The Simple Workings Of Faith

Objective: Explain the workings and manifestation of saving faith.

Reading: Romans 1:8-17.

Memory: Romans 1:17, “The righteous will live by faith.”

Introduction:
1. We understand that we are saved by faith. BUT, I have to ask; “How does THAT work? Do I just SAY that I have faith and that’s all, or is there more to it? Is there some sort of “substance” to faith?
2. Let me assert that for faith to have any real effect on us, to change the status or condition of our souls, something must happen. Faith is more than some intellectual consent. It is more than some abstract vote on the right side. It must have some critical manifestations. Faith must mean something in spiritual reality.
3. “Faith” is not some mysterious, intangible, magical thing. It is really very simple.

We ought to understand the nature of saving faith. (HOW?)

Let’s understand some of the practical manifestations of how faith works to save our souls.

“Faith” is often translated as “trust”. “Keep the faith” = “Keep trusting God”. Here,

I. Faith is trusting in what we cannot see. Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”

A. That there is a God.
1. A divine, all powerful, all knowing, everywhere present Creator.
2. Again, this is not a matter of simply casting a right vote, or making a right answer on a test sheet. It has an application to our lives.
3. If I know there is a God, it makes a difference in my life!
4. Live as if God is right there; even though you don’t see Him.
5. A God Who is Present
6. If He is there (and He is) then I have a bunch of questions;
7. Does He care how I live? What is His nature? Is He angry? Is He a pushover? Does He care about me? Will He help me when I am in trouble?
8. Am I okay with Him? What does it take to please Him?
9. Other verses begin to fit in and make sense;
   a. Romans 3:10-12, “As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”
   b. Hebrews 11:6, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

B. Other “unseen” realities relate.
1. There is a spiritual realm. I have a soul. There IS a heaven and a hell.
2. Demons, angels, Satan. Now I live with awareness of all these realities as well.
3. Sin, itself, becomes a reality, a genuine concern. Something that defiles my sacred soul to where I am not worthy or able to stand in the Presence of the Creator - Who is holy and pure and just.
4. 2 Corinthians 4:18, “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”
   a. Not only does it exist, but it is the true reality! The unseen, God-related life, is what really counts, matters.
   b. From now on, physical things receive less attention because “faith” enables me to concentrate on the “unseen” reality which is the important part of life.
   c. I even begin to pay attention to the warnings God gives throughout the Bible.
5. In this way, faith affects how we live and what we think about. It becomes important because it affects and directs our lives!

Saving faith has to do with confidence in the wisdom and understanding of God.

II. Faith is trusting God’s knowledge.
A. He knows and understands the workings of all things.
   1. When warns, “... watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them” (Romans 16:17) The “faithful” pay attention.
   2. When He teaches: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.” And “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Faithful does it because it has confidence that God knows what He is talking about.
   3. When He says, “You know the way...”, and “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Faith trusts and follows.

B. So, faith leads to obedience.
   1. Not so much because God “orders” something – though that should be enough, but Faith knows that God is love, and trusts that He loves us more than we can know, so all of His instructions and directions are for our benefit. So we do it.
   2. Faith knows that when God tells us something, it is absolutely true and reliable. It will happen, so when He says beware, we beware, when He says love, we love, when he says put off the old and put on the new, we don’t ignore it, we do it!

Another way in which faith alters and affects our approach to daily life stems from the fact that

III. Faith is trusting in God’s immediate Presence.
A. He sees and He knows.
   1. Would you act rudely like that if God was standing right there? Looking you in the eye? He is.
   2. Would you talk like that if you realized God could hear you? He can and does!
   3. Would you sit and watch internet pornography if you were entertaining God at the moment and He was sitting in the chair next to you? In fact would you have that show playing on TV if you knew with certainty that God is in the room with you, looking over your shoulder or looking you in the eye? Have faith! He is!
   4. I get involved in a fair amount of marriage and family counseling. Most of the success that I have is not because I am so skilled, it is simply that families and couples tend to “keep the lid on” and talk through things better if there is a third party present. What if those same folks realized that God was present, watching, listening, caring as they were about to “lose-it” in anger and frustration?
   5. Knowing God is present leads to fewer outbursts of anger, more love, more joy, more peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and more self-control in all aspects of a Christian’s life. That is living by faith!

B. The result of faith is holiness and purity.
   1. Live pure and holy – as if purity and holiness are important to Him. As if He is right there watching and you can’t fool Him. As if you love Him with all your heart and soul and would never do anything, anything to offend Him in the slightest way.
   2. Live knowing with absolute assuredness that He is Present and sees every thought and action, and even the very intentions of your heart.

Faith further alters out thinking and affects our daily lives because

IV. Faith is trusting in God’s power and ability.
A. Faith shows in actions.
   1. When God told Abraham he would father a son in his old age, Abraham trusted; Romans 4:19-21 (NASB), says “Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; 20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.”
   2. Do you trust / believe / expect God to be able to do what He says?
      a. What do you doubt that He can do? How do these doubts and fears affect your life and response to situations?
      b. Are you “brave” enough to speak up and declare truth because God knows how to rescue?
c. Are you “bold” enough to approach someone with the Gospel message?
d. Are you “bold” enough to take a stand on abortion, on homosexual marriage, on coarse and vulgar language?

3. Hebrews 11:27, “By faith he (Moses) left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.” Faith enables one to persevere in the face of all kinds of trouble and opposition. At work. In your marriage. In your loneliness?

4. Do you have faith??
   a. Jesus walked on water. Even the wind and waves obey Him! He has all authority in heaven and on earth. With God all things are possible. Will you step out of the boat if He tells you that you can?
   b. If God says “jump” are you ready to jump? Even off a cliff? Even with a wall in front of you? You would if you trusted God’s ability and power to keep you safe.
   c. Are you ready to die physically because you trust God’s power and ability to keep your life eternally?

B. Faith lives with such confidence!
   1. Live as if God has the power; to succeed in all things.
   2. Live as if God can do it – even when it seems impossible or incomprehensible. He spoke the world into existence – on one day!
   3. Live as if God has the power; to win even against incredible odds.
   4. Live as if God has the power; to win even when it seems impossible.
   5. Live as if God has the power; to heal, to change the weather, to rescue and govern the nation, to alter history.
   6. Live as if God has the power; to change hearts and souls.
   7. Live as if God has the power; to indwell us with His Spirit.
   8. So, faith results in courage and action, in a dynamic Christianity. A life of joy and energy and actions and powerful deeds.

So What?
   Scripture teaches plainly that we are saved by our faith. But it also teaches in James 2:14–18, “What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? …faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. 18 But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.”

The fact is, that “faith is often verbally claimed, but it is not demonstrated in people’s lives. The appeal this morning is for each to take a good look at the essence of saving faith. Examine your own life and verify that you are, in fact and in deed, living by faith.

Closing Prayer:
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Topical

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Memory: Romans 1:17, "The righteous will live by faith."

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Some practical manifestations of how faith works to save our souls.

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   A. That there is a God.
      Romans 3:10-12 Hebrews 11:6
   B. Other “unseen” realities relate.
      2 Corinthians 4:18

II. Faith is trusting God’s knowledge.
   A. He understands the workings of all things.
   B. So, faith means obedience.

III. Faith is trusting in God’s immediate Presence.
   A. He sees and He knows.
   B. The result of faith is holiness and purity.

IV. Faith is trusting in God’s power and ability.
   A. Faith shows in actions.
      Romans 4:19-21 (NASB), Hebrews 11:27
   B. Faith lives with confidence!

So What? James 2:14-18
Examine your life and verify that you are living by faith.