



June 21, 2009

When You Think This Is All There Is

The nature of our faith shapes our perspective of the world and affects how we live. When one thinks of faith, there is an element of trust in God that is involved, but too many times that becomes overshadowed with the cares and pleasures of living a temporal existence. As we look at the religious world we find that there are many who compromise with the physical realm. Most of us are familiar with stories of those who have used religion as a means of acquiring wealth and power in the world. Others may think of themselves as religious but their behavior denies the meaning of true faith in practice. Perhaps others reject the idea of a more spiritual life due to the desire, or perceived need for the things of the world. True faith is defined as the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen (**Heb 11.1**). What do we hope for? In a scriptural sense we hope for a home with God and Christ as the Lord promised (**John 14.1-3**). That hope is based on the scriptures. The home that we can have with God, and the blessings that we enjoy in this life, are evidence of things not seen. Once again this is founded on the scriptures as the physical proof of God's providence in the preservation of his word which reveals these things to us. What happens when we do not firmly plant that hope in our minds and hearts and make Heaven the goal of our existence? In the absence of faith rooted in the word of God, there are dangers that await and the result of this short sightedness is a failure to live acceptably before God. When we fail to hold on to the hope of the promises of God we make ourselves vulnerable to the desires of the world. We find ourselves becoming envious of those about us who appear to be more "successful" in their endeavors. We have a saying that we can't have our cake and eat it too. That is true in spiritual matters as well. This type of thinking leads to compromise in one's life. Some may claim to be Christians but find it hard to part with the world. One may want to pursue the good things in life without paying the proper reverence to the things that God has commanded. In the absence of true faith we may become miserable as we tend to look more at what we don't have or haven't achieved

rather than the blessings and obligations that we have as servants of God. Those who lack this vision cannot see afar off as Peter stated (**2 Pet 1.9**). This type of living and thinking leads to envy and despair at not being able to do all that we would like to do. Commitment to the work that God wants us to do may interfere with doing what we want. This is a selfish way of looking at life and leads to discontent. The world is filled with those who wish to be one of the "haves" and not one of the "have nots". The struggle for gain in this world is fraught with problems and pitfalls. Few rise to greatness and of those who do, their achievement is many times accomplished by overwhelming, overcoming and suppressing others that stand in their way. Paul mentions this type of life in his writing to Timothy. ***"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. ... Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."*** (**1 Tim 6.10,17-19**). In the end, if one cannot get what they want, or think they need, and there is no vision of a life hereafter, then some may resort to taking what they want without regard to the state of others. When we turn to God and the riches of his word we are reminded that we have a home that is reserved for us if we are faithful to the Lord. True faith strengthens that vision, and the resolve to be what God would have us become.

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