

Learning to Apply Our Faith

1- Objectives

- ❖ To know about the true faith and where we are from it
- ❖ To learn how to put our faith in action

2- References

- ❖ The life of faith for HH Pope Shenouda III
http://tasbeha.org/content/hh_books/faith/index.html

3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ "For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18)

4- Lesson Outlines

What is faith?

- ❖ "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). It is beyond the Level of our senses and our intellect.
- ❖ "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).
- ❖ "Faith without works is dead" (James 2: 20); "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?" (James 2:14).
- ❖ We can have faith but with areas of weakness: St. Peter believed that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God, denied Him at a time out of fear then later was martyred for His sake.

People of faith

- ❖ Abraham showed his faith in his willing to sacrifice his son.
- ❖ Daniel's friends confirmed their faith in the fiery furnace.
- ❖ Elijah showed his faith in the boldness he had in front of the priests of Baal.
- ❖ St. Paul the Hermit had faith that God would provide for him when he chose to live in the wilderness away from any human help.
- ❖ All the martyrs and saints declared their faith through acts.

Testing your faith

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5)

- ❖ Do you work diligently in all of God's commandments searching for it and keeping it "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes (Deuteronomy 11:18). "Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18).
- ❖ Do you have faith in God's plan: Someone said to the Lord: "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Then He said to another, "Follow Me..... let the dead bury their own dead " (Luke 9:57-62).
- ❖ Do you strive to enter through the narrow gate: Being born Christians, church goers, hanging out with Christians or even teaching or performing miracles do not make us faithful Christians unless our faith is proven by our honest good deeds according to the word of God (Matthew 7:22-23).

Let us ask ourselves

- ❖ Are we willing to suffer loss and humiliation for what we believe? How do we react when we lose something or can't obtain something we want? Do we blame God often? Do we consider all things rubbish compared to Christ? "I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8).
- ❖ Do we believe that God will take care of us and ask Him strength? Do we thank God and believe that He can give us peace despite how horrible our circumstances "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving...and the peace of God,... will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).
- ❖ What do we allow ourselves to see or listen to? "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8-9)
- ❖ Do we believe God forgives us our sins? We should not feel guilty after confession "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). "He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).
- ❖ Do we believe God hears and answers our prayer and direct us? "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15)
- ❖ Do we believe God can keep us from sinning and call for Him in times of temptation? Do we trust that He is sanctifying us and His sacrifice for us was sufficient? "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 1:24).

- ❖ Do we believe perseverance yields to blessing? Do we persevere in prayer; Bible study; going regularly to church? “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:25).
- ❖ Do we believe God turns all things into good for us and has great things in store for us? Do we blame sometimes and think He is out to get us? “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).
- ❖ Do we come to God to receive rest and comfort? Or do we try to find it in every other way? “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).
- ❖ Do we believe that God is both merciful and just and He will punish the evildoers? Do we keep the wrath of God in mind? “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Romans 1:18)

5- Conclusion

- ❖ God is merciful, loving and caring and turn everything to good for those who love Him; we should believe that He forgive us our sins and purify us; help us to get away from the sin and provide us with His peace.
- ❖ Faith is work; we have to pray with perseverance, read our Bible regularly knowing that the Bible is not a book of facts, but a guidebook for life. One way to start is to put more emphasis on practicing what we know, rather than learning more things.
- ❖ God is Merciful and just; let us not be deceived and look to the mercy of God neglecting His justice to punish the evildoers.

Activities / Discussion Points

- ❖ Divide your audience into groups to discuss the points of “let us ask ourselves” and to put a title for each points and so they come to the conclusion of the lesson by themselves