

person... The specific character of faith is that it looks away from itself and finds its whole interest and object in Christ. He is the absorbing preoccupation of faith.” (John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*)

## Faith

Ephesians 2:1-10

### 4. But what about...

#### (a) assurance

WCF 14.3. “This faith varies in degrees. It may be weak or strong. It may often, and in many ways, be assailed and weakened, but it gains the victory. It matures in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and the perfecter of our faith.”

#### (b) Faith and works

WCF 11.2. “Faith—receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness—is the only instrument of justification; yet it is not the only grace in the person justified, but is always accompanied by all other saving graces. Justifying faith is not dead, but works by love.”

WCF 16.2. “These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith...”

WCF 16.3. “Their ability to do good works is not at all from themselves, but entirely from the Spirit of Christ. And—in order that they may be enabled to do these things—besides the graces believers have already received, there must also be an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit working in them both to will and to do God's good pleasure...”

### Discuss:

1. How would you explain what “faith” is?
2. What is it about faith that saves us?

### Introduction

#### **Recap: salvation accomplished... and applied**

#### **Repentance and faith**

- cannot be separated (e.g. Mark 1:14-15)
- are always found in a regenerate person
- are essential: without them you cannot be saved

### 1. How does faith save?

- NOT the “meritorious” cause of salvation
- BUT the “instrumental” cause: like a hand...
- In fact...

“As one has aptly and truly stated the case, it is not faith that saves but faith in Jesus Christ; strictly speaking, it is not even faith in Christ that saves but Christ that saves through faith.” (John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*)

## 2. Where does faith come from?

Westminster Confession of Faith modern language

14.1 “The grace of faith, by which the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily produced through the ministry of the Word. This faith is increased and strengthened by the same means, and also by the administration of the sacraments and prayer.”

- enabled to believe – Ephesians 2:8
- through the work of the Spirit – e.g. Ezekiel 11:19-20, 36:26-27
- Through the ordinary means of grace:  
= preaching, sacraments and prayer
  - Romans 10:14,17, 1 Peter 2:2, Acts 20:32
  - Romans 4:11, a “seal”= faith strengthener
  - Mark 9:24, “I believe; help my unbelief!”

## 3. What IS faith?

### (i) Knowledge

Romans 10:17, “Faith is of hearing, and hearing of the word of Christ.”

### (ii) Assent

James 2:19, “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-- and shudder.”

### (iii) Trust...

WCF 14.2. “By this faith, a Christian believes to be true whatever is revealed in the Word, because of the authority of God himself speaking in it. He also responds differently to what each particular passage contains—obeying the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.”

- Trusting God’s Word, the Bible – e.g. 1 Thess. 2:13, “you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God...”
  - Obey commands – e.g. Rom. 16:26
  - Fear warnings – e.g. Isa. 66:2
  - Embrace promises – e.g. Heb. 11:13
- A trust which rests **\*\*on Christ alone\*\***
  - e.g. John 1:12, Acts 15:7
  - Galatians 2:20, “The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

“Faith is knowledge passing into conviction, and it is conviction passing into confidence. Faith cannot stop short of self-commitment to Christ, a transference of reliance upon ourselves and all human resources to reliance upon Christ alone for salvation. It is a receiving and resting upon him. It is here that the most characteristic act of faith appears; it is engagement of person to person, the engagement of the sinner as lost to the person of the Saviour able and willing to save... Faith is trust in a