

SAVING FAITH
Zeal in serving the Lord—Rom 12:11
Dr. David J. Rodabaugh

I. Translations—note the significant difference in the first phrase

- A. KJV—“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;”
- B. NASB—“not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;”
- C. NIV—“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.”

II. The Greek

- A. (in-the) in-zeal not slothful
- B. The issue is spiritual matters not secular
- C. ‘spoud-ē’= ‘earnestness, diligence, eagerness, zeal, effort; (with meta) make haste, eagerly (BSL)’—used in Ro 12:8, 11; 2Co 7:11-12; 8:7-8, 16; At 18:25 (tr. ‘fervent’)

III. At no time should our zeal be diminished

- A. Satan would use the doctrine of ‘assurance’ to let us think that it might.
- B. Compare the parable of the sower—Mt 13:3-9; 18-23
- C. The correct doctrine is ‘perseverance’ NOT just ‘eternal security’
 - 1. just ‘eternal security’—you can live as you please and you are still saved
 - 2. ‘perseverance’—God causes you to still live for him throughout your life.
- D. It is the same as the difference between trusting in Christ as ‘Savior’ only or as ‘Lord’
 - 1. This has become a major issue among ‘fundamentalists’ and ‘conservatives’ today.
 - 2. The issue in John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus*, is that MacArthur teaches that Christ is not Savior if he is not Lord.
 - a. He was ‘called on the carpet’ for this book and its teaching by the IFCA. This is of interest because some in the Grace Movement did not like my stand on this subject.
 - b. Note: GGF came out of IFCA when IFCA abandoned the mid-Acts dispensational position.
 - c. Note: We do not support MacArthur’s dispensational position for he teaches on p. 69 (¶ 3) that, after healing the blind man in John 9, “(Christ) withdrew from the Jewish crowds and their unbelieving leaders and turned His attention to the Gentiles.”
 - d. Note: We cannot support the implication (p. 27, note 15) that the Sermon on the Mount is for today. The character that God requires is, of course, the same for all ages. The promises are not. The meek inherit the earth in the Sermon on the Mount—we do not. (In the pages (25-29) where this is mentioned, MacArthur shows a real lack of understanding what dispensationalism really is.)
 - 3. Unfortunately, dispensationalists have become (legitimately) identified with the ‘Savior-only’ gospel.
 - a. This may have come from the great influence of Lewis Sperry Chafer who wrote in, He that is *Spiritual* (1967, p. 21), “The ‘carnal’ Christian is ... characterized by a ‘walk’ that is on the same plane as that of the ‘natural’ [unsaved] man.”
 - b. This is compounded by the current teaching of so many at Dallas Theological Seminary. For example, Charles C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* (1969, p. 170) wrote, “The message of faith only and the message of faith plus commitment of life cannot both be the gospel; therefore, one of them is a false gospel and comes under the curse of perverting the gospel or preaching another gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).” Ryrie other places teaches the ‘faith only’ and no commitment involved in salvation.
 - c. Zane Hodges, Prof. at Dallas Theol. Sem., clearly opposes the ‘Lordship gospel’ in his book, *The Gospel Under Siege*, (Dallas, 1981).
 - d. Earl Rademacher, Pres. of Western Conserv. Baptist Seminary, stated his opposition in a recent (1989) debate in San Diego.
 - 4. Issues related to ‘Calvinism’ are not ‘dispensational’ issues
 - a. **Man’s nature** is not a ‘dispensational’ issue—implies ‘**Total Depravity**’
 - b. **God electing** is not a ‘dispensational’ issue—implies ‘**Unconditional Election**’
 - c. **Christ redeeming** is not a ‘dispensational’ issue—implies ‘**Limited Atonement**’

- d. **The Spirit's work** is not a 'dispensational' issue—implies '**Irresistible Grace**'
 - e. **The new nature** is not a 'dispensational' issue—implies '**Perseverance**'
- E. Can Christ be Savior without being Lord?
1. Look at the Gospel in Romans 10:9, 10 (from Rom 10 outline)
 - a. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord
 1. Openly—Matt. 10:32-33; Lk. 12:8-9
 2. Mouth before Heart as in Deut. 30:12-14 (comp. Romans 10:6-8)
 - a. observation vs. reality
 3. Jesus as Lord (≠ KJV)—1Co 12:3
 - a. not Jesus as Savior (only) but as Lord—Ro 6:23; 2Co 4:5
 - b. repentance—At 20:24; 17:30; Ro 2:4; 2Ti 2:25; 2Co 12:21
 - b. Believe in your heart that God raised from the dead—cp. Heb 13:20
 1. Justification established—Ro 4:24-25; 5:1; 1Th 1:10
 2. NOT historical fact only though that is essential to what follows
 3. BUT all it implies—the work of Christ is a finished work
 2. This is the distinction between 'saving faith' and other faith—At 20:21. It is sad that Pink's book, *Saving Faith* is out of print.
 - a. What is the Gospel?
 1. It is not independent of God's Law
 - a. ¿At 16:30-31? was spoken to a deeply concerned man.
 - b. Rom 3:20
 2. Nature of salvation—from SIN, not just from HELL—Matt 1:21; 9:12
 3. We must show men the enormity of their SIN
 4. Terms of salvation—At 20:21
 - a. Believe (comp. Jn 6:60-71; 8:27-44; At 8:13 comp 21)
 - b. Repent—Lk 13:3; Mt 21:32; Mk 1:15; Isa 55:7
 1. Lord—Lk 1:46-47, At 5:31; 2Pt 1:11; 2:20; 3:18
 2. Note: Heb 5:9; Lk 19:14
 - b. The Counterfeit(s) of SAVING FAITH
 1. At 8:13,21,23 (had gifts but wanted apostolic authority to give them to others)
 2. At 26:27
 3. Ex 14:31 comp. Heb 3:17, 18
 4. Isa 48:2 comp. 4
 5. Stony Ground—Lk 8:13
 6. Jn 8:30-
 - c. Both types of faith are
 1. in Christ—Jn 2:23,24; 8:30-
 2. from the preached Word—Mt 13:20-21
 3. Received with joy—Mt 13:20
 4. Both look to COMING—Mt 13:20
 - d. The danger of deception—Lk 21:8; Gal 6:3; 2Co 13:5
 - e. The nature of saving faith—Prov 30:12; 14:12
 1. There is a counterfeit—Jn 8:30 comp 44, 59; Jn 12:42 comp 43; 6:66
 2. There is genuine faith—Jn 1:12
 3. The Greek words apeitheo, apeithes
 - a. Rendered
 1. unbelief—Heb 4:6, 11
 2. disobedience—Eph 2:2; 5:6
 - b. Believe not—Heb 3:18; 11:31
 - c. Obey not—1Pt 3:1; 4:17
 4. Greek 'pistis' (TDNT—one volume by Bromily)—“As in Greek, this word means 'faithfulness' and more commonly (religious) 'trust' or 'faith,' ...”
 5. Greek 'pistos' (TDNT) “This word may mean either 'faithful' or 'trusting.'”
 6. Nature of unbelief is disobedience—Ja 2:19
 7. True faith includes REPENTANCE or the desire to OBEY
 - a. Lord—Rom 10:9, 10; Jn 15:14; Ro 16:26

- b. Some will argue that this is only giving mental assent to Jesus as Jehovah without submitting.
- c. But, if we acknowledge Christ as LORD = Jehovah, we must submit. There is no concept in a monarchy of acknowledging the King without submission. There may be false subjects in an earthly kingdom but God know the heart.
- f. The difficulty with this topic is that men are told to just 'take Jesus as their savior' and then are talked into thinking that they are 'saved'. Some tell them it is a sin to question such a matter.
- g. Saving faith is from the Lord—Jn 6:44; Eph 2:9; Col 2:12; 1Co 2:5; Ep 1:16-20
- h. The Evidence of 'saving faith'—Tit 2:11, 12; Ro 8:13; Col 3:5-8; Gal 5:24
 - 1. Tit 3:5—We owe our salvation to
 - a. Father—2Th 2:13; Tit 2:10
 - b. Son—Ro 5:8
 - c. Spirit—Lk15:4-10; Tit 3:5; Lk 14:16-24; Jn 6:44 (comp. doctrine of Total Depravity)
 - 2. Heart's desires—Ro 10:10; At 15:9
 - a. Loves Word—Ro 7:22; 2Ti 2:15
 - b. Hates all evil—Eph 4:17-29
 - c. Obedient walk—1Jn 2:3-4
- i. Coming to Christ—Jn 5:40; Mt 11:28, etal.
 - 1. Obstacles—rooted in man's total depravity
 - a. Total Inability—Ro 8:7; 3:11
 - b. Men do not lack mental faculties—Ep 4:18
 - c. A corrupt nature
 - 1. affections corrupt—Jn 6:44
 - 2. will corrupt—Jn 5:40
 - 2. Coming with understanding—Jn 8:30-44
 - a. A knowledge of Christ is essential—Ro 10:14; Heb 11:6
 - b. Theoretical is not enough—must be a change of heart imparted by the Holy Spirit—Jn 6:44; 1Jn 5:20
 - c. Our heart (emotions) must be in it—comp. Ro 8:28, etal.
 - d. Our will is involved
- j. Assurance—1Jn 5:13; 2:3-5 (note: saying 'faith' does not negate the desire to 'obey' and 'keep his commandments.')
- 1. Note: 2Co 13:5 proves that it is
 - a. not based on going to the right church or merely believing the right doctrine.
 - b. not based on recalling an event in our past when we 'made a decision' or 'went forward', etc.
 - c. proper to question our salvation when we are not living for the Lord.
 - d. Some oppose this questioning process
 - 1. Some boast that they have never had doubts.
 - 2. They teach that to have doubts is to sin.
 - 3. One man in a recent debate referred to this as having faith in our faith.
 - e. The issue is whether our faith is of us or of the Lord.
- 2. It's nature
 - a. The faith of God's elect—Tit 1:1; 2Co 13:5
 - b. The graces of Mt 5 present
 - 1. note: not necessarily fully developed but present
 - 2. note: not necessarily always present
 - c. The fruit of Gal 5:22-23 present
 - 1. note: not necessarily fully developed but present
 - 2. note: not necessarily always present
- 3. It's basis—Lk 13:3; Ja 2:20; At 15:9; Gal 5:6; 1Jn 5:4
 - a. saved from LOVE of sin—Ps 51:5; Job 42:6; Jn 3:19; Prov 8:13
 - b. saved from ALLOWANCE of sin—Ro 7:15
 - 1. YES, we do sin—1Jn 1:8-10. But, we should hate it when we do. We must make no excuses for it.
 - 2. Some have taught that this verse (Ro 7:15) relates to the unbeliever but they are wrong. This is the experience of every believer.
 - 3. Do you sin all you wish—you bet you do. And you should hate that in you—Ro 7:24

- c. saved from the REIGNING POWER of sin—Ro 8:6-7; 6:6-22
 - 1. It is spiritually healthy to be conscious of sin in our lives
 - 2. It is spiritually healthy to desire to be conformed at all times—2Co 10:4-5
 - d. Our ground of acceptance is Christ and him alone. Our knowledge of acceptance is another matter.
 - 4. The attainment of assurance—Phil 1:6; At 15:9; Ro 5:5; Heb 8:10; 2Co 13:5
 - a. Spirit produced evidence—Ro 8:16
 - 1. God by Spirit—Ro 8:14
 - 2. Fruit—Gal 5:22-23
 - 3. HIS consolation—At 9:13 comp Ro 15:13
 - 4. Producing affections—Ro 8:15
 - b. Tit 2:11-13; 1Jn 4:13
 - 5. The maintenance of assurance
 - a. Guard heart—Prov 4:23; Mk 14:38; 2Co 10:4-5
 - b. Confess—Prov 28:13; 1Jn 1:9
 - c. Commune with the Lord—1Jn 1:5-7
- F. The ‘carnal christian’ error
1. The teaching is that there are three types of people. *Scofield Reference Bible*, pp 1213-1214)
 - a. Natural Man = unbeliever
 - b. Carnal Man = a believer who lives ‘just like an unbeliever.’
 - c. Spiritual Man = a believer who lives for the Lord
 2. Note: we each may have areas of our lives in which we are ‘carnal’ but the man is not such.
 - a. This teaching is said to come from 1Co 3:1-4 but the divisions in 1Co 2 are ‘natural’ and ‘spiritual.’
 - b. This teaching is a natural outgrowth of the ‘savior-only’ gospel. The ‘carnal’ man is one who has trusted Christ as Savior but not as Lord!
 3. Errors that come from this error
 - a. Wrong meaning to 1Co 3
 - 1. There is one problem in the passage—improper division in the church.
 - 2. Each believer has areas of ‘carnality’
 - b. The provisions in the new covenant (Jer 31:31-34) are separated
 - 1. Law put in inward parts—implies living for the Lord in the present.
 - 2. Forgiveness—implies living with the Lord in the future.
 - c. Saving faith and spurious faith are not distinguished—e.g. Jn 2:23,24; 12:42,43; Lk 8:13, etal.
 - 1. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol III, p. 68, talks of three kinds of faith: (1) Speculative or dead faith. (2) temporary faith, (3) saving faith.
 - 2. Robert Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, p. 600 talks of four kinds of faith: (1) Temporary faith. (2) historical faith, (3) miraculous faith, (4) saving faith.
 - 3. See above
 - d. Repentance is omitted from the gospel—At 20:20,21
 - e. It gives a wrong view of assurance.
 - f. This view gives a low view of sin—Ro 6:1-2. This is the gist of ‘antinomianism.’
 - g. This view requires a ‘second’ work of grace—sanctification as separate from salvation. Thus the believer in this age can’t be said to be complete in Christ.
 - h. It gives a wrong view of Christ. He must be Lord not just Savior.
 - i. This view gives a false spirituality. We thus recognize a category of believers who are distinctly better than others—the spiritual ones.