

## **A Definition of Faith**

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A friend of mine whose views I cherish once explained that faith is like standing before the mouth of a canyon looking east as the sun, the great day star, begins to rise in the morning. The rugged edges of the canyon reach up on the right and on the left, with one jutting peak rising above another. As the sun begins to rise, a person can see the rays of light coming over the rugged edge of the mountain, making it appear as if the mountain is cutting into the flow of light from the sun, and as it does so, leaving places of darkness which accent the places of light. Meanwhile, the sunbeams dance along the edge of the mountain and flow down to the earth.

At first the air is slightly cool, but as the rays of light become brighter the atmosphere becomes warmer, although you still cannot see the sun. A person can see the light of the sun hit the top of the mountain to the right and to the left, and its light begins to touch the valley behind; but the place where the person is sitting is still shrouded in darkness.

As the observer sits in wonder and watches, the scope of the rays of light above expands until it covers the whole mountain on the right and on the left. The trees and vegetation which once appeared as dark green blotches are now vibrantly beautiful. It is as if they had come alive. And the rocks that once looked like murky objects now shine in the light.

Faith is like this beautiful scene of sunrise. Christ, the Son of God, is like the sun, the great day star. He dwells in the heavens above, and the earth is his footstool. From his throne in the regions of light he sends forth his divine truth, which shines as quickening light. His Spirit, or his glory, fills the immensity of space, and he gives life and light to all things.

This is the case with the Light of Christ, but more particularly (where there is an application of enlivening faith) with the Holy Spirit of God – the Holy Ghost. The divine light and power issues forth from Christ. Or, the Person of the Holy Ghost takes Christ's light, Christ's Spirit, or Christ's glory, and manifests it unto the children of men, according to their faith and diligence, and according to His holy mind and will.

Just as the natural light issues forth from the sun, so does the Spirit of God issue forth from Jesus Christ, to enlighten and instruct the children of men.

In this respect, the Lord's children are like the jutting mountainside; some have risen to a higher stature and standard than others. They seek for and obtain more Spirit than others; and the truth, the light, the Spirit shines upon them first, for they are seeking after Christ. They are paying the price to obtain his will and to be filled with his truth and love, while many are content to bask in the reflected light of others. They do not struggle and strive to reach up with all their souls; and thus, though the light is offered to all, many do not receive it. In very deed, they walk in darkness at noon day; and the reflected light which they receive is as darkness when compared to the light that is in the Lord's valiant ones, his noble sons and daughters.

As the children of Christ increase in faith, hope and diligence, feasting on the words of Christ, his love begins to fill their hearts and souls. They begin to bask in the warmth of his love; and though they do not actually see him, they feel the warmth of his arms around them. And that love sinks deep into their souls, even to the marrow of their bones. But more than this, as the faithful do the will of Christ, they begin to know that it is of God, for they see the power thereof made manifest in their lives, even as the person saw the light of the sun strike the tops of the mountains in the canyon above.

The better the faithful see with their spiritual eyes and discern truth by the power of the Holy Ghost, the more they can observe the hand of God in their lives, guiding and directing them in an ever-widening circle. They begin to see the hand of God in all things around them, even as the increasing light of the sun enabled the person to see the trees and rocks on the sides of the canyon. Everything in the heavens and in the earth, testifies of the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet, through all of this, the children of Christ do not immediately see the Son of God. But they know that he lives, just as surely as

they know that the sun is behind the mountain, although they cannot at first see it.

All visible things – all Christ's creations, all His handiwork, all his children – bear record and testify of the visible, but invisible, God. So, it might be asked, What is faith? What is this thing which surrounds all men, but which few desire and hold to, and exercise so that they might come to know Christ, their Lord and their Redeemer?

Faith is feeling the peace of the Holy Spirit as it begins to rise in one's heart, as much as one can see and feel the particles of sunlight as they first begin to shine on the jagged mountain edge. Faith is to be surrounded by the Spirit of God, as one is gradually surrounded by the light of the sun in the canyon. Faith is to see and feel and know the things of God as they are made manifest in one's life in an ever-increasing circle, even as the light of the sun increased until it flooded the mountain. Faith is knowing the pure love of Christ in one's heart and soul, to feel it sink into the deepest regions of one's being and touch every feeling of the heart – to feel the fire and love consume one's body with its warmth and joy, as much as the person could feel the warmth of the sunlight in the air above and bask in its rays as it shown from the tops of the mountains to the regions below. Faith is to see, then acknowledge, then confess the hand of God in all things--not only in one's life, but in the lives of all God's children. It is to see and know the power of his Almighty arm directing the affairs of men and nations, guiding and protecting them, inspiring and uplifting them, and defending and delivering them when they pay the price and show their faithfulness to the Lord. And as the faithful confess the Lord's hand in all things, so also do they come alive.

Then the light of the Holy Spirit radiates from their eyes, and from their very persons. They are vibrant; they shine, as the light of God is reflected in them. All these things are visible, are tangible, just as the light of the sun and the objects it enlightens are visible to the senses.

Thus, faith is being filled with and knowing the visible effects of the Holy Spirit, which testifies of the invisible God. And just as one can say to the great Day Star in the firmament, "I know that you are there, I know that you shine," so can one say by faith to the Son of God, the Divine Day Star, "I know that you live, I know that you are a God of power, a God of truth, a God of light."

This, then, is faith: to see, to feel, and to know the effects of the Spirit, as tangible as is the sunlight; and then to lift up one's head to heaven and raise one's voice to its portals and declare that you know the visible but invisible God – that He is God, and that you will trust in His Almighty arm, in His wisdom, in His mercy, in His love, in His power, and in His Spirit. Faith, more than this, is then to so live that one demonstrates His confidence and assurance and love by keeping all the commandments of God and by doing his will in all things.

With this view, the Prophet Alma exhorted the people to begin their journey to God by exercising merely a particle of faith, for the substance of faith, the assurance of faith (which is the Spirit of God) lies all around the children of men. It surrounds them, and it is given unto them. But many sit in darkness and are cold, simply because they will not reach up and take in the substance of faith, the Spirit of God, so that the things of the invisible God might be made manifest visibly in their lives. Many will only see on judgment day how lax they were, how slothful they became. And they will be left without excuse, for salvation was within the reach of their hands, under their knees, and in the voice of their hearts through prayer. All these things they neglected, and the day of their probation will be past. It will be too late, for they trusted not in the invisible God through the visible manifestations of His light and truth – His Spirit.

But those who come to know him, who trust him, who exercise faith in the living God by partaking of the substance of faith will then have the assurance of the Spirit that He lives, and that He is indeed the great Jehovah, the Savior and Redeemer of men. And in time all those who partake of such faith will actually behold the Son of God, for they will first have beheld Him with the eye of faith. Then will their full hope be realized and made sure, and His perfect faith and love will be sealed in their hearts. And they will truly know the invisible God, even Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal.