

Authentic Faith

I. Slide#1 Announce:

- A. Dan & Ana Jones: 1st service. *Rancho Maranatha in Sonora Mexico.*
1. They reminded me of a missions class I was a part of 20 years ago that they were at. Steve Nauert has taken teams down to visit.
- B. Slide#2 TOTG: Sign up men, \$25. **Only 13 days away.**
- C. Slide#3,4 JM4 - Highlight the Conference (27 days till conf) *A Conf to educate & motivate.*
1. Slide#5 Sec. John Kerry said at the release of the T.I.P. Report 2014 [call to action, call to conscience] *If the cries of those who are enslaved around the world today were an earthquake, then the tremors would be felt in every single nation on the continent on every continent simultaneously. For years, we have known that this crime affects every country in the world, including ours. We're not exempt. More than 20 million people, a conservative estimate, are victims of human trafficking (some say 32mill). 150 bill a yr.*
 2. Slide#6 We will be having some of the Exhibitors spend the night and stay set up for Sunday so you all can meet them and find out ways you can get involved and/or partner with some of these organizations.
 - a) Homes needed: If you can open your home on Sat Feb 7th, after the conference. They would then be here all 3 services and go home from there. Let Kel know, in info booth today.
 3. Slide#7 The Riverside County Task force has asked for volunteers next Sat, Jan 17th to go around our city and ask specific businesses to hang posters informing the public & victims of human trafficking of telephone hotline numbers to seek help or report unlawful activity. [888-3737-888]
 - a) As of 4-1-13 Senate Bill 1193 requires certain businesses to post this notice. Hotels, Motels, Urgent Care Centers, Emergency Rooms, Liquor Stores & Convenience Stores that sell alcohol, Adult Businesses, Privately Operated Job Recruitment Centers, Massage or other Body Work Businesses.
 - b) (RCAHT) Task Force will be using our facility that day to host the volunteers, hand out the posters, and give out addresses of businesses that are required to do this. Kelly is looking for 20 volunteers to help. If you're interested, see her in the info booth. *This is a great way to help and get involved!*
- D. Slide#8 Missions: Tony /Team back safe from Peru (VBS/share Wed). Haiti Team (The team has taught ESL at Laby, Raven Caw, Hinche schools. Today they painted the Laboc church, Mon Papaye church).
1. Slide#9 Jeff T: Heading to Debal-tseva, hard hit village with no water, heat, electric. Will deliver 200 children gifts and baby formula, diapers, groceries, to families who choose not to leave the village.
- E. Slide#10 Pray for Pastor Des starts his 6 weeks of radiation treatments tomorrow.

II. Slide#11,12 Intro:

- A. For centuries the islands of New Zealand were **unpopulated**. No human had ever set foot on them. **Then** the first settlers arrived. They were **Polynesians** from other Pacific islands who had sailed **a thousand miles in outrigger canoes** [Maori/orig. from Taiwan/Melanesia (Vanuatu, Fiji)]. The Polynesians came with the purpose of settling in New Zealand. **How did they know the land was there?** How did they know they would not simply sail across empty seas until food and water ran out and they perished?

The Polynesians had known for generations that land was there because their voyagers had seen **a long white cloud** on the distant horizon. They knew that when a cloud stayed in one place over a very long period of time, there was land beneath it. They called New Zealand **the Land of the Long White Cloud**.¹ (Aotearoa/ou-tay-rOa)

1. **Faith is like that.** It is **voyaging** to an unseen land, **journeying** to an unknown future. **But** it is not mere **guesswork, or chance, or superstition**. There are **facts** behind faith, facts that suggest **conclusions**.

III. Slide#13a FAITH DESCRIBED (1-3) [*Then Faith Demonstrated: by Abel, Enoch, Noah*]

- A. Some **Atheists** like to throw around the quote...**Christianity is the belief that some cosmic Jewish zombie, can make you Live forever, if you symbolically Eat his flesh, and telepathically Tell him that you accept him As your master, so he can Remove an evil force from your soul, That is present in humanity, because A rib-woman was convinced, by a Talking snake with legs, to eat from a magical tree.** Makes perfect sense.
- B. **Christianity is a faith** that is based on a **body of knowledge revealed by God**.
1. **Faith is not** a **blind leap** into darkness, **but** a **trust in God** that moves us **out of** darkness **into** light.
 2. **Faith is simple, but** not **simplistic**.
 3. **Faith is not credulity** [A tendency to believe too readily/gullible]. It is based on **sound reason** and **historical evidence**.
 4. **Faith provides** the **substance** for our **future hope**.
 5. **Faith involves trusting** in what is **not seen**.
 6. **Faith means** more than believing **in** God; it means **believing** God.²

- C. Slide#13b **Faith is...the evidence of things not seen** - **For we walk by faith, not by sight.** 2Cor.5:7
1. Some see **faith contrasted** by **sight, or contrasted** with **empirical evidence** (something based on experiment **or** experience).
 - a) We have a saying, *Seeing is...what?...believing.*
 2. Don't see **faith** as the **opposite** of **sight, or** in **contrast** to it. *Then what's he saying here?*

¹ Mark Robert C. Shannon, 1000 Windows, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

² Essential Truths of the Christian Faith, R.C.Sproul

- a) It is dealing with **future** issues. What we have seen in the **past** gives us faith to believe in the **future**, though we *haven't seen it*.
 - b) **Example:** How **visible** was **God** to the children of Israel? God showed Himself visible through: the 10 plagues, the parting of the red Sea, the drowning of Pharaoh's men, the manna, earth opening, the shining face of Moses, etc.
 - c) **Now**, all that happened **yesterday...now**, here's what's going to happen **tomorrow**.
"You will possess the land, it will be flowing with milk & honey, it will be your inheritance, etc."
 - (1) I know you **saw** **giants** **but** have **giant faith**.
 - (2) **Could any Jew see tomorrow, look into the future? Can you?**
 - d) **So**, true biblical faith is believing what has *already been shown in the past*; **which** causes us to have faith in His **future** promises, **though** we *haven't seen them yet*. [my quote]
- D. (3) **Not made of things which were visible** (i.e. to the naked eye)
- 1. We have **atoms, electrons, energy, particle physics**, & different **waves** that we **cannot see** w/the naked eye. **Like...** *Slide#14*
Gamma Ray – X-Ray – Ultraviolet – Visible – Infrared – Radar – Radio Waves.
 - 2. The OT writers knew the worlds were framed by simply His spoken Word – **Ps.33:6-9**
 - 3. Faith is learning to live by **insight** *rather than* by **sight**.

IV. Slide#15 **FAITH DEMONSTRATED (4-7)**

- A. Faith is **confidence in God** that leads to **obedience to God**, as seen in the rest of the chapter.
 - 1. To illustrate true faith, the writer points to some Old & NT believers, showing how they trusted God to: **bless, provide, protect, lead, conquer, & give life**...even in the most dire circumstances.
- B. **Outline:** Abel's **Sacrifice** of Faith. Enoch's **Walk** of Faith. Noah's **Work** of Faith.
- C. Slide#16a **ABEL'S SACRIFICE OF FAITH (4) AUTHENTIC FAITH**
- D. Adam & Eve had 2 sons:
 - 1. Their **firstborn Cain**, started with **favorable beginnings**. He was the child of **Hope** being their **firstborn**. *He received his AG degree at Eden Univ.* (well just outside of) **so agriculture was his thing**. Their 2nd-born **Abel**, *He went into animal husbandry*.
- E. **Here we have an important contrast of 2 ways of faith: Man's way & God's way.**
 - 1. Abel's faith produced: [1] Authentic Worship [2] Authentic Righteousness [3] Authentic Testimony.
 - 2. **Both were religious men**. **And** when it came time to worship each brought an offering appropriate to his profession (Cain from the **field**, & Abel from the **flock**)
 - a) **Abel's** was **received**, **Cain's** was **not**.

- b) **Abel** went out of his way to please God, **Cain** was simply *discharging a duty*.
3. Best we can tell, this was not a **sin offering** or a **trespass offering** but a **Love offering**
 4. Abel's sacrifice was **more excellent** (greater, more important) **because** it came from a **heart** made righteous by faith.
 5. **Many speculate on why Abel's sacrifice was received & Cain's wasn't.**
 - a) This wasn't a **cattle vs. corn** problem (**both** were required later in Levitical law for sacrificing)
 - b) Throughout scripture it isn't so much about **what** you give, **so much as** to **how** you give it. [i.e. attitude of heart]
 - c) **It doesn't say *He loves the giver*, but that *He loves the cheerful giver*.** [the heart he gives from]
 6. **Slide#16b He being dead still speaks** – This is a direct allusion to Gen.4:10 **And He said, *What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.***
 - a) We have **not 1 word** of **Abel Preaching**, **yet** his life is still speaking...
 - b) **Slide#17 St. Francis** once called to 1 of his young monks, "Let's go down to the town & preach." The novice, delighted at being singled out to be the companion of Francis, quickly obeyed. They passed through the principal streets, turned down many of the byways & alleys, made their way out to some of the suburbs, & at length returned by a winding route to the monastery gate. As they approached it, the younger man reminded Francis of his **original intention**. "You have forgotten, father," he said, "that we went down to the town to preach!" "My son," Francis replied, "**we have preached**. We were preaching while we were **walking**. We have been **seen** by many; our **behavior** has been closely **watched**; it was thus that we preached our morning sermon. ***It is no use, my son, to walk anywhere to preach unless we preach everywhere as we walk!***"

F. **Slide#18 ENOCH'S WALK OF FAITH** (5,6) *FAITH GROWING IN INTIMACY*

- G. (5) The 7th from Adam comes next...he was the man who **pleased** God, & maintained a **daily walk** w/God.
1. **Read** Gen.5:21-24. It indicates for the 1st 65 years of his life, he **didn't** walk w/God. **Then** the birth of his son seemed to change things with him. [witnessing a birth will do that!]
 2. What we do know from the 8 vss. about Enoch...is that he **walked** with God.
 3. **Slide#19 Walk** is the biblical expression for **fellowship & obedience** that results in **divine favor**.³
 - a) This was not an **event** but a **lifestyle**. A **long lifestyle**, a **300 year long lifestyle**.
 4. This walk was one of **deepening intimacy**. A **walk** implies a **journey in a certain direction**, and at a **measured and regular pace**.⁴
 - a) Enoch enjoyed **the continuous presence** of an **unseen Person**, & related his daily life to **that person**.

³ Bible Knowledge Commentary, Genesis 5:21-24.

⁴ Ray Stedman; pg.120

5. When was the last time **you** took a walk with God...*just you & Him?*
6. When do you sense the smile of God on your life?

H. (6) **He Exists & He Rewards.**

- I. Spurgeon said, *Virtues w/o faith are white-washed sins.*
 1. W/o faith/belief it is impossible to please Him.
- J. **God does Exist** – He has revealed Himself in many ways: **Yes** through His **Son**. **Yes** through **Holy Scripture**. **But also** through **nature** itself. *The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.*
 1. **Slide#20** Elizabeth Barret Browning (the British Poet) put it well:
*Earth's crammed with heaven, And every common bush aflame with God.
 But only those who see take off their shoes, The rest sit around & pluck blackberries*
- K. **God does Reward** - Jesus said in the last chapter of the bible, *behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*
- L. We learn from **Enoch** that **faith means** *turning from human wisdom to God's revelation & walking in daily obedience to it until it leads to a fellowship which death cannot interrupt.*

M. **Slide#21 NOAH'S WORK OF FAITH (7) FAITH PERSISTING**

- N. Noah believed what He *couldn't see* (i.e. rain/flood)
 1. He invested everything in that boat: wife, family, reputation [he was 100 miles from the nearest ocean] This boat was WAY too big for his family. And to top it off, he filled it with animals???
 2. He knew it was going to rain because...*what?* Because **God told him** it was going to rain 120 years before the flood came.

- O. **Slide#22** Practically, how does **faith** help me *day by day*? It gives me the ability to **endure** when others are **giving up**. *Faith is not a luxury; it is a necessity.*⁵
- P. Where does this **faith** come from? **Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**⁶
- Q. An old writer said that **Faith** and **Reason** may be compared to **2 travelers**.
Faith is like a man in full health, who can walk his 20 or 30 miles at a time without suffering.
Reason is like a little child, who can only, with difficulty, accomplish 3 or 4 miles.
 Well, says the old writer, on a given day Reason says to Faith, O good Faith, let me walk with you. Faith replies, O Reason, you could never walk with me! However, to try their paces, they set out together, but they soon find it hard to stay together. When they come to a deep river, Reason says, I can never ford this, but Faith wades through it singing. When they reach a lofty mountain, there is the same exclamation of despair; and in such cases, Faith, in order not to

⁵ Warren Wiersbe, pg. 820.

⁶ Rom.10:17

leave Reason behind, is obliged to *carry him on his back*. Oh, what luggage is Reason to Faith.⁷

- R. Slide#23 Noah lived in a time when **all** had *turned their backs on God*. He alone remained faithful.
1. Faith enabled Noah to, *when warned of a coming flood*, devote 120 years to the building of a great boat about 100 miles from any sea.
 2. Faith enabled Noah to *cut through the contrary views of his contemporaries*.
 3. Faith enabled Noah to *accept the warning of impending disaster as fact*.
 - a) And Faith enables us to *withstand social pressures* and respond with reverence, **obeying** the command to build.
 - b) Living by **faith**, or accepting as fact the truths that we cannot **touch** or **feel** or **see**, and then acting on them, seems such *a simple prescription for life*.⁸
- S. Without **faith** it is *impossible to please Him*.

⁷ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Quotable Spurgeon*, (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, Inc, 1990)

⁸ The Teachers Commentary, Heb.11.