God's Economy in Faith

Participate • Exercise • Practice

"Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint." (**Proverbs 29:18a**)

"Therefore ... I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." (**Acts 26:19**)

"Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith." (**1 Timothy 1:4**)

Young Working Saints Outing

Oklahoma City, April 21-22, 2023

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Friday Evening

6:00 Dinner in the Meeting Hall (simultaneous meal for children in the Fellowship Hall)

6:45 Singing/Prayer/Pray-Reading

7:00 **Message 1, "The Governing and Controlling Vision of God's Economy in Faith"** (50 minutes)

7:50 Special Fellowship & Testimony (20 minutes)

8:10 **Group Fellowship 1** – Fellowship for 15 minutes, followed by prayer in a circle (20 minutes)

8:30 Overflow together from message and group fellowship

8:45 Dismiss/pick up children

Saturday Morning

8:45 Arrive & Refreshments

9:00 Singing/Prayer/Pray-reading

9:15 **Message 2, "Running the Christian Race so That We May Obtain the Prize by Looking Away unto Jesus, the Author & Perfector of Our Faith"** (45 minutes)

10:00 One-time prayer and one-time share with 3-4 around you (5 minutes)

10:05 **Group Fellowship 2** – Read for approx. 15 minutes, then fellowship for 15 minutes, followed by prayer in a circle

10:35 Break (10 minutes)

10:45 **Message 3, "The Linking Faith—the Faith of the Overcomers"** (45 minutes)

11:30 Overflow from any message or group times

12:00 Lunch

Message 1

The Governing and Controlling Vision of God's Economy in Faith

I. We in the Lord's Recovery Need to Have a Vision of God's Economy and to be Governed, Controlled, and Directed by This Vision

Prov. 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint…

Acts 26:18-19 To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God… Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

A. God's Economy Is God's Household Administration, Which Is to Dispense Himself in Christ into His Chosen and Redeemed People That He May Have a House to Express Himself, Which House Is the Church, the Body of Christ.

1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

Eph. 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

B. God's Economy Is Carried Out by the God-Ordained Way; These Two Matters Cannot be Separated.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

C. The Divine Economy Is to Produce the New Creation out of the Chaotic Old Creation

2 Cor. 5:17 So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

II. God's Economy Is Initiated and Developed in the Sphere of Faith (1 Tim. 1:4)

A. On the Negative Side, to Exercise Faith Is to Stop Our Work, Our Doing; on the Positive Side, to Exercise Faith Is to Trust in the Lord

Heb. 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

B. Faith Is a Matter of Seeing a View of the Contents of God's Economy (Heb. 11:2, 6, 9, 23-26)

John 20:29 Jesus said to him, Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.

Heb. 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

Eph. 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Rom. 10:17 So faith comes out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Heb. 4:2 For indeed we have had the good news announced to us, even as they also; but the word heard did not profit them, not being mixed together with faith in those who heard.

C. Faith Is the Unique Requirement for Us to Contact God in His Economy and the Unique Way for Us to Carry Out His Economy

Gal. 2:16 And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.

20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Matt. 17:5 …This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, Go, for this man is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before both the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

1 Thess. 1:3 Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

Message 2

Running the Christian Race So That We May Obtain the Prize by Looking Away unto Jesus, the Author & Perfector of Our Faith

Scripture Reading: Heb. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 9:24; Phil. 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; Rom. 12:3; Isa. 40:30-31

I. "Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us" – Heb. 12:1:

A. The cloud is for leading people to follow the Lord (Num. 9:15-22), the Lord is in the cloud to be with the people (Exo. 13:21-22); in Greek *witnesses* implies the sense of martyrs (Acts 1:8):

1. With the people of faith, we can have the Lord's presence and His leading; all the people of faith, the church people, are the cloud; the best way to seek the Lord's presence is to come to the church.

2. If anyone is seeking the Lord's leading, he must follow the cloud, the church; the Lord is in the cloud, meaning that He is with the people of faith.

3. Since we are the people of faith, we are today's cloud, and people can follow the Lord by following us; those who seek Him can find His presence with us – cf. 1 Cor. 14:24-25; Psa. 36:8-9; 16:11.

B. The Christian life is a race; every saved Christian must run the race to win the prize (1 Cor. 9:24); the prize is not salvation in the common sense (Eph. 2:8; 1 Cor. 3:15) but a reward in a special sense (Heb. 10:35; 1 Cor. 3:14); the apostle Paul ran the race and won the prize (9:26-27; Phil. 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:7-8):

1. An encumbrance is a weight, burden, or impediment; the runners of the race strip off every unnecessary weight, every encumbering burden, that nothing may impede them from winning the race.

   Note: Family, especially children, are NOT an encumbrance or weight, nor an "entangling" keeping us from assembling; but gifts from God that motivate us to run the race even more.

2. The unique entangling sin in this context was the willful sin of forsaking the assembling together with the saints, of giving up the new covenant way in God's economy, and of going back to Judaism (Heb. 10:26); both the encumbering weight and the entangling sin would have frustrated the Hebrew believers and restrained them from running the heavenly race in the new covenant way of following Jesus.

C. We need to run with endurance, asking the Lord to direct our hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ – 2 Thes. 3:5:

1. This love is our love toward God, issuing from the love of God (1 John 4:19) that has been poured out in our hearts (Rom. 5:5).

2. This endurance is the endurance of Christ we have enjoyed and experienced – cf. Rev. 1:9.

3. We cannot become weary if we "wait" on the Lord, terminate ourselves and stop our own "doing", and then our strength will be renewed by Him – Isa. 40:30-31.

II. "Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joyset before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God"—Heb. 12:2:

A. We can live the Christian life, run the Christian race, by looking away unto Jesus with undivided attention by turning away from every other object.

B. Jesus is the Author of faith, the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the causeof faith; in our natural man we have no believing ability, but when we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) transfuses us with Himself, with His believing element.

Acts 6:5 And the word pleased all the multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip and Prochorus and Nicanor and Timon and Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch.

C. Faith is a substantiating ability, a sixth sense, the sense by which we substantiate, give substance to, the things unseen or hoped for—Heb. 11:1

D. Faith, as the substantiation of things hoped for, assures and convinces us of things not seen; therefore, faith is the evidence, the proof, of things unseen.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

E. Jesus is the Perfecter, the Finisher, the Completer, of our faith—Heb. 12:2a:

1. As we look away unto Him continually, He will finish and complete the faith that we need for the running of the heavenly race—v. 1.

2. We all have the same faith in quality, but the quantity of faith we have depends upon how much we contact the living God so that we may have Him increased in us. Then He can overflow within us, causing there to be a mutuality of faith among us.

Romans 1:12 That is, that I with *you* may be encouraged among you through the faith which is in one another, both yours and mine.

Philemon 6 That the fellowship of your faith may become effective in the full knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ.

3. Our regenerated spirit, our spirit of faith, is the victory that overcomes the Satan- organized-and-usurped world.

1 John 5:4 For everything that has been begotten of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory which has overcome the world — our faith.

4. The great irrepressible and unlimited power of faith motivates thousands to sufferfor the Lord, risk their lives, and become overcoming sent ones and martyrs for the carrying out of God's eternal economy, which is in faith—Luke 18:8; cf. Judg. 8:4.

Group Reading

The Proving of Our Faith

In verse 7 Peter continues, "That the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes and is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the unveiling of Jesus Christ." In this verse Peter gives the reason we are put into trials. We are put into trials because our faith needs to be tested, proved.

The Greek word rendered "proving" means testing for approval. It is the proving, the testing, of our faith, not our faith itself, that may be found unto praise. This may be compared to an examination in school related to a student's study. It is not the student's study itself that is found approved; rather, it is the examination that is found to be approved. Of course, the approval of our faith comes out of the proper faith. The emphasis here is not on our faith; the emphasis is on the proving of our faith by the trials through sufferings.

A good student will actually welcome the opportunity to be examined. An examination will prove how thoroughly he has studied and how much he knows concerning the material on which he is being tested. Without examinations, a superior student would never be proved to be outstanding. A student who studies diligently may look forward to an examination because it will prove, both to the student himself and to others, that he is an excellent student. This is an illustration of what Peter means by the proving of our faith.

In verse 7 Peter says that the proving of our faith is "much more precious than of gold which perishes and is proved by fire." The words "much more precious than of gold...by fire" do not modify faith; they modify the proving. This means that the proving of our faith is much more precious than the proving of gold. The comparison here is not that between faith and gold. Many Christians understand verse 7 in this way; however, this understanding is wrong. The comparison here is that between the proving of our faith and the proving of gold. Gold is proved by the purifying fire. In like manner, our faith is proved by trial. This proving is certainly more precious than the proving of gold.

Faith as the Shield

Ephesians 6:16 says, "Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one." We need truth to gird our loins, righteousness to cover our conscience, peace as the standing for our feet, and faith to shield our entire being. If we live by God as truth, we have righteousness (4:24), and righteousness issues in peace (Heb. 12:11; Isa. 32:17). Having all these, we can easily have faith as a shield against the flaming darts of the evil one. Christ is the Author and Perfecter of such faith (Heb. 12:2). For us to stand firmly in the battle, we need to be equipped with all these four items of God's armor.

The shield of faith is not something that we put on, but something that we take up in order to protect ourselves against the attacks of the enemy. Faith comes after truth, righteousness, and peace. If we have truth in our living, righteousness as our covering, and peace as our standing, we will spontaneously have faith. This faith is a safeguard against the flaming darts, the attacks, of the enemy.

We certainly are not to have faith in our own ability, strength, merit, or virtue. Our faith must be in God (Mark 11:22). God is real, living, present, and available. We need to have faith in Him.

We also should have faith in God's heart. Every Christian needs to know and trust both God and the heart of God. God's heart toward us is always good. No matter what may happen to us or what kind of sufferings we may experience, we should always believe in the goodness of God's heart (Rom. 8:31-39). God has no intention to punish us, to injure us, or to cause us to suffer loss.

Along with faith in God's heart, we should have faith in God's faithfulness (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:9). We may change, but God does not change. As James 1:17 says, with God there is no variation or shadow cast by turning. Furthermore, God cannot lie (Titus 1:2) but is always faithful to His word.

God is not only faithful but also able. Therefore, we need to have faith in God's ability. In Ephesians 3:20 Paul declares that God "is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think."

Still another aspect of our faith is faith in God's word. God is bound to fulfill all that He has spoken. The more He speaks, the more responsible He becomes to fulfill His own word. We can tell Him, "God, You have spoken, and Your written Word is in our hand. Lord, You are bound to fulfill Your word." We should praise God for His faithful word.

We also need to have faith in God's will. Because God is a God of purpose, He has a will (1:9, 11). His will with respect to us is always positive. Hence, no matter what befalls us, we should not doubt God's will, and we should not care for our happiness or our environment. Rather, we should have faith in and care for God's will. Our environment may change, but God's will never changes.

Furthermore, we must have faith in God's sovereignty (Rom. 9:19-29). Because God is sovereign, He can never make a mistake. Under His sovereignty, even our mistakes work for good. If God did not sovereignly allow us to make mistakes, we could not possibly make them. When we are wrong, we need to repent. Yet there is no need for us to regret, for that means we lack faith that God is sovereign over our mistakes. After we repent for a mistake or shortcoming, we should exercise faith in God's sovereignty. We could not have made that mistake if He had not sovereignly allowed us to do so. Hence, there is no need for regret.

We all need to have full faith in God, in God's heart, in God's faithfulness, in God's ability, in God's word, in God's will, and in God's sovereignty. If we have such faith, Satan's flaming darts will not be able to damage us.

The flaming darts are Satan's temptations, proposals, doubts, questions, lies, and attacks. Every temptation is a deceit, a false promise. Satan often makes proposals to us. For this reason, we need to get into the Word. If we are not in the Word, we will have no covering against the devil's proposals. Doubts and questions are also the flaming darts of Satan. Note that a question mark looks very much like a serpent. It was Satan who asked Eve, "Did God really say?" (Gen. 3:1). When the devil questions us in this way, our response should be to flee, without even talking to him. Many times Satan attacks us with lies, but the shield of faith guards us against these flaming darts.

The devil's flaming darts come as thoughts injected into our mind. These thoughts may seem to be our own thoughts, but they are actually Satan's. We should never confess to the Lord all these thoughts injected into us by Satan in his subtlety. Instead, we should say, "Lord, I am fallen, but I am under Your cleansing. Satan, this thought is yours, and you must bear the responsibility for it. I will not share this responsibility."

If we would have the faith to be defended against Satan's flaming darts, we need a proper spirit with a conscience void of offense. However, faith is not mainly in our spirit nor in our conscience but in our will, the strongest part of our heart. Romans 10:10 says that we believe with our heart. According to our experience, this faith in our heart is related mainly to the exercise of our will. No one with a weak will can have strong faith. In James 1:6 we are told that he who doubts is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind. Such a person has a vacillating will. Hence, if we would have faith, we need to exercise our will.

Questions:

1. Why must our faith be tested and proved?
2. What does Peter mean when he says that the proving of our faith is "much more precious than of gold which perishes and is proved by fire?"
3. Please elaborate on one aspect of our faith in God.
4. How can we use our faith as a shield against the attack of the enemy?

Message 3

The Linking Faith—the Faith of the Overcomers

I. The Source of faith is the word, but we have to realize the crystallization of this point; there are three aspects of the word:

A. The written word—the Bible

John 10:35 If He said they were gods, to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken.

B. The living word—Christ

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

C. The applied word of God—the Spirit

Eph. 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God.; **John 6:63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Rom. 4:17 (As it is written, "I have appointed you a father of many nations") in the sight of God whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls the things not being as being.

II. We need to see the effect of faith—nothing is impossible to faith:

Matt. 17:20b If you have faith like a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.

Hymn #535 by Charles Wesley

Matt. 19:26 And looking upon *them,* Jesus said to them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Only God is all able, omnipotent; nothing is impossible to Him (19:26); but the Lord also said that nothing is impossible to faith, indicating that God and faith are one; faith is the subjective God applied to our being; thus just as nothing is impossible to God, nothing is impossible to faith.

III. The believers, the believing ones in Christ, are the household of faith—Gal. 6:10

IV. The believers' faith in Christ brings them into the life union with Christ (John 3:15, 36); the word of God is embodied in Christ and realized in the Spirit to be our faith; the believers live Christ and walk by faith:

Faith is the linking of our salvation; it links God with us and links us to God; this linking makes us God-men.

We live Christ by a linking organ, and this linking organ is faith; thus, Paul says in Galatians 2:20 that the life that he lived, he lived by faith, the faith of Jesus the Sod of God, "who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Phil. 4:6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

2 Cor. 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by appearance.

1 Pet. 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing *Him* at present, yet believing, you exult with joy *that is* unspeakable and full of glory.

V. **The way to receive such a linking faith is to contact its source, the processed and consummated God, by calling on Him, praying to Him, pray-reading His word, and musing on His word; this faith links us with God and imparts, transfuses, God into us; then we will become men of faith—Heb. 4:16; Rom. 10:12-13; 2 Tim. 2:22; Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15 and footnote 1:**

Rom. 10:12-13 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord *is Lord* of all *and* rich to all who call upon Him; for "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

1 Thes. 5:17 Unceasingly pray.

Eph. 6:17-18 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints.

Psalm 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways. (*Cf*. **Jer. 15:16**)

Footnote 1: Rich in meaning, the Hebrew word for *muse* (often translated *meditate* in the KJV) implies to worship, to converse with oneself, and to speak aloud. To muse on the word is to taste and enjoy it through careful considering. Prayer, speaking to oneself, and praising the Lord may also be included in musing on the word. To muse on the word of God is to enjoy His word as His breath (2 Tim. 3:16) and thus to be infused with God, to breathe God in, and to receive spiritual nourishment.

VI. **Romans 12:3 says, "Not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith."**

VII. **Faith is the indicator of the believers' life in the enjoyment of the Divine Trinity—1 Thes. 1:3, 5, 7-8; Rom. 1:8:**

1 Thes. 1:8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded out; not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but in every place, your faith toward God has gone out, so that we have no need of saying anything. (*Cf*. **Rom. 1:8**, "your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world")

VIII. **The linking faith is the divine requirement for the overcomers to meet Christ in His triumphant return—this is based on Luke 18:8, where the Lord said, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"**

IX. **The overcomers who live by faith will be rewarded by Christ with the co-kingship and the top enjoyment of the divine life with Him in the millennium (20:4, 6); the Lord will then say to His overcomers, "Well done, good and faithful slave…Enter into the joy of your master" (Matt. 25:21, 23).**

X. **By this linking faith we are linked to God in Christ to participate in all that the all-inclusive Christ is, has, and has attained to, for the producing of the organic members of Christ to constitute and build up His organic Body, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the enlargement and expression of the eternal Triune God in His unlimited glory in the mysterious mingling of divinity with humanity for eternity (Rev. 21:2—22:5); this is the eternal fulfillment of Romans 1:17—"the righteous shall have life and live by faith"!**