

## **By Faith Series**

### **Part 1 – What It Is**

**Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

**2** For by it the elders obtained a good report.

**3** Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

**4** By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

**Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

**2** For by it the elders obtained a good report.

- Tonight, we reflect on the essence of faith,
  - as beautifully defined in Hebrews 11:1-2.
  - This passage isn't just a description, but a powerful declaration of what faith truly means.

- **Faith as the Substance of Things Hoped For**

- The word "substance" suggests something tangible, something real.
- Faith gives form and reality to our hopes.
- When we hope for peace, healing, or guidance, faith makes these hopes feel solid,
- as if they already exist within our hearts.
- It's not wishful thinking - it's the foundation on which our hopes stand firm.

- **Faith as Evidence of Things Not Seen**

- Evidence is what convinces us of something's truth.
- Even though we cannot see God with our eyes, faith serves as the undeniable proof of His presence and promises.
- Just as we trust the wind exists though invisible, because we feel its effects,
- so does faith help us "see" the unseen work of God in our lives.

- **The Testimony of the Elders**

- The scripture tells us that "by it the elders obtained a good report."
- Heroes of faith like Abraham, Moses, and Sarah lived by faith.
- They trusted God's promises even when circumstances seemed impossible.
- Their lives stand as testimonies, encouraging us to live with the same unwavering trust.
- Faith bridges the gap between our hopes and God's promises,
  - making the invisible visible in our hearts.
  - Let's hold firm to this faith, trusting in God's plan even when we cannot see the outcome.
  - May our lives, like those of the elders, reflect a good report of unwavering belief.

**Hebrews 11:3** Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

- I've read verses 1 & 2 so many times and never really allowed verse 3 to hit me.

- Verses 1 & 2 are the doors to the Hall of Faith.
- This is where we see the lives of men and women who trusted God.
- We see what was created in their lives and through their faith...
- but nothing would have been done without God's Word!
- I simply cannot produce anything in my life of eternal worth apart from God's Word.
  - It is His Word that gives me faith
  - and it is faith that produces good works
  - and good works glorify God
  - and God glorified is where my treasures must be.
  - There will only be fruit, both internal and external, when I trust that ONLY God can produce it.
  - What an amazing fact that He desires to use me to produce anything!

**Hebrews 11:4** By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

- Knowing that nothing we do can produce anything worthwhile.

- Knowing that faith is the key to the supernatural power of the Almighty.
- Knowing that faith, real faith produces some action in the life of the believer for the glory of the Object of faith.
- As I go through the Hall of Faith and look at the images set before me...
  - I want to see truly what their faith produced
  - with the knowledge that the creation cannot create,
  - only the Creator is truly producing anything.
  - God is not giving them glory for anything other than trusting Him as **He produced unbelievable things.**
- Abel trusted that God's way was the only way.
  - What I find really intriguing here is Cain's sacrifice was excellent.
    - That means Cain's work to produce the sacrifice was good.
    - He probably was an excellent keeper of the ground.
    - What was his heart though?
    - Maybe it was that he was an excellent keeper of the ground and he felt he had produced something great.

- I know, “without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins”,
  - and I am not advocating that Cain's sacrifice would have been in any way acceptable.
  - I am only wondering why God called it excellent.
- Abel's sacrifice was “more excellent”.
  - Why?
  - That's easy, FAITH.
- Abel took God at His Word...Look at
  - **Genesis 3:22** “Unto Adam and his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins and clothed them.”
  - Anytime there is a physical representation of God in the OT it is Christ, as He is the fulness of the Godhead, and is eternal.
  - “Coats of skins” had to have come from animals
  - and there had to be shed blood for these coats to cover the nakedness.
  - Whether or not the Lord spoke to Abel or not, this was God showing how shame (sin) was to be covered.
  - Jesus being the Word, Abel trusted the Way of the Word.

- **Abel's faith was so resolute God has chosen to put him in the hall of faith.**
  - The first to live by faith
  - Was the first to die IN FAITH.
  - Yet in his death, he found life eternal.
  - This Bible stuff is really cool!