

January, 2013

The Little Christian That Could

By: Lee Snow



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The verse under consideration this month is one of my favorites, and probably one of your favorites as well. In it is contained trust in the Lord, confidence in one's salvation, acknowledgment of the fact that Christians sometimes must endure things which one, not understanding to the Truth of God, would think would be outside the realm of the child of God. It is a powerful child of God, not in his role as an Apostle but in his role as a Christian, proclaiming a truth that resonates in the minds of the faithful so many times. One could walk through almost any religious building and find this verse displayed proudly. It is,

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phi. 4:13)."

This simple sentence, containing only ten words, is one of tremendous importance and courage. It was written in the context of the apostle Paul's writing on his support, or lack thereof, from congregations by way of monetary assistance. And yet, during the toughest fiscal times, Paul had the wherewithal to know that the money in the bank, or purse in his case, didn't mean that he was or wasn't doing the righteous thing. But, the Christian can glean more from this verse than just confidence and contentment during times of monetary hardship! Let's break the verse apart into simple points taking just what Paul wrote and seeing what we can learn from such a wonderful statement.

"I"

Isn't it interesting that Paul could start a statement with such magnitude with this simple personal pronoun? Many Christians wouldn't be able to do just that. We sit in services and Bible classes and hear the names of those brethren and non-brethren that are desperately in need of our prayers and we petition God on their behalf, but when it's us that goes through the difficult time or situation and the leader of the study or the person doing the announcements says, "Is there anyone in need of prayers?" we sit idly in our seat and think, "My problem isn't worth the brethren's action." We think that for some reason every other brother or sister in Christ could say, "I... can make it through this" but for some reason we will not allow ourselves to say the same in regards to us. Paul had that self-confidence! For a moment, let's think of the rest of the statement which we are studying. Paul

had the self-confidence to be able to boldly say that he knew beyond a shadow of doubt that he was not only going to make it through it but that he was in need of the prayers of the brethren. This, and only this, mindset will allow the Christian to be able to repeat Philippians 4:13 with all confidence and readiness of mind to stand in the face of adversity and triumph.

"Can do all things"

Keeping with the thought of this self-confidence that is to be present in the mind of the Christian, let us ask ourselves the simple question, "How many things did Paul say he was going to be able to accomplish?" It's a very simple answer - ALL. As has already been discussed, Paul was in dire straits when it came to his monetary possessions and ability to support himself, and yet he had no second thoughts about his ability to get the work accomplished. Too many times we allow the contrite situations and problems in our lives to hinder our work for the Lord. This may be because of our lack of self-confidence in the Lord, or it may be because we simply allow ourselves to sink into the mindset when a man allows himself to think that what he is encountering is something which no man has ever dealt with and that he is completely alone in his problems (1 Cor. 10:12-14). Many Christians today exist, as it were, in a congregation which isn't the largest in numbers. And many times that hinders the thoughts of the Christians in that congregation because of the statement, "We are small, and may not be able to take on such a large job." However, what did Paul confidently exclaim when faced with some of the same problems (small numbers and even smaller funds)? He had realized that he should be content and God would help him get the work done. We should think the same thing!



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**"BUT THOSE WHO WAIT ON THE LORD
SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH..."**

Isaiah 40:31

The Best Part

The best part of anything having to do with the Bible and the divine God in Heaven is the fact that He has provided a way by which a man can be saved from his sins. Paul wrote that every single person, attempting to justify himself by way of his own means, has fallen short of the mark and has therefore been guilty of trespasses (Romans 3:23). But, thanks be to God, He has not left us alone in order to find our salvation! He has sent Himself, in Jesus Christ, to die on a cross for the forgiveness of all man's sins (John 3:16). BUT, we have to access that salvation which is freely available. How does someone do that?

Hear - Romans 10:17

Believe - John 8:24

Repent - Acts 2:38

Confess - Romans 10:9-10

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16

If you have not done these things, or have never even heard such things, please contact us at the PFP. We would love to help you in your spiritual life so that you can be accepted by the Lord (2 Cor. 5:9).

You can contact us at
www.thepfp.weebly.com

“Through Christ”

You may be reading a translation that is worded somewhat different. It may say, “I can do all things through *HIM* who strengthens me.” The questions should be asked, “Does this alter the point being made? Absolutely not! This is obviously speaking of the fact that any Christian, that person who is *IN* Christ (Gal. 3:27), has this confidence that God will make a way and allow the work to continue. Christ is God (John 1:1-3) and God is the one who strengthens us in our time of need, therefore this verse can clearly be understood in light of those facts. What a wonderful thing to know that not only does our God allow us the ability to be saved from our sins by the death of Jesus Christ (John 3:16), but that He strengthens us as well and does not leave us alone to fight this battle!

“Who Strengthens Me”

Read Ephesians 3:12-16 and ask yourself, “How wonderful is this?” To know that the Lord strengthens our inner man by way of His divine guidance (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17), to know that not only will He do this but He is able to that and then some! The spiritual, inner, virtuous strength provided by our God in Heaven is that which will allow us to continually face our situations and the adversary, Satan, without flinching. I remember as a child playing a game in which a person would act as if he was going to hit another person and would essentially try to make the recipient “flinch” from being frightened. Satan isn't just trying to make us flinch, he's trying to make us give up, but with God on our side there is no way we will succumb to his advances. That is, if we do our part as well!

Philippians 4:13, a great verse to emblazon on coffee mugs, is more importantly a great verse to emblazon on the hearts of Christians. Not because it is catchy and makes us feel good, but because it holds within it the confidence of a man that is to be our spiritual example (1 Cor. 11:1) and powerful statements about our Lord and His wonderful help provided to His people. And with it we can boldly say that we are the

**LITTLE
CHRISTIAN
THAT
COULD!**



FAITH ONLY

SAY WHAT?

with Tony Clay

Let me begin by introducing this new column. What we aim to accomplish by this monthly column is to discuss various things that many in the religious world say that cause us to raise an eyebrow. We aim to point out the ideas and doctrines that are popular and take a closer look using only the Bible as our guide and standard of authority.

Our first task will be discussing and looking at faith only. If one will google the words, “history of justification by faith alone” they will find a host of search

results. Some of those results are in reference to their teaching and others are of the actual history. Their teaching begins by claiming that Paul began this system of thought in Romans 4. They say that Paul rejected a “works salvation” like that which Peter taught (cf Acts 2:36-47; 1 Pet. 3:20-21). Unfortunately for this doctrine, it does not agree with Paul’s teachings in Galatians 3; Romans 6; et al. The actual history of this doctrine obviously originated during “the reformation movement” of the 1500’s. Thomas Thompson, one whose materials are used to teach “History of Christianity Class I” at the Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) outright says, “A clear line of development of this doctrine from the Apostles to Martin Luther simply does not exist.” This should cast quite a specter of doubt into minds of anyone who wants to take seriously any of the propositions of this institution concerning these matters.

Mr. Thompson goes on in his article to make the assertion that the majority of faith only proponents make, that is, to believe in baptism for remission of sins is to believe in a works salvation separate from the grace of God. One of the arguments posed was in reference to Paul’s statement concerning Abraham: Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Gal. 3:6). We will address this argument and others later in this column.

The heart of our discussion rests in the second chapter of James. James begins his writing on this matter, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in verse fourteen. He says, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” James is most certainly asking a rhetorical question, because he will answer it himself! He likens faith without works to not caring for the needy. We would liken it by saying bless your heart to a person in need but then sending them on their way with the need unsatisfied. James, half brother of Jesus the Lord says boldly, “even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone.” James says that faith alone does not save, but says faith, when it is alone, is dead! Verse nineteen tells of the faith of demons who also simply believe. Believing in God alone will not save someone, because the demons have a far greater knowledge of God than we do, yet they will not be saved in this.

Perhaps the core teaching of this chapter can be found in verses 21-24, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:21-24).

How can it be that one is both justified by faith (not works; Romans 4) and justified by works (not by faith only; James 2). Does the Bible contradict itself? Is there no basis for unity in the Scriptures? The answer for both of these questions can be an emphatic NO. The works of which Paul is speaking are meritorious works, like those done by the pharisees. The works of which James is speaking are works of obedient faith. Abraham was both justified by faith and works, declared by James when he said, “Seest thou how faith wrought with his (Abraham) works, and by works was faith made PERFECT (complete, emp TC).

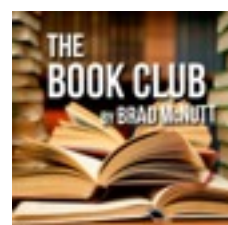
This is a discussion that has been going on since the 1500’s and it does not appear that it will stop. Clearly, the Bible does not agree with this doctrine when it says “Ye see then how that by works (a perfected faith accompanied by works) a man is justified, and not by faith only.” When we hear someone say that justification can come by faith alone, that ought to raise an eyebrow and cause us to exclaim, “Say What?” because we know better than that, and the Bible has all of the answers! To God be the glory for ever!

You've seen the ads on the PFP's Facebook page, and even in a previous month's issue of the publication but now the ads have finally come to fruition! The Light Network officially launched on January 5th with 8 weekly podcasts and even more to come. Now, TLN has vowed to not pay for any kind of advertisement, but the PFP is FREE so as the editor of the PFP I would like to point out some great things that would help every Christian in his walk... The Light Network! The men and women of TLN are producing some amazing podcasts that aren't just for preachers but are for men and women that are simply looking to be closer to God. Let me just copy and paste the short descriptions of the shows for everyone to get a better feel of TLN.



Biblical Manliness: Exploring the Biblical Definition of Manhood with Chris Clevenger – “Courage, Strength and *sexual potency?!?*” That is how the world typically defines manliness. The modern male is represented as a man-child interested only in his personal gratification. In the Bible, God presents the prototypical man: Jesus the Christ. Join Chris as he

dives into the Word of God to answer the question, “What is Biblical manliness?”



The Book Club is a show dedicated to reviewing and recommending various religious books that will aid one in his or her studies

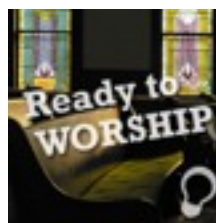
of God's Word. Cutting edge, contemporary, and classics will all be examined. The books covered will range from apologetics and study helps to commentaries and relationship development books and everything in between! While it is true that the Bible is the perfect standard, it is also amazing to see just how many books have been written about God's book! Please join me as we consider many books written about the one Book!



Culture Shock is a current events talk show that highlights news stories from a distinctly Christian point-of-view. The show is designed to equip Christians to engage with culture by addressing modern issues. By examining the “times” through the Christian worldview, this show also serves to edify and strengthen those who are following Christ in the 21st century.



Preachers in Training - Each week, Robert Hatfield is joined by a panel of young preachers who share their passion, enthusiasm, lessons, and goals as gospel preachers. On the last episode of each month, Robert interviews an older, experienced preacher who will share



his wisdom with the next generation.

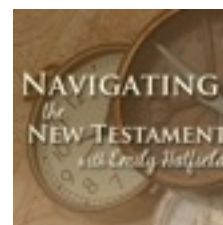
Ready to Worship will help you prepare your mind for the Lord's day. Look for a new episode of *Ready to Worship* each Saturday. “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the LORD’” (Psa. 122:1). “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).



Let's talk about the greatest gift God has given to man! **The Salvation Podcast** spends fifteen minutes each week discussing the beauty of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3-4).

PROGRAMING FOR LADIES

Navigating the New Testament with Emily Hatfield – Emily's love of travel and passion for God's Word are combined in this show for



ladies. While she was in college, Emily spent a semester abroad traveling throughout ancient New Testament sites. Each episode will feature a different site with Emily's personal photos and an exploration of the

accompanying Biblical text.

Under the Juniper Tree with Melissa Clevenger – In this fast-paced, modern world, depression and anxiety entangle the minds of millions. Just as God provided comfort to Elijah under the juniper tree, each five minute episode endeavors to bring biblical light to the shadows of life.



Upcoming Issues

FEBRUARY - Chris Blackwell
MARCH - Tony Clay
APRIL - Chris Clevenger
MAY - Dalton Gilreath
JUNE - Travis Byars
July - Andrew Lamica