

e ssentials

Faith in One Accord

1). TITLE: Epilogue: The Visibility of Faith

2). TEXT: Hebrews 11:1

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

3). INTRODUCTION

A). Welcome everyone. Thank you for being here today. Last week, we finished our 11-part series called Essentials: Faith in One Accord.

i). For some of us we made some new discoveries of what we believe or maybe what we used to believe. 😊

ii). Others may have been challenged about the beliefs of our faith; and for others it sounded familiar but was a good reminder of what we believe and it galvanized our Christian faith.

iii). But I prayed that what you learned through the written revelation of God’s Word, that your understanding of God and your relationship with God had deepened.

B). So, it got me thinking about what to teach for tonight’s study after our time studying the essentials of the Christian faith, and I was struck with this thought—the truths you have learned from the Scripture will shape your faith.

- C). And if what we learn from God's Word will shape our faith as we grow in spiritual maturity in Christ Jesus, then, what does our faith look like?

4). PROPOSITION

- A). In other words, what we learned with the help of the Holy Spirit to help shape our belief in Christ Jesus will need to go from the mind and heart right to our feet. 😊

- i). In other words, because faith is an action word, what does that look like?
- ii). We receive God's truth by way of our mind since we need to know what we believe. But we need to take what we learn from the mind to our hearts and bring our faith into action.
- iii). So, this begs the next question—what does an active faith look like in our lives?

- B). So, treat this teaching as an epilogue in what we believe as we consider four points about our faith:

- i). The *DESCRIPTION* of Faith
- ii). The *RESPONSIVENESS* of Faith
- iii). The *VISIBILITY* of Faith
- iv). The *ENDURANCE* of Faith

5). TRANSITION

- A). So, let us first turn to a well-known Scripture passage that describes faith for us—Hebrews 11:1...

TEACHING

I. HEBREWS 11:1—*The Description of Faith*

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

- A. Hebrews 11:1 is not so much a definition of faith, but a description of what faith does. This is a beautiful description because it means our faith is not about possessing simple belief but goes much deeper.
- B. Faith is more than assenting or agreeing certain truths from Scripture with just our minds. We are a people made righteous by God to *live* by faith.
 - 1. Habakkuk 2:4—*“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.”*
 - a). In other words, *“True righteousness before God is linked to genuine faith in God.”*¹
 - b). Romans 1:16-17—*“[16] For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [17] For in it {meaning the Gospel}² the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”*³
 - i). Here by trusting in the Gospel we are sinners saved by God’s grace who have been assured that we are *now* a people made and

¹ Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997), Hab 2:4.

² Parenthetical statement added

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 1:16–17.

declared right by God through saving faith that leads to a life that sanctifies and transforms us.

- c). Galatians 3:11—*“Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for **“The righteous shall live by faith.”**”*
- i). The word live as used here in the Greek is ζάω (*zaō*) which means to “to live or to be alive.” But it also means a person’s manner or way of living.
 - ii). In other words, because we are now a people who have been made alive in Christ living by faith—this faith has now become our new lifestyle or new way of living that is different from the world, and from our old self.
 - iii). It is a life that brings us to conformity to the Christ-like life that brings pleasure to our holy and gracious loving God.
- d). Hebrews 10:38—*“but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”*
- i). Pastor Tony Evans shared that *“If you want to experience Christ’s pleasure now and when he comes, then keep moving forward, press on to maturity, and live by faith. You became a Christian by faith, and you can only live the Christian life by faith.”*⁴
 - ii). So, as we walk, trust and obey, our walk with our Lord grows sweeter and sweeter, and more personal like Moses, we all become friends of God.

⁴ Tony Evans, *The Tony Evans Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible, 2019), 1464.

- iii). And here's the truth, our faith is extraordinarily tied with our relationship with our Heavenly Father through Christ with the Spirit who indwells in us.
- e). As one pastor⁵ pointed out that faith is the *bond* that *unites* us to Jesus Christ. Faith is the *glue* in our *relationship* with Jesus Christ.
 - i). Therefore, faith is more than simply or merely in believing in something for James said in James 2:19 (NLT)—“*You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.*”⁶
 - ii). Therefore, we do not possess a faith that is bare belief, but a faith that is alive and active.
- C. So, all that we have learned in what we believe such as—*We Believe in the Scriptures; the One Living God; the Triune God; the Deity and Humanity of Jesus Christ; the Work of Jesus Christ; the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit; and the Gospel Unto Salvation*—helps shape our faith into action in our Biblical Christian belief in Jesus.
- D. So, let's go back to Hebrews 11:1—“*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*”
 - 1. Another word for assurance is substance. Both words as used here means essence or reality.
 - a). But assurance can also mean “*to stand under, to support.*”⁷

⁵ Pastor Colin Smith, *audio Faith Possess Christ—The Anatomy of Faith*.

⁶ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), Jas 2:19.*

⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 317.*

- i). In other words, faith is to a Christian what a foundation is to a house.
 - b). What God has promised from His inerrant and infallible Word—by faith, we followers of Jesus can with assurance or with confidence will stand and not falter.
 - c). Friends, this is a beautiful and wonderful promise from the Lord.
2. Next, we have the word hope which does not mean “*not blind optimism or a manufactured “hope-so” feeling*”⁸ or “*terms of uncertain desire—“I hope it doesn’t rain on Saturday,” “I hope I do well on this test.”*”⁹
- a). Hope is more accurately described as confident expectation based on the incomparable unchanging character of the Persons our Triune God.
3. The word conviction has been translated as evidence or proof.
- a). This conviction or evidence is not based on what we can now grasp with our five natural senses—touch, sight, taste, smell or hear.
 - b). But, this type of faith, the conviction, is based on the divine assurance of God’s Word of things we cannot sense with our natural senses or see like heaven or eternal life and so on.
4. Warren Wiersbe made this observation of how the world does not understand true Biblical faith—“*The world fails to realize that faith is only as good as its object, and the object of our faith is God. Faith is not some*

⁸ *Ibid*, 317.

⁹ Bruce B. Barton et al., *Hebrews, Life Application Bible Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997), 176.

“feeling” that we manufacture. It is our total response to what God has revealed in His Word.”¹⁰

- a). So, it begs the question: do we believe in God’s divinely inspired Word or not?

II. HEBREWS 11:4-6—*The Responsiveness of Faith*

“[4] By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. [5] By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. [6] And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

- A. Now, the opposite of faith is unbelief. However, doubt and unbelief are not the same.
1. One pastor shared this observation—*“Doubt presupposes some kind of faith. You have faith with questions. That is what doubt is, and it is one of the most common struggles in the Christian life...Doubt is questioning what you believe...Doubt is a struggle faced by the believer.”¹¹*
 2. Now, as for unbelief, Pastor Colin Smith continue saying, *“unbelief involves spiritual blindness, and a determined resistance toward God.”*

¹⁰ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 317.

¹¹ <https://openthebible.org/open-the-bible-daily/doubt-is-not-the-same-as-unbelief/>

- B. Now, consider what another theologian pointed out—*“Doubt will become unbelief—because you allowed it to. Feed your doubts and your faith will starve—but feed your faith, and your doubts will starve.”*¹²
1. And how do we feed our faith? We feed our faith through our daily reading of God’s Word, studying God’s Word, talking to God during your prayer time *and* at any time, being involved with your church fellowship while engaging with other believers, and have spiritual friends to encourage one another.
- C. Now, back to Hebrews 11:6—to have no faith in God is impossible to please Him. We cannot respond to God without faith.
1. Verse 4 and 5 gives us two examples of two people who showed great faith—Abel offered to God an acceptable sacrifice, and Enoch’s life pleased God.
 2. What the writer of Hebrews is saying is that what we offer to God or how we live before Him means nothing without faith.
 - a). *“The writer to the Hebrews doesn’t say that it is difficult to please God without faith. He says that it is impossible.”*¹³
 - b). So, as children of God, He places a high value on our faith because for Him our faith in Him is personal since it is tied to our *relationship* with Him.
 3. Charles Spurgeon once wrote, *“Without faith we are without God, for God is only apprehended {or captured} by faith. Without faith we are without hope, for a true hope can only spring out of a true faith. Without faith we are without Christ and, consequently, without a Savior. It would be infinitely*

¹² Alister McGrath <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/when-doubt-becomes-unbelief>

¹³ David Guzik, *Hebrews*, David Guzik’s Commentaries on the Bible (Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik, 2013), Heb 11:5–6.

better to be without eyes, without hearing, without wealth, without bread, without garments, without a home rather than to be without the faith that brings everything the soul requires. Without faith we are spiritually naked, poor, miserable, lost, condemned—and without a hope of escape.”¹⁴

- D. And this takes us to James 2:14-24—*“[14] What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? [15] If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, [16] and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? [17] So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. [18] But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. [19] You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! [20] Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? [21] Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? [22] You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; [23] and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. [24] You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.”*

1. Just for clarification—we can never ever earn our salvation through works. *“James is not saying that we are saved by works but that a faith that does not produce good works is a dead faith.”¹⁵*

¹⁴ Spurgeon, *The Spurgeon Study Bible: Notes* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1655. Parentheticals added.

¹⁵ Charles C. Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, Expanded ed.* (Moody Press, 1995), 1970.

- a). What James is telling us is that true faith is shown by our action. *“Merely claiming to have faith is not enough. Genuine faith is evidenced by works.”*¹⁶
 - b). Also, from the Nelson Study Bible—*“Faith and works are not enemies. True faith and righteous works go hand in hand. They are two parts of God’s work in us. Faith brings a person to salvation, and works bring that person to faithfulness. Faith is the cause, works are the effect.”*¹⁷
 - c). In other words, the work we do now with our faith is our response we give to God for gifting us salvation by grace which we could never ever earn.
- E. So, everything that we have learned from God’s inspired Word informs how we now live.
- 1. The essential of our Christian faith is not simply to believe but it is a belief that is alive and active. This brings us to what I call the visibility of faith.

III. HEBREWS 11:4-40—*The Visibility of Faith*

- A. Hebrews 11:4-40 list the names of people from the Old Testament who are our example of what faith looks like. It is by how they lived that faith is visible to our eyes.
 - 1. And why it is visible to our eyes is that their faith is seen by their actions which tells us something fundamental about faith—it is indeed a verb, an action word.

¹⁶ J. Ronald Blue, “James,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 825.

¹⁷ Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997), Jas 2:14.

- B. Here are some names mentioned in Hebrews 11 where we see the visibility of faith:
1. Now, we already saw the first two: Abel and Enoch.
 - a). Abel's faith was expressed through *offering* an acceptable sacrifice to God, and Enoch's faith was expressed in *pleasing* God by his life.
 - b). But look at Hebrews 11:6 again—*“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”*
 - i). What does faith look like in this verse? Faith wants to *please* God and wants to *draw near* to God. What amazing faith! 😊
 2. Noah's faith was expressed by a *godly fear or reverence* to God when he listened and obeyed Him when he built an ark while for 120 years looking foolish before a world that mocked him as his faith remained true to God.
 - a). What does faith look like? It hears God and is reverent towards Him and is steadfast even among persecution and intimidation.
 - b). Faith also looks like this: it doesn't care what the world says *but* what God says.
 3. In verse 8, Abraham's faith was expressed not as blind faith but out of *obedience*—trusting in the faithfulness of God *“when he was called, obeyed and set out for a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out, even though he did not know where he was going”* (Hebrews 11:8, CSB).

- a). What does faith look like? It is obedient to God and looks forward to something better that God promised to give not seeing what that would look like.
 - b). So, when we hear the words *“we walk by faith and not by sight”* this does not mean we turn off our brains, but we live out our faith with our eyes fixed on Jesus and on eternity. Therefore, faith walks with purpose, and that purpose is trusting God.
4. In verse 11, Sarah’s faith was expressed in holding on to the promises of God even when she doubted God, or didn’t believe, who even lied to God when she said she did not laugh at God’s promise when she actually did when God said she would give birth to a boy at the age of 90.
- a). What does faith look like here? Faith trusts in God’s promises even when we cannot get our heads wrapped around the impossible. And who hasn’t been there before, right!?! 😊
 - b). The visibility of faith we see here is not—with God nothing is impossible—but that faith stands and knows that *with* God He can *do* the impossible.
 - i). Think about your life. What are you walking in, trusting in, or having faith for? You see, we love and serve a benevolent God who is in the business of crushing impossible situations.
5. In verse 21, Jacob’s faith was expressed in *“a worshipful attitude as he blessed the sons of Joseph.”*
- a). What does faith look like? This visibility of faith is worshipful and it blesses others.

6. In verse 23, in the case around Moses's birth, faith was expressed in the providence of God during dark times when Pharoah had all newborn Hebrew boys put to death by drowning in the Nile River.
 - a). What does faith look like? Knowing God is in control even during the darkest or toughest of times in our lives.

 7. In verse 30, faith was expressed by unconventional means when the Israelites walked around the famous fortified city of Jericho blowing their trumpets for seven days until God gave them the victory causing the walls to come tumbling down.
 - a). What does faith look like? Trusting God even when He doesn't make sense but will always come through for us.
 - b). Also, faith walks knowing we are victorious in Christ Jesus even if we look crazy before the world walking around a wall blowing our trumpets for seven days.
 - c). Proverbs 3:5-6—*"[5] Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. [6] Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take."*

 8. To be honest, we are all living out the visibility of our faith without knowing because the Holy Spirit has been and continues to work in you and through you!
- C. Now, if we are to look at the fullness God's interaction with everyone mentioned in Hebrews, and for us today—is that our ultimate goal is Jesus!

1. 1st Peter 1:8-9 says, “[8] *Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, [9] obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*” Amen!?

D. Now, before we move on to our last point, I want to say that our belief in the Christian faith can also be shown verbally or non-verbally. Consider this:

1. VERBALLY speaking our faith:
 - a). There will be opportunities to share your faith:
 - i). There will be those you will share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and all that it entails like forgiveness of sin, deliverance from sin, a relationship with God the Father, having eternal life, the emptiness of life that can be transformed to a joyous life with purpose and fulfillment, and so forth.
 - b). Or there will be those you might encounter where they will challenge your faith, and now you have been equipped with Scripture to defend *what* you believe and *why* you believe.
 - i). Therefore, stand on John 14:26 when you are in this situation—
“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”
 - ii). The Holy Spirit will give you words whether you are good at it or not because we never want to discount what the Holy Spirit is doing and wants to say through you as you speak out because this is your faith in action, and the Lord will bless your faith. 😊

2. Next, speaking NON-VERBALLY of our faith:
 - a). Our faith this side of heaven will help us to endure as we live in this world, a world that is in total hostility and opposition with our Christian Biblical belief *and* how we live.
 - i). Sometimes living our faith before the world needs no words because our lives are or should be different that people will notice because they will see the visibility of your faith—living Christ-like before them.
 - b). The world has a way of sensing or knowing that we are different from them. And we know this because we were once like them.
 - i). We were once children of darkness that wanted nothing to do Jesus. Ephesians 5:8-9—*“[8] For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light—[9] for the fruit of the light consists of all goodness, righteousness, and truth.”*
 - ii). What is the key word? Once! *“You were once darkness.”*
 - c). But now that we are children of the Light, we understand where they are at in this world but who and what they are need of in their lives is the Jesus of the Scripture.
3. In the end, we pray that by living out our faith whether verbally or non-verbally, will point people to Jesus.
4. And because God loves sinners, He desires to save them from themselves and their sinful ways and offer a new life in Christ, be reconciled in a deep relationship with the Father and have eternal life.

- E. Furthermore, the importance of being grounded and believing the essentials of the Christian faith as followers of Jesus is that our faith shapes a Biblical worldview by offering us a lens through which we interpret and respond to the ways and culture of the world.
1. It guides our values, ethics, and actions, often countering worldly norms with principles rooted in Scripture like our friends in Hebrews 11.
 2. Moreover, living out the Christian faith through the lens and truth based on the written Word of God influences how we perceive issues...
 - a). ...such as morality, virtues, and human purpose, leading us to live in a way that reflects God's will and demonstrates a distinct, Christ-centered approach to life in a society and culture that is different and even hostile towards our beliefs.
- F. Again, we are reminded that the righteous (that is all of us right now in Christ Jesus) shall live by faith for God has glorious work for you.
1. And all that we have learned and embrace from God's Word will shape our belief to the point where our faith becomes visible by our action.
- G. So, how shall we then live!? *"In light of the previous examples of faith ([Heb. 11](#)), and especially in light of Jesus' own model of endurance, believers are called to endure as runners in a race."*¹⁸
- H. This brings us to our last point. As followers of Jesus in our faith journey we move forward as *"faith enduring runners."* 😊

¹⁸ <https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-key-bible-verses-on-endurance/>

IV. HEBREWS 12:1-3—*The Endurance of Faith*

“[1] Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. [3] Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”

- A. The word endurance in the Greek is *hypomonē* (ὑπομονή) which means perseverance or patience.¹⁹
1. One theologian explains the type of faith we are to possess in the race of faith until we reach pass the finish line into eternity is—*“the kind of sustained effort required of the long-distance runner who keeps on with great determination over the long course. That is what the heroes of faith did in their day, and it is that to which we are called.”*²⁰
- B. When it comes to our faith, the writer of Hebrews is exhorting us to put off or strip away any sin that will slow us down and anything that would cause us to stumble.
1. Why? So that we can run with a profound purpose—with an unwavering focus on Jesus the Author and Perfector of our faith—the visibility of faith that endures.

¹⁹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

²⁰ Leon Morris, “Hebrews,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 134.

V. CONCLUSION

- A. In closing, our Christian faith—that is based on God’s inerrant eternal Word—is what we believe and how we live.
- B. Our faith in Jesus doesn’t give us a “*get out of hardship*” card but goes the distance because we place our confidence, trust and faithfulness on our incomparable God who loves us and keeps His promises.
- C. So, hold on to this promise found in Philippians 1:6 (CSB)—“*I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*”

To God Be The Glory Forever and Ever. Amen!