Faith, Attitudes and Views

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2/KJV).

Again I am dealing with St. Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 13: 7, saying that **love "believeth all things"**. I am using the verses quoted above to illustrate what the Greek word translated "believeth" might mean.

You may recognise some of these concepts from previous posts. I like to repeat certain things. The subject of "faith" and "trusting" is very important to becoming or being a good Christian.

The Greek word 'pisteuo' can take the meaning of 'to entrust' or 'to commit'. In Romans 12:1 we are challenged to give our bodies to God as a living sacrifice. That means we are to give ourselves at his disposal. Of course, before you can give yourself fully to God, you must believe that he loves you and that he desires that which is eternally good for you.

You only have to look at the news to realise that many things people are doing in this world are not good in God's eyes. Sometimes this is very evident. Often it is not that obvious.

There is a human tendency to adapt to people around us. This is not (altogether) wrong for Christians. Yet it must not be our primary goal. Being a Christian is not about doing things so that everybody around us should be pleased with us. Being a Christian means to be concerned with how God looks at us. This is why Paul challenges us not to be ***“conformed to this world”***.

It is possible to believe in God, yet in some issues to merely follow human customs. It is not necessarily wrong to adhere to how people around us are going about doing things. Yet at times, this may lead us away from our faith in God and our faithfulness to God.

In other words, you may believe God, but you may not believe him in all things. There may be some areas in our lives where we tend not to trust God fully.

Paul goes on to say: ***“...but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*** There is a learning process in Christian living. This has to do with our mental disposition and our way of thinking.

“Pisteuo” is derived from *“peitho”*, which also can be translated *“believe”*. It can take the meaning of *“to convince”*. By analogy it can mean *“to pacify”* or *“to conciliate”*. As we go along we may have to bring certain of our views and attitudes in line with our faith in God. Paul speaks of the ***“renewing of our mind”***.

In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul describes love as a goal for every Christian. He also says that ***love “believeth all things”***. Thus a Christian might aim at coming to believe God in everything God is concerned with. This would lead us to ask God about how he is looking at our circumstances, and how he sees our attitudes and opinions.

“Lord God, please teach me to understand how you look at the circumstances of my life. Grant me a fresh awareness for your will in my life. Help me to cling to you in faith! Lord Jesus, you have sacrificed your life for me at the cross of Calvary. Therefore I also want to give all of my life to you! Amen.”