What is Faith?

How Does Faith Work in Everyday Life?

by Ernest O'Neill Program 98

What is faith, and how does it work in ordinary, everyday life? What difference does it make to the things that all of us pass through: the financial troubles, the domestic difficulties, the professional problems that we have in our career? That's what we're talking about at this time each morning on this program. And one of the things that we have said, of course, is that faith in itself is a very reasonable belief that we form on the basis of certain facts that we observe in our everyday lives or that we have observed in the past. So, we've said, you remember, that we turn the ignition of our car every morning, expecting the car to start, having faith that the engine will start, and that we'll get to work, simply because we've observed other people doing that. We've seen ourselves doing it often. We've seen that it really works.

That's the same with faith in a Supreme Being in the universe. We've observed the order and design in the world, and we've observed the life of that remarkable man Jesus of Nazareth who had power over nature, and power over disease, and who Himself came back from the dead, and lived again on this earth, and assured us that His Father was the God of the whole universe, and that He was like Him. on the basis of these observations that we have made of the facts of history, and of the present facts of the universe, we concluded that there is a God, and that He is like the Father of Jesus.

What we have been sharing, of course, is that this God is better than any main frame computer. He has an infinite mind, and can foresee all the things that will come about in our lives. He was

able to foresee that you would be born. He was able to foresee the grandparents that you would have. He was able to foresee the kind of life you would live. He was able to foresee the kind of decisions that you would make. Now, some of us may say, "Oh, well. That means pre-destination." No, pre-destination is pre-destining a person. It's making a person so that they can only be certain things or do certain things. It's forcing a person to be a robot. It's treating a person like a marionette or a puppet on a string.

Now God has not done that. God has given you a free will, and actually you know you have a free will. You know that you can choose to do what you want to do when you want to do it. He has given us all free wills because He wants us all to enjoy a loving relationship with Himself. Of course, people can't love that have not got free wills. So, the Creator of the universe has made us with free wills, so that we could choose to love Him, or choose not to love Him, he does not want a group of people who are robots and are puppets, and love Him only because they can't do anything else.

The Creator of the World has obviously given us a free will, and we prove it every day that we do what we want. But He has nevertheless read us. He has foreseen what we would do. He can read us better than any psychiatrist. He can read us better than we ourselves can. He can read us even better than our mothers, whom you know knew quite well what we would do in certain situations. They'll say, "Oh, John will do this", or "Tom will turn out this way." Even we human beings are able to foresee what other human beings will do because we know their minds very well. Now, the Creator of the Universe is able to do that with every human being that's ever lived. He has foreseen the kinds of decisions you will make. He has foreseen even the difficulties that other people will bring into your life.

What we have been sharing is that having foreseen all that, He did something about it. Of course, we find that truth stated very clearly, you remember, in a verse in the Bible. It's Galatians 6 and verse 14. It runs like this, (Paul is speaking), and he says, "I glory in nothing, except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

What we have shared is that when he talks about the world, he means the cosmos in Greek, the whole world system that has been created by all kinds of powers of evil to operate the world and life apart from God, and apart from trust, faith in Him. That world system includes the whole finance system, the whole finance system of loans and of commercial arrangements, the whole finance system of all kinds of arrangements with money that actually end up enslaving us rather than freeing us. It means the whole world system of a pecking order. You know what that is. That's the system whereby human beings control each other. They wouldn't need to control each other if they had a real love and trust in the Creator of the universe. He would enable us all to work together as a family of love.

But the world system, because it does not do that, has created an alternative to that. That is a whole system of authority and pressure and of controlling other people by fear of punishment, and by hope of reward. Now that whole world system which works upon you and me daily, has all kinds of spiritual powers behind it that really are the ones that make us fearful and so unhappy and sad and depressed at things that happen in our jobs. Now that whole world system has been crucified with Christ. In other words, in Eternity which is timelessness, you remember Einstein talked about the fact that time doesn't really exist, that there is a place and a space in this universe where it is possible to see all of the past, all of the present, all of the future in one great eternal moment.

Now in that realm, God put all this world system of powers and pressures that work upon us into His Son, Jesus, and He crucified and destroyed them in Him. He raised us up with Jesus in that timelessness and made us alive and freed us from the power of this world system. That's what that verse means. When Paul says, "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." He means that that whole world system has been crucified to me. It has been destroyed as far as its power to affect my inner life and even to affect the events in my outward life are concerned.

He has destroyed all that, and if I have faith in that, if I believe that, if I say, "Yes Jesus did die in 29 AD. The history books tell that plainly. He came alive again so He is God's Son, and so what He said was true.

What His Apostles like Paul said therefore is true also. This has really happened. And even though I don't understand it all, it means that the power of my boss to radically change the direction of my life from the one that my Creator has intended, that power has been destroyed. It means that the power even of disease to destroy my body and end my life, that power has been crucified with Christ. He has born my sicknesses, and carried my pains. He has destroyed the power of sickness to radically change the direction of my life. if I have that faith, then it is onto me according to my faith."

And what we have been saying is if you get up each morning and look forward to the day with an outward confidence, and an inward absolute trust that God has already made the mountains low and raised the valleys, and He has already made the crooked paths straight and the plain paths smooth in your life, then that's what it will be. The Spirit of God will release power to make things what He has created them to be in Jesus' death.