

**The Theology of the Westminster Standards**  
**WCF 14.2 – The Acts of Saving Faith (or, What Does Faith Do?)**

*“Q. What is faith in Jesus Christ? A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.” (WSC 86)*

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. The Source and Strengthening of Saving Faith (WCF 14.1)**

*The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word, by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened. (WCF 14.1)*

1. Saving faith is a “grace” (i.e., a gift of God)
2. Saving faith is worked in the elect by the power of the Holy Spirit, sent by Christ
3. Saving faith is the means by which we are saved
4. Saving faith is produced by hearing the gospel, strengthened by the sacraments and prayer

*“A weak hand may receive a rich jewel; a few grapes will show that the plant is a vine, and not a thorn. It is one thing to be wanting in grace, and another thing to want grace altogether. God knoweth we have nothing of ourselves, therefore in the covenant of grace he requireth no more than he giveth, and giveth what he requireth, and accepteth what he giveth: ‘He that hath not a lamb may bring a pair of turtle doves,’ Lev. 12:6.”*

– Richard Sibbes (1577–1635), *The Bruised Reed*

## **II. The Acts of Saving Faith**

*By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace. (WCF 14.2)*

### **A. What is the difference between looking to the benefits that come from Christ versus looking to Christ himself? What are some ways in which we do this today?**

1. **Acts 8:35–35** – *“And the eunuch said to Philip, ‘About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?’<sup>35</sup> Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus [KJV: ‘... and preached unto him Jesus’].”*
2. **John 1:11–12** – *“He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.<sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God ...”*

- B. WCF 14.2 says saving faith rests upon Christ “alone” for every saving benefit. How does the story of Abraham shed light on what this “alone” should mean in your life?

1. **Rom 4:18–21** – *“In hope he [i.e., Abraham] believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, ‘So shall your offspring be.’<sup>19</sup> He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb.<sup>20</sup> No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,<sup>21</sup> fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.”*

*“Religious belief exists, not in its last analysis on what we can prove to be so, but on the fact of God having declared it to be so.” – Geerhardus Vos, BT, 84*

- C. What are some Bible texts that have comforted you? Made you tremble? Made you rejoice?
- D. How should this instruction from WCF 14.2 help us when reading our Bibles?
- E. Why are these broader acts of saving faith better considered “radiating” acts of faith? “Radiating” from what? How?

*“The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” – Luke 17:5*