

“Of Saving Faith” part 6, WCF 14.2.2–3, Faith Obeys Commands and Trembles at Threatenings

2021.04.11 Sabbath School Lesson

Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

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WCF 14.2 (TPH p927)

II. By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein;(e) and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands,(f) trembling at the threatenings,(g) and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come.(h) But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.(i)

(e) John 4:42; I Thess. 2:13; I John 5:10; Acts 24:14.

(f) Rom. 16:26.

(g) Isa. 66:2.

(h) Heb. 11:13; I Tim. 4:8.

(i) John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Acts 15:11.

Romans 16:25 **Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began²⁶ but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—²⁷ to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.**

Who is able to establish (make believers to stand, and keep them standing) believers?

What five things do vv25–26 list as means by which He has ordained to do so?

What does v26 call the right way of responding to these things?

What does v27 say is the result, when we respond to God’s Word in this way?

Isaiah 66:1 **Thus says the LORD:**

**“Heaven is My throne,
And earth is My footstool.
Where is the house that you will build Me?
And where is the place of My rest?**

**² For all those things My hand has made,
And all those things exist,”**

Says the LORD.

“But on this one will I look:

**On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My Word.**

What is God saying about our ability to “do things” for Him or to give Him things?

To what kind of heart (spirit) does He say that He will respond instead?

What is one way that someone with this kind of spirit responds to His Word?

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via tinysa.com/hopewellarp)

Our father in heaven how we thank you. That you have created us in your image to know you to enjoy you to glorify you. We confess that not only in our first Father Adam, but in ourselves we have sinned against you.

We have fallen. We have died. And we are deserving of your wrath, but we praise you for the gift of your son our Lord Jesus. And we thank you that you have given us your word by your spirit that we might know the gospel that we might know all that you command us we might know what we are to believe concerning you and what duty you require of us.

We thank you that you give your same spirit to sustained Christ in his humanity who who gave us your word and now we pray that you would continue pouring him out that you would continue ministering to us. Holy Spirit that you would help us as we consider your word and how we are to respond to it.

We recognize that all that we are about to learn we need you. Holy Spirit to do in us. And so we ask that you would help us even as we read and think about that in which you help us. All this we ask you Christ amen.

So we're in the second paragraph of unsaving faith or I'm saving faith you just you have just that second paragraph at the top last week we considered the first portion of that by this faith a Christian believer to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word for the authority of God himself speaking therein it's very important that we recognize that faith and scripture is a believing the word of God how many of you have heard people say faith is a leap.

Anybody okay, well you get that from people guard and not from people like the Apostle Paul. Or if you believe that it was some other writer the F-stop period through whom we got Hebrews but Paul as well it believes God's word, it doesn't leap it stands on that which is more solid than anything else that we think we know so faith is actually more certain not less certain as very important that you remember that when the Bible talks about faith it is not talking about this wishing against hope and believing against evidence.

We actually have better hope and better evidence for what the Bible says than we have for anything else because the Bible is God's own word so by this faith Christian believe it to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word for the authority of God himself speaking there and then.

We are towards. Spanned to what the Bible says in faith. It's not just an intellectual affirmation. So some of you perhaps have read the Westminster directory for family worship. One of the things that we hope that the Senate will do in June is approved a new directory for private and family worship that has been produced over the last couple of years.

Some of you know, Phillip Bunch who was one of the men in the Senate who has been on the committee that was producing. That and it has basically followed the original Westminster directory for family workshop. And one of the things that it says is it gives help to fathers who are leading worship.

If you've grown up in the church or family worship wasn't a thing or you grew up in a church and family were supposed to think but in your home, it was a difficult thing and especially if you're a guy who is or hopes to be one day a father you won't help for leading worship.

And the directory for public courses, very helpful. Says whatever the scripture commands command, whatever it threatens threaten whatever promises promise whatever it teaches teach and it sounds simple but it's simple enough to be overlooked. But that's basically what faith does. So we'll hopefully take these three metal sections of this paragraph from the scripture this morning.

The faith act of differently upon that which each particular passage thereof passages scripture than to. Containeth yielding obedience to the commands. Children how often maybe I shouldn't ask it this way. One of the things you may be tempted to do. Is that when mom gives you a command you think you're about to have a discussion.

And so it starts very even a one-year-old can learn to say why instead of yes ma'am or doesn't have to learn probably is more natural to say why than yes ma'am you have to learn to say yes ma'am instead of why it says oh so interesting that you have given me this command.

Let's have an intellectual conversation about it. And yet how often we do so with God's commands. And God gives us commands primarily to be obeyed. It's good to understand why they are good and the logic of God and His word, but the primary thing we're supposed to do with commands as a bay.

It was a yes, sir. Yelling obedience to the commands and trembling at the threatening when God threatens something against sin and guiltiness how easy it is to think of all the other people that audit tremble and to have a little intellectual exercise about other people's tremblings. It's wonderful to tremble at the threatenings of God because then when we see that the threatenings or that which has been threatened if you believe in Christ belong to him by faith the what has been threatened that.

Inspired upon Jesus. And so you're trembling turns from a trembling of terror to a trembling of all. It is. Marvelous in a way that even your glorified brain will never grow weary of exploring the depths of that God became a man to take upon himself what was threatened against your sin?

We ought to have real tremblings at the threatenings of God both because there are great help to us who are still growing and grace to see the terribleness of our sin and the terribleness of our guilt. But also to see the greatness of what Christ has done for us.

Embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come God has made promises about. He how he deals with us in this life. His word has those. And so we should believe him. And embrace love the word embrace. It's not just believing the promises to grip those promises to hang onto them.

You think of Jacob hanging onto God and saying I will not let you go until you bless me and that wrestlers embrace. Dear children. I would love for you to learn the habit of when God promises you something you cling to him and you cling to that promise saying the same kind of thing as Jacob I will not let you go and, Do you bless me because God is faithful and true.

His promises are true and he gives you promises that are true for this life and for that which is to come. So let us look at the scriptures from which we learn or some of the scriptures some scriptures from which we learn these truths. First we have Raymond 16 and they give us verse 26, but of course that comes in a context it's a conclusion to the book of Romans and we have verses 25 through 27.

Now to him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Christ according to the revelation of the mystery kept secrets since the world began, but now made manifest and by the prophetic scriptures made known to all nations. According to the commandment of the everlasting God for obedience to the faith.

To God alone wise be glory through Jesus Christ forever amen, okay. So it's to God be glory, of course, the apostle doesn't finish his letter with just a God be glory. Now to him who is able to establish a he is able to make you stand and to keep you standing.

Often it's the latter part that is that is the harder one, isn't it? If you've ever had to stand still if you ever had to stand on something. I don't know maybe some of your you kids are like my brothers and I would go somewhere be like a pier and there'd be posts and we'd all get up on a post and we just have a contest who could stand on the post the longest and maybe throw things at each other or try and get each other to laugh until someone would fall hopefully on into the water and not on to the pier.

But in the Christian life there is standing upon the word of God and then there's the remaining standing and you remember in Ephesians chapter six when he was talking about having done all and he said that three times stand well God is the one who's able not just to make you stand and to keep you standing and he gives you.

He gives you five things by which he has ordained to make you stand and he says who's able to establish you according to my gospel, what does the gospel? News that's specific news, it's about Jesus and what he has done the the gospel first Corinthians 15. Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures on third day, he rose again according to scriptures and so on but it is news it is words.

I don't know where it came from but at one point my life. I was exposed to idiotic phrase preach the gospel at all times and if necessary use words. That is theological spiritual stupid stupidity. It is like feed people at all times and if necessary use food. All right the gospel is words.

Preaching the gospel is using words, so the first thing he's talks about God establishing us through is the gospel words and the preaching of Jesus Christ. Says both preaching about Christ and as we have been learning from the scripture the preaching of Christ Christ's and preaching it was in chapter 10 of this letter that he's now concluding this way that he says you hear Christ and you believe Christ when he sends a preacher with his word and addresses you that you believe in him whom you have her so another set of words according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began.

So now we talk about sometimes two different kinds of revelation, what are they?

Okay natural and special or general and special that revelation generally that you can see so much about God and in what he has made and also he has put knowledge of himself in all of you general revelation isn't just science it's also the the knowledge that he's put in in all of us but that's not the mystery kept secret since the beginning of the world is it?

Because those are things that have been made known to man since the beginning of the world. So he's talking again about special revelation. He's talking about words. So now him to him who is a stable to able to establish you according to words words and words. Verse 26, but now made manifest and by the prophetic scriptures made known to all nations.

So exciting for someone who is a Pharisee and grew up under Gamalio and highly invested in Jewish exclusivity. Now, he says what does he talking about when he says the prophetic scriptures? He's talking about primarily his Hebrew Bible or maybe his Septuagint if he's got a Greek translation may also be talking about the letter that he's just finished writing.

We've seen on the number of occasions recently. Well in the last few years, but just last week, we saw John saying very powerfully that what he was writing in the letter of first John he believed to be God's own worked which is amazing. And so we've seen Paul speaking that way First Corinthians 14, we've seen Peter speaking that we've seen John speaking that way but when he says the prophetic Scriptures made known to all the nations.

It was almost unheard of until the translation of Septuagint but really until the spread of the gospel to all the nations that people like we are most of us. Oh no if there's anyone with any Jewish in our congregation. There's probably some we all do the ancestry stuff and let me know.

But for the most part we are extremely gentile in our ethnic background in this congregation, aren't we but we have the scriptures that were entrusted, you know, when he said earlier in this letter to the Romans what advantage has the Jew and one of those advantages they have the Oracles of God.

Well at the end of the letter we said it was an advantage to the Jews that they had the Oracles of God. He's now saying all nations have the oracles of God. But that's fourth thing through which he establishes. So how does God make you stand make you stand and keep you standing so far words words and words.

Rest of verse 26, according to that commandment of the everlasting. God. Commandment is more words. Okay for obedience to the faith. So he's God is one who is able to make us stand and keep us standing. God uses especially words his words to do that. As you read your Bible day by day as you lead your family or for most of you are led as a family in worship day by day in the Bible as you are taught from the Bible as you sit under preaching of the Bible you are doing much more than merely learning ideas.

We we give ourselves to these things as a matter of worship first of all for the glory of God because he's revealed to himself to us as the speaking God and if that's how he reveals himself if that's how he is glorified then you glorify him by being a listening people.

And you're speaking God is honored for what he is like in himself but second of all because he is the one who is making you stand and keeping you standing and this is the means that he's appointed to do it and so it's an act of resting in him and trusting in him just to use the words but then he wants us to respond to the words in a particular way and that is especially obedience so wherever he has given us commandment.

We obey by obeying the commandment wherever he's given us gospel, we obey by believing the gospel, you know that you're actually obligated to believe the gospel. Now when you obey your obedience is not what has counted for you for righteousness. Jesus is obedience is counted for you that's what faith means it says Jesus is the obeyer.

I am not he is my righteousness but it is a obedient thing to believe what he says and as they disobedient thing not to believe what he says if God says I am a try and God I am father son and holy spirit and God the, Son has become a man because you are a sinner.

And you deserve hell death and hell and I have given myself in my son to take what sinners deserve and and then you hear that and you don't believe your disobeying the gospel there obedience to the gospel actually appears a couple of times in the book of Romans, but it is a right response to the gospel to believe it but for our purpose it.

Is as he gives us these five things especially the commandment at the end that faith obeys the commandments of God and so he calls the right way of responding to God's word obedience and what happens when we do these things God is glorified he is glorified as being alone wise he is glorified as the one who has given Jesus Christ as a display of his glory so verse 27 to God alone wise be glory.

Through Jesus Christ forever. Amen. So if you're teaching your family for leading your family come across a commandment and scripture command what God commands and for all of us when we come across commandments and scripture we are to obey what God commands. Well, God doesn't just give commandments another thing he does in the Bible is he threatens one of the places in the Bible where he has threatened much is in the book of Isaiah and promised much and much and, But also threatenings and one of the one of the things he does in Isaiah 66 is he highlights how he responds or the kind of person to whom he responds, so.

Is there a 66 verses one and two thus says Yahweh Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool. Now, we think of heaven and earth as being very far apart. What does God say? He's describing himself as the one who fills all in all. We are accustomed to saying God is in heaven because there is a place called in Scripture the Third Heaven where God especially makes His glory known and of which He has made a copy at times in.

His people's lives. What was the tent called that was a copy? The tabernacle and there is a place in the heart of that tent. What was that place called? The Holy of Holies and when God when God approved of the Tabernacle after they were done building it and they had gone through the process of of consecrating it by the sacrifices and all of those things that he had told them to do how did they know that the tabernacle had been accepted by God as a place by which to dwell among his people.

What happened? Glory the glory cloud came down. And as especially so in the holy of holies which is why there's a little incense altar out there was a little incense altar outside so that as the high priest would go in once a year he could take the the shovel of incense and he could burn start at burning from that incense alter and he'd take that with him and the cloud of incense representing the aroma of the sacrifice of Jesus and, Protecting him from the glory that was enthroned upon the charity.

It's also one of the reasons why is such a terror when Nate Evan abai who are killed because the fire that kills them comes from Yahweh, it says it came. From the mercy seat even the mercy seat. Was not was not in God's providence there to spare them so we were accustomed to thinking of God as in particular locations because he makes his glory and his presence known in especially in particular locations, but God doesn't have location to himself.

He is and he is everywhere in the same amount it's difficult for us to comprehend because we are people who are located in places in so he's trying to communicate his complete utterness evidence my throne and earth is my footstool. I mean, what would you how big would you think a guy was if you walked into his living room and there's his favorite chair, you know way at one end of the room and he says that's my footstool you.

Know that's you're talking this you're talking to your friends that that's my dad's footstool over there at the other end of the room and your friend says, oh should we get it for him and oh no when he sits over there, he puts his feet up over there you think how tall is your dad it's like when you find out that all king of patient or basin had a thirteen and a half foot long iron bedstead to accommodate his life suddenly.

Goliath is like look at that little Phyllis. Alright so I grew up being taught Goliath was the tallest man ever. I yeah seen a felt days and all that. God makes everything even the whole of creation tiny. Because even the concept of location is too small for him well so is the concept of possession where's the house that you will build me you remember Solomon saying heaven and the highest heavens cannot contain you much less this house that I built he got it right he understood God is not contained in the temple he's pleased to make his presence in his glory known at the temple, where's the house that you will build me, where is the place of my rest for all those things my hand has made and all those things exists as Yahweh?

Okay, so. You and I cannot actually profit. God anything. Think it's it's either this week's or next week's reading in Luke where he said after we had done everything that God has commanded us to do we have only done our duty and we are to say I'll only done my duty and we're to call ourselves what?

Unprofitable servants now. God doesn't benefit from what we do for him. God displays his perfection and God glorifies himself. He magnifies himself in Christ, especially because anything good that you do is only done in Christ anyway. But God doesn't benefit. So we're not to think of God as as someone who is grateful to us and you know pays us back for what we have done for him.

So he says, but on this one, I will look on him who is poor. And of contrite spirit, okay? So you're needing this is actually something to plead with God for his generosity to you. This is where we are in the as in the petition portion of the prayer meetings and we pray through each the biblical categories and then within each of those categories we pray the different ways that Scripture teaches us and we're in the middle of pleading different things.

God is the kind of God with. Whom pleading neediness works because he loves to glorify himself upon the needy. Pleading your misery works because he is compassionate upon his children and he cares that they are miserable. I think this coming Wednesday evening we're going to be pleading the blessedness of belonging to him and obeying him.

Lord, it would be such a blessing to us and you're the kind of God who loves to bless your people so help us to obey because that would be a blessing. So that's one kind of argument with God something else that God loves to see enough that he produces by his spirit is trembling.

God says on this one will I look on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit and who trembles at my word? So we're supposed to tremble when God threatens.

That may not sound like a surprise to you, but I do have to warn you. That there are teachers and preachers even in the reformed world now who don't want you to tremble when God threatens. So if you trouble you don't understand grace. No. Grace makes you tremble. You know someone who's still a sinner who's still has things in you that God hates.

He hates them so much that he's determined to get rid of them. He wants you to hate the sin, that's left in you too. He wants you to tremble. That the fury that he has against the sin, that is in you. And he wants you to rejoice. That Christ who trembled?

And prayed. With sweat like great drops of blood. That if there was any other way for God to be glorified for us to be saved. That he would not have to endure the cross. Your savior trembled. It wasn't even his sin. Do you think that he didn't understand grace?

And so one of the things. That God produces in us when he produces likeness to Christ is a trembling at the wickedness of sin at the severity of God's hatred against it that is fury against it so when God sees someone trembling at his word, he sees his own work by his own spirit to make them like his own son.

That is something that God loves and he looks upon with favor just like in Psalm 51 which is parallel passage to this and he says a you know, the kind of sacrifice that God loves is a broken heart and contrite spirit very similar isn't it to here in Isaiah 66 and verse 2.

So faith when it reads God's commands that it resolves to and by the grace of God obeys those commands when when faith when sees God's threatenings at trembles at those threatenings now. Kids when and we've had some some good providential opportunity for this when lightning strikes and I don't just mean like the pretty stuff that you fear see far away.

I mean the stuff where you kind of feel the zappy and it kind of a little bit before and it's so close and and you get the thunder almost right away strikes and rattles and God doesn't give you the option of not trembling because the house trembled and you were in it.

Where do you go? Now not all of you some of you have gotten to be brave and if that's you, where did you use to go?

What do you do what what is your little sister do?

Absolutely mom and dad yes see the flash feel the sap here that Sam feel the humble and what do we do we count down in our heads right for three two.

Are not the threatening of God designed to make you tremble that you may run to Christ and cling. Faith responds to the threatenings of God. By that trembling.

Think we'll take the embracing of the promises of God for this life and that which is to come next time encourage you to just look over the passages if if you've got a sheet you can flip it over and I've put a little more context of the proof texts there for you.

I'm just some easy questions. You can the questions come right right out of the text and that'll that'll be a help to us as we consider considered continue considering this next week. So again the way the Bible talks about faith is not the way the world and even some people in the church adopting world language talk about faith.

It's not leaping past knowledge or without evidence. It's embracing. That which is most of all shore what God himself has said. It is the surest thing that there is. Alright, let's pray. Thank you. Father for all that you have taught us in your word. Thank you for your wisdom in the way that you have assembled your word and we pray that you would help us as we continue to lay this foundation that you would help us to compare Scripture with Scripture that you'd help us to understand how the truth of your word fits together that we would start to have an appreciation of the system of doctrine in your word that your spirit would then help us in whatever passage we are in to be able quickly to relate it to the rest.

Of what you teach Lord some of us. Are just grappling with learning systematic theology for the first time in our lives late and it's difficult. We thank you that the children in particular get to be exposed to it young we pray oh God that you would be laying a foundation not only for them for the rest of their lives, but that as you who are God from generation to generation build them up that you would be preparing them.

To be fathers and mothers fellow church members to others and we pray even from among some of these young men. Oh God that you would raise up elders preachers. That that which is being laid line by line and brick by brick in these weeks you would be using for the strengthening of generations to come.

We thank you oh God that you sanctify us by your truth and we pray that you would your word is truth and so use it to establish us we pray to make us life unto Christ that he would be glorified as the firstborn among many brethren and that you would be glorified in your son through whom we ask it amen.