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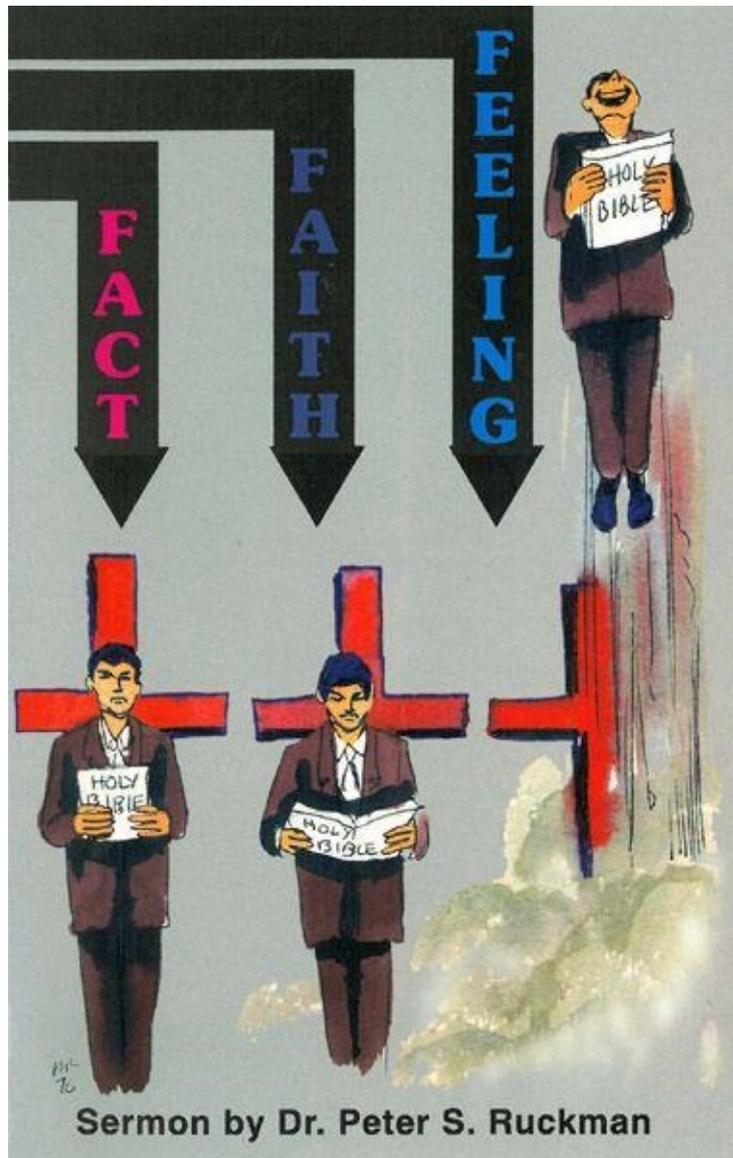
FAITH

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Sermon by Dr. Peter S. Ruckman



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Fact, Faith, And Feeling

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Fact, Faith, And Feeling

To be a complete Christian you ought to have the *facts*, you ought to have the *faith*, and you ought to have the *feeling*. Fact is the *root* of salvation, not feeling. People in America are always going by feeling. It's all right to have feeling, but feeling is not the *root* of salvation. Feeling is the *fruit* of salvation. If your root is in your feeling, you are going to be uprooted about every other day, because you are going to be up and down, and back and forth, and all around. Fact is a certain thing, faith is a certain thing, feeling is a certain thing, and they are all in Acts 8.

In Acts 8 there is an Ethiopian eunuch who gets saved, and when he gets saved, he sets the pattern for the rest of the Bible for salvation by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. When you find folks fooling around with Acts 2, it is because they know nothing about salvation by grace through faith. The first man that ever got saved in that Bible by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, without laying on of hands and without tongues, was an African. He was a black man. The Bible says a Christian is a servant of Jesus Christ. When Paul used to refer to himself as a servant, he was referring to himself as a bonds slave of Jesus Christ. So the first man in the Bible to get saved exactly like you are saved, was an African. Do you know why? Because Genesis 9:25 says he is “**a servant of servants.**” Paul said you are bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Do you understand that? You are somebody else's. That is awfully hard to get through to some folks that are saved.

They say, “Go to the church of *your* choice.” Don't ever do that. Don't ever make that mistake. Don't ever go to the church of your choice. You go where the Lord wants you to go. You say, “Well, I prefer this version to that version.” God forbid that you should have any preference. Listen, you Christians, I'm talking to you. If you are saved, you are not your own. Have you got that? You keep thinking, “I have a right, I have a right....” You have no rights. You are not your own. You are bought with a price. Your master is Jesus Christ. He said you have one master, and that master is Christ. You are not your own master. If you are saved, Jesus Christ is your Master.

Look at Acts 8:32, “**He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth.**” There is the *fact*. The fact is that Christ died for your sins. In verse 32 when Philip gets in that chariot and starts talking to the Ethiopian eunuch, he opens to the Scripture and verse 32 says, “**He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth.**” He was led like a sheep to the slaughter. What is that? That is the substitutionary sacrifice. That is a lamb slain for somebody else. “**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**” (John 1:29). It is a fact that Jesus Christ died for your sins. That is a *fact*. Somebody asked Sir James Simpson, the great Englishman who discovered chloroform, “What was the greatest discovery you ever made?” He said, “The greatest

discovery I ever made in my life was that I was a sinner, and the second greatest discovery I ever made was that Christ died for me.”

When you pin your faith in what Christ did for you on Calvary’s cross, you are dealing with a *fact*. That isn’t a “belief.” “Well, you believe this or you believe that....” Listen, it is a *fact* that Christ died for sinners. That is a fact. It is a *fact* that sinners who trust Him get to heaven. That is a fact. What you think about it is immaterial. A fellow says, “I don’t believe that.” Who asked your opinion? Christ died. That’s historical. He was buried. That’s historical. Five hundred people saw Him come up. That’s historical. You don’t have to have that many witnesses in a law court. It is a *fact* that Christ died for your sins, and *facts are facts*.

It is a *fact* that He died a substitutionary death. Folks say, “I don’t believe in substitution.” Sure you do. You believe in a mother going down through the valley of death to bring a child into this world. You believe that. You believe in a man out there working and getting greyheaded before his time and getting ulcers trying to pay bills for a family. You believe in that. You believe in substitution. You believe in somebody’s life for somebody else’s life. Sure you believe in that. **“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures”** (1 Cor. 15:3-4). **“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”** (Heb. 7:25). All right, that is a *fact*. It is a fact that Christ was offered as a sacrificial lamb and didn’t talk back and was nailed in your place and bore your sins (Acts 8:32). You say, “I don’t know that is a fact.” All right, try it out.

Years ago an uneducated rescue mission superintendent had a debate with a fellow who was kind of a half atheist/half agnostic. He got up there and started dealing with that agnostic, and that fellow made a fool out of the mission superintendent. The debate went on and on and on, and finally the superintendent saw that he was getting the worst of it and couldn’t match wits with the agnostic; so he stopped trying to match wits with him. The next time the superintendent got up he said, “Is evidence admissible in this debate?” The judges said, “Certainly.” So the rescue mission superintendent stood up and said, “All right, I would like everybody in this building that has found peace and joy and assurance of salvation through believing what I told them to stand up.” Forty converted bums that were staying at the mission at that time stood up, and 100 more that had been saved for years that had come to hear the debate stood up. He had 140 in a crowd of about 1,000. Then he turned to his opponent and said, “Now, would you have all the people stand up in this building that have gotten peace and joy and assurance by following your teaching?” Nobody stood up.

You see, we’re not dealing with what you think you know or what you think you don’t know. The fact is *that if you don’t know where you are going when you die, you have not trusted the finished work of Jesus Christ*. When you trust the finished work of Jesus Christ, *you can know*. When that many people try a thing and it works, then the thing works! A fellow says, “Well, it worked for them, but it won’t work for me.” Have you tried it? How does this chalk feel? If you’re an honest man, do you know what you will say? You’ll say, “I don’t know exactly how it feels. I’ve never had that piece of chalk in my hand.” That’s right. Now, let me ask you this. Can Jesus Christ save a sinner? You say,

“I don’t know.” Why don’t you try it? That old Book says, **“O taste and see that the Lord is good”** (Psa. 34:8). If you don’t think it will work, why don’t you try it? I’m dealing with *facts*.

The next thing is faith. The Bible says, **“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Rom. 10:17). Now, let’s get this thing clear. It is a *fact* that Christ died for sinners. If you don’t believe it, try it out. How do you try it out? **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast”** (Eph. 2:8-9). You come down to Acts 8:36, 37 and what do you have? You have Philip talking to the Ethiopian eunuch, and the eunuch asks that if he believes can he get baptized. Philip says to him in verse 37, **“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.”**

If you have a “new” Bible, that isn’t in your Bible. If you have an ASV, you’ll not find that verse. If you have a *New ASV*, that verse isn’t in there. If you have an *RSV*, that verse isn’t in there. But if you have a King James Bible, that verse is there. That verse says, **“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”** The Bible says, **“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life”** (1 John 5:13). If you’re saved, then you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and if you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Saviour, then you should know that you have eternal life. There are some Christians that are safe. They’ve trusted Jesus Christ, and that is a fact. But they are not sure because surety comes by the word of God. **“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Rom. 10:17).

Every Christian ought to be safe, he ought to be sure, and he ought to be satisfied. Some of you are safe. You have trusted Jesus Christ. But you’re not sure. Do you know why you are not sure? You don’t believe what He said. You are not resting in what He said: **“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** What you have to do is rest your naked soul on the word of God or rest your soul on the naked word of God. People are always looking for something. Some of you are just sitting and waiting for some feeling to get you. You are just sitting there waiting for some evidence of the fact. *The evidence is in that Book.* That Book says, **“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life”** (1 John 5:13). What you have got to do is rest your faith in what that Book says. Somebody says, “Just a little old Book?” Yeah, a little old Book. “How can I rest my faith in a Book?” It’s more reliable than your mother. It’s more reliable than your father. Your mother or father might lie to you, but that Book won’t lie to you. Your kids might lie to you, but that Book won’t lie to you. **“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”** (Num. 23:19). You need to rest your soul on the naked word of God and say, “OK, Lord, you said it. That is it.”

There is going to come a time in your life when you are going to have to rest your soul on the word of God. J.C. Penney, the great department store magnate, had about 500 stores when the depression came, but by 1929 they were all going bankrupt. He was at the end of his wits and was in the hospital suffering with ulcers and breaking out from rashes and about to kill himself. One day he went by the chapel in the hospital and heard somebody

singing, "Be not dismayed what 'er betide, God will take care of you." He said that right at that moment he trusted Christ as his Saviour and said, "OK, God, you are going to have to take care of me." He went back to his room and slept like a baby, got over his rash in two days, and then went out and lived to be seventy-one years old, and he never had an ulcer again. You say, "What did he do?" He believed what God said.

The Bible says, "**But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus**" (Phil. 4:19). Rest on that. *God will take care of you.* Rest on it. A lot of folks have faith, but they have no facts. A fellow says, "I've got faith to believe. I've got faith to believe. I've got faith to believe Santa Clause comes down the chimney.... I've got faith to believe that Christ was crucified on the dogwood tree.... I've got faith to believe that God will give me a million dollars.... I've got faith to believe God will give me a new yacht." *Listen, your faith has to rest on a fact.* Faith without fact is credulity. That isn't faith, and that is not honoring God. You've got a bunch of people today who try to manufacture faith. They try to think faith up, but it has got to be based on fact. You've got fact; you've got faith; you've got feeling. Faith is not the root of salvation. Fact is the root of salvation.

I was talking to a fellow one time about his soul, and I was trying to get across to him the fact that all a man needed to get saved was faith. (He was a Roman Catholic and had been taught to do penance and take the sacraments.) I said to the fellow, "Are you saved?" He said, "No, I'm not." I said, "Would you like to be saved?" He said, "Yes, I would." I said, "Do you know how to be saved?" He said, "No, I don't." I took out that Bible and showed him how to be saved, and I said, "Now, if you want to be saved, what you have got to do is quit trusting your feelings and put your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Will you do it?" He said, "Yes, I'll do it." I said, "OK, if you will, let's kneel," and I knelt down and he knelt down. I said, "If you will take Christ the best way you know how as your Saviour then take my hand." He took my hand. You say, "What is that?" That is exercising faith. "**Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God**" (Rom. 10:17).

You've got *fact*. You've got *faith*. And last, and this is the trouble with people, you've got the *feeling*. There's nothing wrong with feeling. I like to have good feelings. Who doesn't? But listen, *you are not saved by feelings. You are saved by what Christ did for you.* You have the right feeling when you live for the Lord and serve the Lord. If you don't serve the Lord, no feeling. If you don't believe what God said, no assurance. If you don't trust Christ, no safety. You are safe because of what Jesus did. That is a fact. You're sure of what God said. That is assurance. And you have the right feeling when you live for the Lord. If you don't live for the Lord, your feelings go out the window.

Feeling can't save anybody. Feeling is the *fruit* of salvation, not the root. It has never been the root of salvation. It is the outcome of serving God, and believing God and doing what God told you to do. When I got saved, that bothered me just like it bothers you. I was led to Christ in the record room of a radio station in Pensacola, Florida, and when the guy that led me to Christ showed me how to get saved, I bowed my head and prayed and asked the Lord to save me. When I got through praying he said, "Did you mean that prayer?" I meant it. He said, "Now you're saved." I said, "I don't feel any different." He said, "You're not supposed to feel any different." I said, "Well, how do I know I'm saved?" He

said, "You just know." I said, "No, I don't." He said, "You do so." I said, "No, I don't." He said, "You do so." I said, "I don't either." And he showed me a verse that said, **"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life"** (I John 5:13). I had to believe what God said. Now listen, I've got a feeling, but I didn't get that feeling until a week after I got saved. A week later, during a church service, the preacher gave an invitation, and I went down the aisle and stood right there and shook hands with those folks, and when I went out the door that night, I knew I was a saved man, by feeling. But I was saved long before I thought that. You are saved when you trust Jesus Christ. That is a fact. And you know it when you believe God's word. That's *faith*. You feel it when you do what God told you to do.

Some of you who are reading this book want the right feeling, and I can tell you how to get it. I can tell you how to get so much feeling that it will make your skin crawl, but you won't do it. You haven't got the guts to do it. I'll tell you how to get the feeling. When the invitation is given in your church, get up and go down the aisle and confess Christ as your Saviour; then get baptized. Next, get a fistful of tracts and go back to all the folks you have been lying about and talking about and messing around with, and apologize to them and give them a tract and tell them how to be saved. Then take your car downtown and park it by a parking meter and put your money in the parking meter and then stand on the roof of your car, where everybody raised in the town that knows you can see you and hear you and cuss you out and say you're going crazy, and witness for Jesus Christ. If you don't have the feeling by then, I'll quit the ministry. OK? Is it a deal? Why don't you try it? Do you know why you don't try it? You don't want a feeling that badly. "I want a feeling; I want a feeling." You don't want one badly enough to get it. Listen, if you ever get in a position like that and start witnessing like that, you will find out what happens. You'll find out! You get up there and something like a wall of fire goes around you! I've felt that thing many times, brother, about four feet around you. Somebody says, "I don't believe that." TRY IT!

I was preaching in Dayton Baptist Temple one time and a fellow about forty years old came down to the altar and knelt and I said, "Would you like to trust Christ?" He said, "I don't have any feeling." I said, "What did you come down here for?" He said, "Well, the fellow said to come down and I came down, but I don't feel anything." I said, "Do you know you're lost?" He said, "Yes, I'm lost." I said, "Do you want to be saved?" He said, "Yes, I want to be saved, but I don't feel anything." I said, "OK, let's pray and ask God to give you some feeling." He said, "All right." So we bowed our heads and I said, "Now, Lord, I want You to give this fellow some feeling. He wants feeling, and I want You to give it to him. Give him so much he can't stand it." He looked up at me and said, "I don't feel anything." I said, "Come back tomorrow night." Next night the invitation was given, and he was right back down there again. I said, "OK, do you want to pray for a feeling?" He said, "No, no, I've got enough feeling. I've got to get saved." I don't know what that guy had been doing all day, but he was ready for prayer, brother. He wasn't going to fool around wanting feeling any more.

How do you get the feeling? You get the feeling by doing what God told you to do. The trouble is that folks don't cash in on it. They don't take God at His word. That Book tells you how to get the feeling, but first, before God gives it to you, you are going to have to have faith. You are going to have to believe God and believe what He gave you. **"These**

things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13).

I read of a case one time where an old saint in England lost her young son. He went away to sea in the Navy and then got out of the Navy and disappeared someplace. It turned out later that he had been shanghaied. That old sister waited for him to come back for years and years, but he never did. But every year at her birthday, and on special occasions, he would send her a little blue slip of paper, which she used to paper her walls. When she got to be around seventy years old, the people came by from the welfare office and said, “I’m sorry, but you’ve got to go off to the poor house”; but when they started to take her out of the house, one of the men said, “What are these money orders doing all over your wall?” She said, “I don’t know. That’s just a little thing my son sent me. He’s in Australia and couldn’t get back home so he would mail those to me every year.” There were 240 fifty dollar money orders on that wall. Little blue slips of paper. That woman had 240 fifty dollar money orders around that wall, just nice little “pictures” like wallpaper. God has given you some orders right there in that Book, and you’ve got the thing in your lap. The thing is not just to look at. You are supposed to use it. That will give you the right feeling.

Sadhu Sundar Singh was a famous Hindu convert in India who got saved and disappeared into the Himalayan mountains at about the 18,000 foot level while going out to seek for sinners. That old boy said, “A Christian is somebody who has fallen in love with Jesus Christ.” That always seemed to me like a pretty good definition. Listen, a saved sinner is a man who has put his faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. But a Christian is a saved sinner who has fallen in love. It’s real to him. It isn’t just a matter of serving. James McGinley said, “The longer I live, the more I am convinced that most Christians in America are serving a historical Jesus, instead of loving a living Lord.” Folks talk about the right feeling and falling in love and falling out of love and that kind of thing, but you have to work at love. You have to work at it. You have to give. Do you think God didn’t have to work at it? **“For God so loved the world, that he gave...”** (John 3:16). Do you think God just fell in love with us? Folks have a funny idea about that thing. Listen, the Lord had to work at loving us, **“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us...”** (1 John 4:10). If you are going to love Jesus Christ, you are going to have to work at it. It is not going to come by just sitting around and waiting for some beautiful, milky feeling to just cover you from head to foot. Start sacrificing for Him. Start denying yourself for Him. Start making a fool out of yourself for Him—and you’ll see how it goes. Fall in love with Jesus Christ.

Sadhu Sundar Singh’s family was royal Moslem, what they call “Sikh.” They cut their hair a certain way and were in one of the upper classes of India. While he was growing up, his parents sent him to a mission school where he laughed at the missionary preachers, tore up Bibles, and burned them. When the missionary preachers would preach on the street, he would throw rocks and bottles at them. Then one day he got under deep conviction and prayed, “Lord, reveal yourself to me.” That was his prayer. “Reveal yourself to me.” Sundar said the Lord spoke to him in his own language, and he got saved.

Right before his father died, he told Sundar of his inheritance and what was expected

of him, but Sundar said that he was a Christian and could only work for and serve Christ. His father told him that he would be disinherited and disowned, but Sundar said that he could only serve Christ; he could not be a Moslem. They shaved his head, disgraced him before the family, had the last supper for him, and ran him out of the house. He left the house that night vomiting all the way out because they had tried to poison him. That old boy spent his life in India going up and down those mountains, especially around the Himalayan mountains, preaching. They called him “the apostle of the bleeding feet.” That fellow would go by a field and preach to the workers, and they would throw rocks at him. He would get up there in the field and pick up a sickle and help them get the harvest in and then seek their forgiveness and preach to them again. In those Himalaya mountains around Tibet, the Buddhist lamas got after him. One of those head lamas had him stoned and mobbed and thrown in to a pit to die. That night about eleven o’clock, while in the bottom of that pit with all the dead bodies, the top of that well opened and a rope came down. He got hold of the rope and somebody hauled him out of there and left the keys there and then disappeared into the bushes. The keys to the top of that well hung around the inside garment of the high Tibetan lama who ran the monastery. Somebody had taken the keys off his belt to get Sundar out of there. That fellow was chased up and down the Himalaya mountains and whipped and beaten and stoned probably more than any man living in this century. The last time anybody saw him he was 18,000 feet high in the Himalaya mountains going back into the snow. Folks say, “Well, what happened to Sundar Singh?” I’ll tell you what happened to him. He got the right feeling.

There you have it. You have *fact*. You have *faith*. You have *feeling*. Look at the end of Acts 8:39, “... **and he went on his way rejoicing.**” See that. There’s the feeling. “... **And he went on his way rejoicing.**” That comes at the end. When I first got saved I had never heard any real Bible preaching in all my life until I went to Brent Baptist Church one night and heard James McGinley, a Scotch preacher. I’ll never forget the shock when I first heard him preach. I was raised in the Episcopal Church, and when you go from an Episcopal church to James McGinley, you take a real step. When he got through preaching, I went around and talked to him, and I said, “Dr. McGinley, I’ve got a problem. I’ve got a bunch of fellows I hung out with before I got saved, and I don’t know how to get rid of them.” He said, “They’ll get rid of you.” I said, “No, they won’t get rid of me. We have been drinking beer and living like the devil for years, and they’re good friends of mine.” He said, “They’ll get rid of you if you witness for Jesus Christ. Are you ashamed to witness for Jesus Christ?” I said, “No, I’m not ashamed.” He said, “OK, you witness to them, and you won’t have to worry about getting rid of them. They will get rid of you.” The next morning at the radio station my old buddy Pete Chiccine came by and said, “Hey, Ruckman, let’s go have a beer.” I said, “OK, be right with you.” I put my records away and logged out and started out by the record room, and I said, “Hey, come here a minute.” I took him back in the record room and shut the door behind him, and I said, “Do you know something? I just got saved.” That old boy began to back along that wall and said, “What, what, what?” I said, “I just got saved.” He said, “Ah, Ruckman, you’re getting religion,” and he began to feel for the door behind him. I said, “No, I’m not getting religion. I got saved. You ought to get saved, man. It’s great.” Blam! Out that door. He never bothered me again.

You’re saved if you trust Christ. You’re sure if you believe what God said. You have

the right feeling when you do what God tells you to do. No living for the Lord—no feeling. No believing what God said—no assurance. No trusting Jesus Christ—no safety.