

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2008**

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE BELIEVERS

Message Thirty-Five

**The Believers' Exercise of Faith
in Living the Christian Life under the Government of God**

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 1:5, 7-9, 21; 2:7a; 5:9; 2 Pet. 1:1, 5; Jude 3, 20

- I. "I found it necessary to write to you and exhort you to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints"—Jude 3:**
 - A. *The faith* here is not subjective faith as our believing but objective faith as our belief, referring to the things we believe in, the contents of the New Testament as our faith, in which we believe for our common salvation—Acts 6:7; 1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9; 4:1; 5:8; 6:10, 21; 2 Tim. 3:8; 4:7; Titus 1:13.
 - B. This faith has been delivered once for all to the saints, and for this faith we should earnestly contend—1 Tim. 6:12.
- II. "But you, beloved, building up yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit"—Jude 20:**
 - A. *Your most holy faith* is the objective faith, referring to the precious things of the New Testament in which we believe for our salvation in Christ—v. 3.
 - B. On the foundation of this holy faith, and in the sphere of it, by praying in the Holy Spirit, we build up ourselves.
- III. "To those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours"—2 Pet. 1:1:**
 - A. Faith is the substantiation of the substance of the truth, which is the reality of the contents of God's New Testament economy—Heb. 11:1.
 - B. The equally precious faith, allotted to us by God through the word of God's New Testament economy and the Spirit, responds to the reality of such contents and ushers us into this reality, making its substance the element of our Christian life and experience.
- IV. "Who through Him believe into God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God"—1 Pet. 1:21:**
 - A. Our believing into Christ brought us into an organic union with God; now through Christ we believe into God to be one with Him and participate in all His riches—Gal. 3:26-27.
 - B. Faith receives the divine things and substantiates the spiritual and unseen things; hope reaps and partakes of the things substantiated by faith—1 Cor. 13:13; John 1:12; Heb. 11:1; Rom. 8:24-25.

- V. **“Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory”—1 Pet. 1:8:**
- A. It is a wonder and a mystery that the believers love One whom they have not seen.
 - B. We love Him whom we have not seen because of believing, because of the faith that has been infused into us through our hearing of the living word—Gal. 3:2.
- VI. **“To you therefore who believe is the preciousness”—1 Pet. 2:7a:**
- A. With God, Christ, the living stone, is chosen and precious, held in honor—v. 4.
 - B. The Christ chosen by God as a stone, even a cornerstone that is precious to God, is the preciousness to His believers.
- VII. **“So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ”—1:7:**
- A. Although the approval of faith comes out of the proper faith, the emphasis here is not on faith but on the proving of faith by trials that come through sufferings.
 - B. It is the trying, the precious proving, of faith, not the faith itself, that may be found unto praise.
- VIII. **“Him [the devil] withstand, being firm in your faith”—5:9:**
- A. *Withstand* here is not to resist nor to struggle against but to stand firmly, like a rock, on the ground of our faith before the roaring devil—v. 8.
 - B. *Your faith* refers to the believers’ subjective faith in God’s protecting power and loving concern—v. 7.
- IX. **“Who are being guarded by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time”—1:5:**
- A. The power of God is the cause of our being guarded; faith is the means through which the power of God becomes effective in guarding us.
 - B. In this verse *salvation* refers to the salvation of our souls from the dispensational punishment of God’s governmental dealing—Heb. 10:39.
- X. **“Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls”—1 Pet. 1:9:**
- A. Our soul will be saved from sufferings into the full enjoyment of the Lord at His revelation, His coming back—Matt. 16:25.
 - B. To enter into the Lord’s joy is the salvation of our souls—25:21, 23.
- XI. **“Adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue”—2 Pet. 1:5:**
- A. This is the equally precious faith allotted to us by God as the common portion of the New Testament blessing of life for the initiation of the Christian life—v. 1.
 - B. This faith needs to be exercised so that the virtue of the divine life may be developed in the succeeding steps and reach maturity—vv. 5-11.