

Jesus is bigger than my best efforts

SMALL GROUP NOTES

Tom Shaw, July 2015

Outline

This Sunday look at Hebrews Ch 11 and particularly verse 1; "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen."

New Testament scholar Raymond Brown makes the point that this definition of faith has two essential ingredients: a future aspect ('things hoped for') and a present one ('things not seen'). That is, the way that these men and women in this chapter did what they did was actually by having hearts filled with faith not in themselves and their best efforts but in God; God in the now and in the life to come.

The key to real faith is a growing confidence that God's purposes are very much being worked out despite the pain and mess of our lives right now, and that even beyond this life, the hope we have of being with Him in eternity is a very deep assurance in our souls.

The key is our hearts being 'assured/convicted' or we could say, confident in God in the now and God in the future. This sounds obvious but so often our confidence is actually in many other places.

Other scriptures referenced: Revelation Chapter 3 v17.

Questions for discussion

- 1) Read verse 1. What most strikes you about the nature and quality of faith described here and exemplified in the main subsequent examples?
- 2) Is your greatest confidence ('assurance/conviction') in God at work in the present (despite what your eyes may be telling you!) and God's next Chapter for your life when you die? If not, what examples can you give of where you do find yourself most confident/assured?
- 3) What ways can we grow in becoming more confident in this two-fold way (faith = God in the now and God in the future) rather than spending our lives focused only on the natural areas we feel strong/confident?