Do You Trust God or Just Believe in Him?
(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:
A. Luke 18:1-8 - An interesting question: “When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”
   1. The Lord’s question requires us to look at something that makes Christians uncomfortable, praying with conviction
   2. In other words, can one believe in God’s existence without believing or trusting Him?
B. Christians live on the frontlines of a spiritual war - Eph. 6:11-12
   1. We are warned to stay vigilant against our Adversary - 1Peter 5:8-9
   2. He has had considerable success:
      a. God is increasingly banished from public life.
      b. Religious people are increasingly hesitant to express their faith
      c. The Adversary has filled churches with people who have no faith
         1) 2Tim. 3:1-5

I. NOT EVERYTHING CALLED FAITH IS FAITH
A. Anyone can speak highly of Jesus but have little or no faith.
   1. John 3:1-2 - Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to avoid being seen.
   2. John 19:4-6 - Pilate found Jesus innocent and sentenced Him to death
   3. John 7:32, 45-48 - The temple guards believed Jesus to be a great teacher, but later arrested Him in the Garden
   4. Matt. 8:26, 14:31, 16:8 - The apostles believed in Jesus, but they did not believe Jesus
B. Anyone can lead an apparently moral life without true faith
   1. Luke 18:9-14 - The Pharisees didn’t do sinful things common in their culture. They did good works
C. Anyone can get excited over worship and religious works without true faith
   1. Mark 4:16-17 - The seed sprouted on rocky soil and among the thorns, but did not survive over time
   2. Act 5:1-11 - Ananias and Sapphira had enough faith to sell their property and give to the poor, but not enough to be honest.
D. Anyone can have great sorrow over sin without true faith
   1. Matt. 27:3 - Judas regretted betraying Jesus and returned the money
E. Anyone can be baptized and active in a local church but not have true faith.
   1. Acts 8:13, 20-21 - Simon the sorcerer was baptized, but still thought, spoke, and acted materialistically and worldly.
F. Anyone can actively serve God but have no true, saving faith.
   1. Matt. 7:21-23 - They did things others could not do. (miracles, et al)
G. Religious people do not always have true faith.
   1. When Satan persuades people to settle for less than true faith, he wins.
   2. He can do it, even with elders - Acts 20:28-30
II. TRUE FAITH TRUSTS GOD

A. It doesn’t merely believe in God; true faith is the conviction that God will keep His every word, it and labors trustingly to meet every condition God has set upon His promises

B. True faith and trust always begin in the heart of the believer.
   1. He doesn’t work his way into believing; he believes his way into working
   2. He unselfconsciously declares his sin and his need for God to save him
      a. Psalm 51:9-10, 17, 19
   3. Those without true faith and trust from the heart cannot discuss their sins objectively. “I know I’m not perfect, but…”
      a. 2Cor. 7:10; Prov. 28:13; 1John 1:9

C. True faith and trust in God will never attempt to justify the self and blame God or others for his sins - Psalm 51:3-4; Luke 5:8

D. True faith and trust always bow to God’s sovereignty - Psalm 51:10
   1. We must ask God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.
   2. It seems to be our nature to want to control our own lives, making it difficult to surrender control to anyone, even God.

E. True faith and trust in God depend on Jesus alone for salvation
   1. Rev. 2:10; 2John 9
   2. Some think it is necessary to add something of their own to the mix
      a. Be good enough; show God how much better we are than others
      b. Be more devout; I read every day, pray three times daily, attend all of the church services

F. True faith and trust transform the believer; it does not try to transform the faith to fit the believer
   1. Col. 3:9-10; Rom. 1:16-17, 10:17; 2Tim. 3:16-17; 2Peter 1:3-4
   2. True faith and trust make us into the sons of God bearing the visible and invisible image of God in this world.