



How Do I Know I'm Saved?

A Message from Billy Graham

Some people doubt that they are actually Christians. They *want* to be, but feel like they are missing the joy of the Christian faith.

The dreadful uncertainty that haunts many people grows out of misunderstanding what the Christian experience is. Some people don't seem to know the nature of Christian conversion, while others have been misinformed concerning conversion and seek an experience that is not biblical. Many confuse faith with feeling.

Faith always implies an object—that is, when we believe, we must believe something. That something I call the “fact.” Now let me give you three words that will help you understand the Christian life: *fact*, *faith* and *feeling*. They come in this order, and the order is essential. In this order, you will have the joy and confidence of one who can say, “I know whom I have believed” (2 Timothy 1:12).

First, you are saved through a personal faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as defined in the Scriptures. The Gospel refers to the news of Christ's death and resurrection in order to pay the penalty for our sins and provide a way to eternal life.

Though it might at first seem dogmatic and narrow-minded to you, the **fact** remains that there is no other way to be saved from your sins than by God's grace through your faith in Christ. The work of Christ is a fact, His cross is a fact, His tomb is a fact and His resurrection is a fact.

It is impossible to believe anything into existence. The Gospel did not come into being because men and women believed it, and Christ's tomb wasn't empty three days after His death because His followers believed it. The fact preceded the faith. We are psychologically incapable of believing without an object of our faith. Christians do not call upon people to believe something that is not credible, but to believe in the fact of history. Trusting in Christ for your eternal salvation is trusting in a fact—not in a figment of someone's imagination.

Faith is the second of these three words. Faith is rationally impossible where there is nothing to believe. Faith must have an object. The object of Christian faith is Christ. Faith means more than

agreeing with the claims of Christ; faith involves the will—a decision to believe in Christ. If you say with your mind and your heart, “Yes, I believe in Christ and receive what He has done for me”—that He died for my sins—then you have eternal life. Faith, then, means surrender and commitment to the claims of Christ. It means acknowledging sin and turning to Christ. We do not know Christ through the five physical senses, but we know Him through the “sixth sense” that God has given every man and woman—the ability to believe.

Feeling is the last of the three words, and it must remain last in your thinking. I believe that earnest and honest seekers for the salvation of God have unrest and uncertainty when they think they must have some kind of emotion to make conversion a true experience. If you are seeking salvation as it is presented through the Scriptures, you will want to know what kind of experience the Bible says you should have.

Maybe you went to a church altar, to an inquiry room, or knelt beside your radio or TV when an invitation was given to receive Christ. You heard the message, and you knew that you were a sinner in need of a Savior. In your lost and hopeless condition, you looked to Christ for salvation. You believed that He could and would save you. Maybe you read His invitation to sinners: “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

I have read carefully through the New Testament to see just what kind of experience you are entitled to. I have looked to see what the nature of the experience of conversion is, and I have found that the New Testament reveals only one: the experience of faith.

Believing is an experience as real as any experience, yet multitudes are looking for something more—some electric sensation that will bring a thrill to their physical bodies, or some other spectacular event. Many have been told to look for such spiritual thrills, but the Bible says that a man is “justified by faith” (Romans 3:28), and not by feeling. A person is saved by trusting in the finished work of Christ on the cross and not by bodily sensations and religious ecstasy.

Still, you might say, “Is there no place in saving faith for any feeling?” Certainly there is room for feeling, but we are not saved by it. Whatever feeling there may be is the result of saving faith, but feeling never saved a single soul.

When I understand something of Christ’s love for me as a sinner, however, I respond with a love for Christ, and love has feeling. Those who love Christ also have a confidence in Him that raises them above all fear.

To have a guilty conscience is also a feeling, and the Bible teaches that Christ cleanses the conscience: “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” (Hebrews 9:14).

To have a guilty conscience cleansed and to be free from its constant accusation is an

experience, but it is not the cleansing of the conscience that saves you. It is faith in Christ that saves. A cleansed conscience is the effect of a right relationship with God.

Joy is a feeling as well. So is inward peace. Love for others is a feeling. Concern for the lost is a feeling. But these feelings are not conversion. Again, the only experience you can look for and expect is the experience of believing in Jesus Christ.

Finally, someone might say, "I believe the historic facts of the Gospel, but nothing has changed for me. I don't think I'm saved." Perhaps you are not, for the faith that saves has one distinguishing quality: Saving faith is a faith that produces obedience. It is a faith that brings about a way of life. Some have successfully imitated this way of life for a time, but for those who trust Christ for salvation, that faith brings about a desire to live out that inward experience of faith. It is a power that results in godly living.