

Hebrews 11:1-7

“Jesus Inspires Better Faith” [Pt. 1]

Pastor Bruce Zachary

Intro * Chris S and bus-jacking in Columbia – theology became very real

Challenging circumstances often test our faith in Christ

Subject: The nature of faith in God

Object: Trust Christ + grow in faith

Context: 10:39 “The just shall live by faith” [Hab. 2:3, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38]

What do you think of when you hear, “live by faith?”

I. What is faith, and how does it grow?

A. What biblical faith is [1]: Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Greek *hupostasis* trans “substance” ref a foundation.

1. Faith is hearing God speak and responding with actions of obedience and attitudes of dependence upon God

a. We are to have faith in Christ’s sacrifice, 2nd Coming, and promised restoration.

b. Wiersbe, “True faith obeys God regardless of circumstances, consequences, or feelings.”

i. Faith is not: blind optimism, superstition, or faith in faith.

c. Faith is only as reliable as it’s object

d. It is active, more than mere mental assent. It stirs action

Why do we struggle to trust God in a difficult situation?

B. How can your faith grow?

a. Revelation of God [2-3] 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.

Heb. 1:1-2 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by *His Son* ...

Rom. 10:17 So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

i. Faith is connected to the Scriptures

ii. The creation reveals the Creator as the invisible force behind the visible [3]

b. Relationship with God [6] the purpose of faith is to seek and please God

But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is: Please God as we respond and grow in faith

c. Response to God obedience to and dependence upon God grow faith

i. There are varying levels of faith described in the Bible: no, little, great (saving).

ii. **4 key ideas:**

watching: what God is doing in the world (seeing God move grows faith);

walking: unite with God as you study word & apply it to your life;

working: exercise faith like a muscle by obedience and dependence,

worship: glorify, 1st love

iii. Faith without works is dead **Ja. 2:17**

d. Rewards of God [6] and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

i. The rewards of life in Christ, eternal life, and eternal rewards motivate faith steps of faith (and leaps of faith).

C. Who can experience this faith? [The theme of Heb.11, how faith was tested]

1. Abel (worship) [4] By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks: Gen. 4

a. Abel's faith displayed by a right sacrifice, with a right heart, showing he was right with God. He gave God his best, and what God desired and required

2. Enoch (walk) [5] By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. ⁶ But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

a. Pleased God by walking with Him so that he did not experience death

i. Walking with: ref unity [**Amos 3:3**] no ref to amazing feats. Walk humbly [**Mic. 6:8**]

ii. God's taking of Enoch is a picture of the rapture of the church

3. Noah (work) [7] By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

*Noah is Enoch's great grandson

4. Sinners who become saints through faith in Christ: throughout this chapter we discover heroes of the faith, and many had notorious sins, yet only their faith is mentioned here. In Christ, the sins have been blotted out and their faith in God praised.