

THE POWER OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:1-3

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- ❖ Let's talk about faith
 - Faith is at the core of all that we do as Christians, and it is the biggest single requirement from God of us

- ❖ The greatest item that is available to all of us is our ability to have faith
 - Everything we believe as Christians and all of our actions come from a foundational place based on faith

- ❖ The definition of faith as defined by my internet search tells me that it is having a complete trust in someone or something
 - That is not a bad description but it does leave some things to the imagination as it relates to our relationship with God

- ❖ The book of Hebrews gives us an incredible definition and examples of what faith is from God's perspective and what it looks like in action
 - Not only does it define faith but gives us a "Hall of Fame of Faith" so we can see real live examples of people who have exercised their faith
 - These examples are people who pleased God by their actions based on faith
 - As we look through the book of Hebrews we see people in various trials and what they endured
 - Some had what we would call really good endings
 - And some had life ending trials
 - All exercising faith and all pleasing to God

❖ Let's start with Hebrews 11:1-3

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

- The writer of Hebrews starts by listing Faith as something tangible
- He calls it a substance, or some versions call it an assurance
 - He is calling Faith a viewpoint that is rooted in a reality that we know to be true
 - Having biblical faith isn't just wishing
 - It is an understanding of the certainty of matters which cannot necessarily be proven
- So you may be saying "If you can't prove it, then I cannot believe in it"
 - How does that work in our everyday life?
 - If you jump out of an airplane at 30,000 feet without a parachute, you have complete faith that you are going to hit the ground and most likely die, even though you haven't experienced it
 - Also, you are pretty sure that if you try to take a breath of air while under water that it is not going to go well
 - Both items you believe to be true based on a perspective of certainty
 - You haven't personally tried them you just have faith based on what you believe to be true and for good reason
- ❖ Faith always looks at a future event to decide its probable outcome
 - Here the writer of Hebrews says that faith is the assurance of things hoped for
 - If we are hoping for something, then that means something has been promised to us
 - Hope has been created because someone or something has given us a reason to expect the thing to happen
 - **The promise has created hope and that hope is kept alive by faith**

- ❖ The foundation of faith is built on reality and truth not on a speculation or fantasy of some sort
 - We can have faith that something is going to happen based on the object of that faith – for example
 - We can have faith in the promises of Jesus based on
 - The fact that we have personally witnessed Jesus changing people's lives
 - We can look into the night sky and see order
 - Not to mention history, geology and most important – fulfilled prophecy
 - We have a solid foundation of what our faith is based on
 - On the other hand, we can have faith in what the world tells us
 - That men can be women and women can be men
 - That one day a blob of goo turned into something living
 - That the goo evolved into something as complex as a human being
 - That the government is here to help you
 - The list could go forever
 - Having faith in Jesus makes much more sense
- ❖ Now we know that faith is the assurance or substance of things hoped for, let's look at the second part of that verse
 - The evidence (or conviction) of things not seen
 - The word for evidence in the Greek means "proof"
 - So, said another way, faith is the proof of the unseen
 - Like the sun going down tonight and rising again tomorrow
 - ◆ It has not happened yet but you have faith that it is going to happen
 - ◆ You plan your life around that simple faith fact

- ❖ So, our faith in the promises of Jesus are proof of things we expect to pass
 - Based on that information, our faith and obedience to the Word of God serves a purpose, it shows the world a truth that they could not see otherwise
 - Our lives, lived in faith, prove to the world that Jesus is true and that He is a promise keeper

- ❖ Verse 2 says “*For by it (faith) the elders obtained a good testimony*”
 - The elders he is referring to are the Old Testament saints, men and women, that he will describe later in this chapter
 - The testimony of these elders is their demonstration of faith
 - These elders showed or proved their faith by their actions
 - As it says in James 2:17
 - “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead”
 - We prove our faith by our actions
 - If we keep our faith hidden then do we really have faith at all?

- ❖ In the next section, the writer goes into reasons we should have faith
 - Starting at creation, he states what he considers to be obvious facts
 - Hebrews 11:3
 - *By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible*

- ❖ We can rest assured that there were no human witnesses to the creation
 - This fact remains true that no matter what you believe of how we got here or how the universe was formed
 - All is a matter of faith
 - Because we have an abiding trust in God and His word we believe His account of how He authored creation
 - His word states that He spoke the universe into existence
 - ◆ The author says the worlds were framed by the word
 - The Greek word for framed means arranged
 - Every moon, every planet, every star, every galaxy

- All were spoken into place by God
- ❖ Then he adds *“So that the things which are seen were not made by things which are visible”*
 - This flies directly in the face of evolution
 - In evolution you see a continual progression, or things that evolve from one thing to another
 - Evolution has become its own faith system and even that system evolves over time to suit its own narrative
- ❖ The consistent word of God states clearly in Genesis chapters 1&2 how the universe was created
 - It is clear and precise how it was done, how long it took to do it and by whom
 - I always like to use how of a jury would look over the evidence and make a verdict
 - We can make an intelligent observation of all that we see and all that God has said and live on faith that He is The Creator
 - Put in another way, we can see a design that took an intelligent designer
 - Faith is not a contradiction to reason but a belief in a Creator using reason and logic
- ❖ Verses 4 and 5 the writer gives examples of faith by Abel and Enoch speaking of their obedience through faith
 - Important points but we are not going to concentrate on that so much
 - Let's look at what the bible says in verse 6
- ❖ Hebrews 11:6 says
 - *“but without faith it is impossible to please Him (God), for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”*
 - This seems like the most elementary of statements that you must believe in Him before you come to Him
 - Why would you ever come to God and ask for anything if you do not believe He is God?

- There are those who attempt to “hedge their bets” if you will, but they may as well pray to a bug in the front yard
 - ◆ I personally have talked to many people who believe there is a God but that they will not make Him their God
 - ◆ You will often find that situation in someone who is living in some sort of sin and that sin is more important than God
 - James 2:19 addresses this issue when he says
 - *“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe and tremble”*
 - Believing there is a God is one thing
 - Believing in a God that loves you and a God you completely give yourself over to, is another

- ❖ The really cool part of this verse is the second part where he says that God rewards those who diligently seek Him
 - The writer isn’t describing saving faith
 - Saving faith is a belief in Jesus Christ as your Savior

- ❖ Jesus says that if we have enough faith we can move mountains
 - Do we think that He is talking about literal mountains?
 - Why would we ever need to do that?

 - Have you ever had so many problems that they seemed as high as the mountains?
 - I have watched God move troublesome mountains
 - I have witnessed people who have experienced drug and alcohol abuse and be freed from that
 - I have seen marriages that were crumbling be restored
 - Wayward children come back home
 - Widows living life again
 - And many other such trials of life extinguished all because faith was exercised in obedience to God

 - How does God reward those who seek Him?
 - He reveals His word to us

- As a non-believer, the bible and faith do not make any sense
 - But God opens the mind of someone who believes in Him and gives them the ability to understand His word
 - As a believing Christian, you are rewarded by your obedience to that faith
 - If you want to please God, then structure your life in such a way that you are reflecting faith in Him
- ❖ How do we acquire Faith or more faith?
- Romans 10:17 says *“So then Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”*
 - This is telling us that being in God’s word increases our faith and understanding of God Really good to meditate on that
 - Romans 12:3 says that God has dealt each person a measure of faith
 - 2 Cor 5:7 exhorts us to walk by faith and not by sight
- ❖ All of us have times when we have less faith than we should have
- When that happens just ask God for a greater measure of faith
 - He knows our weaknesses and wants us to turn to Him
 - He is a good Father who loves His children
 - And last, be of good cheer for your redemption draws near!