

1 Peter 1:3-8 (NIV) How Can I Have Faith?

Before we ask the question 'How Can I Have Faith' – perhaps we should consider what faith is.

I like this acronym:

Forsaking

All,

I

Trust

Him

The OED give two definitions of faith:

1. Complete **trust** or confidence in someone or something
2. Strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof.

But faith in secular society can arouse much scepticism – Faith some say 'is believing something you know isn't true', but such a definition starts from a place of unbelief, a place of atheism.

The life of Jesus, that he was indeed a person of history is an attested fact, with more evidence for his existence than of people such a Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great.

So the Christian faith is not based on delusion, it isn't founded in something that isn't true... and it doesn't I believe meet the OED second definition that said it was strong belief in doctrine of religion based on spiritual conviction rather than proof.

Sure spiritual conviction is part of it.. but there is evidential proof. Maybe not the scientific level of proof that non-believer may demand but there is proof non-the-less.

In the video Nicky talked about marriage and love... that he could produce a marriage certificate to show his commitment to Pippa. Just like I can the same with Emma.

But love is a feeling, an emotion – it is something I know, deep within – I am convicted of it. But can I scientifically prove it... I don't think so.

But I can show the evidence of my love – I can buy flowers (and do occasionally), or chocolates, go out for a date night, snuggle up and watch a great movie together, go for walks, or just sit in one another's company... all are evidence of the emotion of my love.

However true evidence is what I would do for Emma, for my children, what many people do when putting others they love before themselves. It is what Jesus did for us all. True love is evidenced by the sacrifice we would make.

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And so like love can we prove faith, maybe not to scientific levels of proof but yes through evidence, because evidence of faith is belief – but belief in more than the doctrine of Christian faith, and on more than the spiritual conviction of the truth of the Christian faith –

The evidence of faith is shown by the billions of Christians who choose to follow Christ and live their life in discipleship... because of their experience of God

Hebrew 11.1 says

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

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So, our passage from 1 Peter says much to the question of faith.

V3 starts with a wonderful doxology, a praise to God –

... who is not a distant unknown being, but to God who Father, who is known through His Son – Jesus Christ.

Peter then acknowledges the key to faith – that it is through new birth, rebirth into living hope.

This does not come from our own effort – but from through the resurrected Jesus.

New birth is all about change. It is about metanoia – turning to a new way, repenting of the life we have led, a sinful life, and actively seeking the new way – the Christian way.

It is about Faith in God but more than that it is about faithfulness in God.

Peter also writes the rebirth brings us into a living hope.

A living hope is that born of God there is an incorruptible seed within, the spark of the Spirit...

... and therefore we are of something that cannot be destroyed – and our in-destruction, of fullness of life is found in the hope of the resurrection.

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The new birth in Christ is an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade the passage continues.

Inheritance (*Kléronomia*) is the word used in the Old testament for the inheritance of Canaan, the Promised Land – the Bible uses the word to mean not just something we will have in the future, but rather something that is a **SECURE** possession – **guaranteed in the promise of God.**

So Christian inheritance is

1. Imperishable

It's unravaged by any opposition – and so can be possessed with peace and joy;

2. Unspoiled / undefiled

It's unpolluted with impious impurity – it will stand up against all false idols and defilement of this world. In other words, truth will stand;

3. Unfaded

The promise of God will not fade as everything else does in this world.

And so, this inheritance Peter says is waiting, in heaven – eternal life and love... but what about the here?

... now we are protected and shielded by God, by His power through faith.

So, back to the question... what is faith?

- It's not blind but informed
- It is not made but a gift of God – we're given faith and faithfulness is returned.
- It is not in seeing, but in believing
- It is not in seeing, but in knowing His love and giving our love in return.

And... what are the results of faith? –

- inexpressible and glorious JOY

VIDEO!! Pete Grieg – Prayer Course on unanswered prayer

How Can I Have Faith was the question of the Alpha video – it's a question we'd love to explore with those who have questions.

Who do you know?

Come – take the first step...

If those you invite trust you, they may just take that first step of faith...

If they share food, break bread together, share in watching the videos and then share questions – they may just start to trust and step out in faith...

The faith that says

Forsaking All, I Trust Him