

FAITH

Faith is TRUST.

Christianity is all about *trusting* Someone who is absolutely *trustworthy* in relationship with us. That Someone is the God who reveals Himself to us in the Bible. Because we can trust Him, we can also trust everything He says in his Word, the Bible.

The following excerpts from the *Heidelberg Catechism* express our understanding of what *faith* is all about – what it means to trust in God and His Word and how such trust transforms our lives in relationship with Him.

Heidelberg Catechism

21 Q. What is true faith?

A. True faith is
not only a knowledge and conviction
that everything God reveals in his Word is true;¹
it is also a deep-rooted assurance,²
created in me by the Holy Spirit³ through the gospel,⁴
that, out of sheer grace earned for us by Christ,⁵
not only others, but I too,⁶
have had my sins forgiven,
have been made forever right with God,
and have been granted salvation.⁷

¹ John 17:3, 17; Heb. 11:1-3; James 2:19

² Rom. 4:18-21; 5:1; 10:10; Heb. 4:14-16

³ Matt. 16:15-17; John 3:5; Acts 16:14

⁴ Rom. 1:16; 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:21

⁵ Rom. 3:21-26; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-10

⁶ Gal. 2:20

⁷ Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:10

22 Q. What then must a Christian believe?

A. Everything God promises us in the gospel.¹
That gospel is summarized for us
in the articles of our Christian faith--
a creed beyond doubt,
and confessed throughout the world.

¹ Matt. 28:18-20; John 20:30-31

23 Q. What are these articles?

A. I believe in God the Father, almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit;
I believe a holy catholic church,
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting.

24 Q. How are these articles divided?

A. Into three parts:
God the Father and our creation;
God the Son and our deliverance;
God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification.

25 Q. Since there is but one God,^{^1}
why do you speak of three:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

A. Because that is how
God has revealed himself in his Word:^{^2}
these three distinct persons
are one, true, eternal God.

^{^1} Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6

^{^2} Matt. 3:16-17; 28:18-19; Luke 4:18 (Isa. 61:1); John 14:26; 15:26; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:6; Tit. 3:5-6

60 Q. How are you right with God?

A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ.^1

Even though my conscience accuses me
of having grievously sinned against all God's commandments
and of never having kept any of them,^2
and even though I am still inclined toward all evil,^3
nevertheless,
without my deserving it at all,^4
out of sheer grace,^5
God grants and credits to me
the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ,^6
as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner,
as if I had been as perfectly obedient
as Christ was obedient for me.^7

All I need to do
is to accept this gift of God with a believing heart.^8

^1 Rom. 3:21-28; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil 3:8-11

^2 Rom. 3:9-10

^3 Rom. 7:23

^4 Tit. 3:4-5

^5 Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8

^6 Rom. 4:3-5 (Gen. 15:6); 2 Cor. 5:17-19; 1 John 2:1-2

^7 Rom. 4:24-25; 2 Cor. 5:21

^8 John 3:18; Acts 16:30-31

86 Q. We have been delivered
from our misery
by God's grace alone through Christ
and not because we have earned it:
why then must we still do good?

A. To be sure, Christ has redeemed us by his blood.
But we do good because
Christ by his Spirit is also renewing us to be like himself,
so that in all our living
we may show that we are thankful to God
for all he has done for us,^1
and so that he may be praised through us.^2

And we do good
so that we may be assured of our faith by its fruits,^3
and so that by our godly living
our neighbors may be won over to Christ.^4

^1 Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:5-10

^2 Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19-20

^3 Matt. 7:17-18; Gal. 5:22-24; 2 Pet. 1:10-11

^4 Matt. 5:14-16; Rom. 14:17-19; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:1-2

87 Q. Can those be saved
who do not turn to God
from their ungrateful and impenitent ways?

A. By no means.
Scripture tells us that
no unchaste person,
no idolater, adulterer, thief,
no covetous person,
no drunkard, slanderer, robber,
or the like
is going to inherit the kingdom of God.^1

^1 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:1-20; 1 John 3:14

88 Q. What is involved
in genuine repentance or conversion?

A. Two things:
the dying-away of the old self,
and the coming-to-life of the new.^1

^1 Rom. 6:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-10

89 Q. What is the dying-away of the old self?

A. It is to be genuinely sorry for sin,
to hate it more and more,
and to run away from it.^1

^1 Ps. 51:3-4, 17; Joel 2:12-13; Rom. 8:12-13; 2 Cor. 7:10

90 Q. What is the coming-to-life of the new self?

A. It is wholehearted joy in God through Christ^1
and a delight to do every kind of good
as God wants us to.^2

^1 Ps. 51:8, 12; Isa. 57:15; Rom. 5:1; 14:17

^2 Rom. 6:10-11; Gal. 2:20

91 Q. What do we do that is good?

A. Only that which
arises out of true faith,^1
conforms to God's law,^2
and is done for his glory;^3
and not that which is based
on what we think is right
or on established human tradition.^4

^1 John 15:5; Heb. 11:6

^2 Lev. 18:4; 1 Sam. 15:22; Eph. 2:10

^3 1 Cor. 10:31

^4 Deut. 12:32; Isa. 29:13; Ezek. 20:18-19; Matt. 15:7-9

115 Q. No one in this life can obey the Ten Commandments perfectly:
why then does God want them preached so pointedly?

A. First, so that the longer we live
the more we may come to know our sinfulness
and the more eagerly look to Christ
for forgiveness of sins and righteousness.^1

Second, so that,
while praying to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit,
we may never stop striving
to be renewed more and more after God's image,
until after this life we reach our goal: perfection.^2

^1 Ps. 32:5; Rom. 3:19-26; 7:7, 24-25; 1 John 1:9

^2 1 Cor. 9:24; Phil. 3:12-14; 1 John 3:1-3

116 Q. Why do Christians need to pray?

A. Because prayer is the most important part
of the thankfulness God requires of us.^1
And also because God gives his grace and Holy Spirit
only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly,
asking God for these gifts
and thanking him for them.^2

^1 Ps. 50:14-15; 116:12-19; 1 Thess. 5:16-18

^2 Matt. 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-13