

3-10-19
Understanding What Faith Is

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Hebrews 11:2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

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.

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.

Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Our text shares one of the most important truths of the Christian experience. It is important that we live by faith. Without faith we cannot please God.

We live in a day of reason and doubt. Men desire to understand things but they want to exclude God from that understanding. In so doing this they wind up in the dark.

Years ago I was witnessing to a friend and he said to me, Frank the only way I would believe is if I could see for myself. Herein lies the age old question. Why doesn't God just come down and manifest Himself to people? Why does God require faith of us?

The answer is simple: The lessor must submit to the greater. Our faith is the greatest example of submission. In the garden of Eden, God gave no explanation as to why Adam and Eve were not to eat from the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But along comes the devil and says to Eve:

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Genesis 3:2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

Genesis 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

Genesis 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

Genesis 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

In essence the devil says this.

God lied to you, you won't die.

Furthermore, God is holding back something good from you, knowledge that will make you a god. When you eat it you will be as gods knowing good and evil for yourself.

Did Eve have any proof of that?

No all the devil did was fabricate doubt in God and His word in the mind of man and this is what he has been doing ever since.

So the first step back to God is exercise unwavering faith in our God who we cannot see but we believe is real.

If you want to please God you need to be a person of faith.

I. LET IS DEFINE WHAT FAITH IS:

Notice Hebrews 1:1 defines faith.

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1. FAITH REQUIRES HOPE IN SOMETHING UNSEEN.

Romans 8:24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

God gives this requirement for us to be saved.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Ephesians 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Notice what I said from the beginning, faith and humility go hand in hand. Proud men want to pull themselves up by their boot straps and boast and puff out their chest and say look at what I have done.

You must be humbled to be saved. When you are humbled you cry out to God and call on Him.

If your hope is in this world you cannot be saved.

Paul says it so clearly:

Romans 8:24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

A. Faith requires you do not see what you believe:

- B. Hope that sees is not hope.**
- C. We are saved through faith and by hope.**
- D. It is only by the grace of God that proud men get to this point.**

So Hebrews says it very clearly:

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

2. FAITH OPENS THE EYES OF OUR UNDERSTANDING.

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.

Men who do not have faith are blinded to God the creator. They come up with all kind of ideas about this world that are absolutely not true.

Men are trying to understand what is going on in our world, blinded to the creator. They have the wrong pre-supposition. They are not even in the ballpark.

Instead of reading the Bible to try to understand why things are changing with our weather patterns, they look to their own proud understanding.

Do you realize that this Green New Deal is the most blatant example of proud men trying to play god? They really think if we all band together like saying the word Abracadabra⁽¹⁾ it is just going to happen and through our efforts we are going to save the planet. The ultimate arrogance and pride. If we are so powerful why can we not thwart off hurricanes and tornadoes. Are they too man made?

The Bible says, it is noble to search out things but we should never exclude the knowledge of God. Because,

Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

The problem men have is that they will not be humbled, and they in fact they despise those who humble themselves before a Holy God!

Faith and humility go hand in hand.

Jesus said it:

Matthew 18:2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 18:4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

As we enter the end times, we see more and more rebellion against authority. This is because God is the ultimate authority and when men have the audacity to think this world is a by product

of chance they become proud in their disbelief. They put more faith in man than God. Soon this arrogance and pride permeates our society and there is a disdain of all authority.

So we see this with the way people treat our president, the way they treat the police, what teachers are dealing with in our public schools. The fact that children are out of control the day that we live. On and on we can show example after example of the results of a society that has lost faith in God.

II. CONSIDER THERE ARE MANY MIS-UNDERSTANDINGS OF FAITH:

Imagine living your life thinking you have faith only to find out you were deceived?

What Biblical Faith Is Not:

1. Biblical faith is not a feeling.

Lady got shivers during the mass.

When we exercise faith a feeling may follow, but trusting in a feeling alone will be disastrous.

Certainly the faith of God will permeate our whole being and certain emotions or feeling may follow. But a person can have an emotional experience void of faith.

2. Biblical Faith is not some cold doctrinal statement or prayer.

Catholic - we used to repeat the apostles creed.

Good statement, and nothing wrong with what it says, but you don't have faith just because you do a repeat after me thing.

Baptists - we get people to say the sinners prayer, nothing wrong in the words of that prayer, it is something, but some people trust they are saved just because they repeated some prayer.

So in that regard we have Baptists who do the the same thing that catholics do.

Just repeating a prayer or saying words does not constitute saving faith.

3. Biblical faith is not something you think you know as a cold fact.

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

III. What is Genuine Biblical Faith?

Biblical faith is that proper response and reaction that a person has from hearing God's word. It is a trust in His promises or word. It is enough of a trust that the person who has faith is willing to stand on that promise, and live by it.

Habakkuk 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Paul quoted this verse many times in his Epistles:

Romans 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Galatians 3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Note in each of these passages, the Bible does not separate how you live from your faith. Faith should permeate our lives and the way we live.

IV. TRUE BIBLICAL FAITH IS ALIVE AND NOT DEAD.

Romans 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

True biblical faith will have an affect on how you live.

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH, in other words, their faith is alive.

How do you know someone is alive and living? What are the signs of life?

1. James notes that there is a faith that is dead and a faith that is alive.

How do we know that a person has a living and vibrant faith:

James 2:14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

James 2:15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

James 2:16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

James 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

James 2:18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

James 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

When we had our children they gave what they called an apgar test.

A Activity; muscle tone.

P Pulse rate.

G Grimace; reflex irritability.

A Appearance; skin color.

R Respiration.

What is the spiritual APGAR test for a new Christian:

2. Evidence that a person has a saving faith in Christ. Spiritual APGAR Test

- A. **Confess** with your mouth the Lord Jesus.. is a person willing to make it known with their mouth that Jesus is indeed their Lord
 - B. **Believe in their heart:** Is their confession a sincere reflection of their heart (Illust..) you can tell when someones heart is not really there. Illust.Young Art.. he confessed with his mouth for other reasons than it was in his heart.
 - C. Follow up with the proper response of obedience to his word:
Baptism is the first proper response of faith in Christ.
 - D. **Sincere hunger** for more of the word of God.
A living faith is a growing faith, living organisms either grow or die.
Reason Dinosaurs were so big is because they lived so long.
 - E. A person who has true faith will have a desire to share that faith.
Witness Living things reproduce after their own kind, produce fruit.
- V. ***How do we get this Kind of faith?h Romans 10:13 ff is the classic passage concerning reception of saving faith:***

Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

Romans 10:15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Romans 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Romans 10:18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

The word of God is shared. God said this.

A person believes that report and responds appropriately to it.

Thus, their faith is alive and vibrant.

THIS IS HOW WE GET FAITH.

THIS IS HOW WE GROW IN FAITH.

Invitation:

You can have this faith. The word of God is now being preached.

You can respond by confessing with your mouth and believing in Christ.

EVENING MESSAGE PART II
EXAMPLES OF GREAT PEOPLE OF FAITH

VI. CONSIDER HOW PAUL GIVES EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE OF GENUINE BIBLICAL FAITH. EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE OF FAITH IN THE BIBLE.

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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.

1. Abel was an example of faith.

The reason Abel's offering was accepted and Cain's was not was because Abel was offering his sacrifice in faith. He humbly submitted to what God said about the offering system and gave the proper blood sacrifice. Do you think he understood all the reasons he was to do so? NO NO, what he offered he offered in faith.

Abel brought a blood offering.

Cain brought a fruit of the ground.

Remember.. they were vegetarians. Humanly speaking, Cain's offering made more sense.

Humanly speaking. How the world tells you to live makes more sense, but the reward will come by faith.

There are many of the old timers and saints who have gone home to be with the Lord who could have had a lot more in this world if they did not live by faith. Carlton Lewis, Anna Jones, Selwyn Schmitt, many others could have had a lot more in this world if they didn't try to live by faith.

There are many who make themselves poor because of their faith.

2. Enoch Was A Great Example of Faith.

Though we do not know a lot about him, except that he walked with God and God took him.

Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

But the bible says that he had to be living by faith.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

So Paul says, if the Bible says he pleased God we know he had to be a man of faith because without faith you cannot please God.

Think about it. The only way you can please God is by walking and living by faith!

3. NOAH WAS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF FAITH.

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Imagine the kind of faith it took for Noah to do what he did.

Building a ship so large it would be impossible to transport to water.

What was the evidence of his faith? The Ark that he built.

4. Abraham and Sara: Lived by faith.

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Hebrews 11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Hebrews 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Hebrews 11:11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Hebrews 11:12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Hebrews 11:14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

Hebrews 11:15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

Hebrews 11:16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Hebrews 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Hebrews 11:18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

Hebrews 11:19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

5. THE PATRIARCHS OF FAITH.

Hebrews 11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

Hebrews 11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

Hebrews 11:22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

6. MOSES WAS AN EXAMPLE OF FAITH.

Hebrews 11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

Hebrews 11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Hebrews 11:26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Hebrews 11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Hebrews 11:28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

Hebrews 11:29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

7. *Joshua Conquered the Land through Faith.*

Hebrews 11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

Hebrews 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

8. *Every Child of God through History Lived by Faith.*

Hebrews 11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

Hebrews 11:33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Hebrews 11:34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Hebrews 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

Hebrews 11:36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

Hebrews 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

Hebrews 11:38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

9. *The Conclusion Is That How Much More Should We Walk In Faith.*

Hebrews 11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

Hebrews 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

They received not the promise.

They never lived to see the Messiah born in their day. They waited patiently for the Kingdom of God to come. Today we actually can experience being part of that Kingdom when we get saved. When we receive Christ into our hearts we become children of God and joint heirs with Christ. We are translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son.

We have greater truths, we have access to the Holy Spirit of God and we have greater revelation and understanding. How much greater should our faith be!

No excuses for us. In fact the Bible says:

HEB 10:28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

HEB 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

HEB 10:30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

HEB 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

It is a fearful thing to reject this great gospel. Those who reject Christ are under a great curse and condemnation. Let us live the faith, walk in the faith, grow in the faith share the faith, and understand what true biblical faith is!

Foot Notes:

Interesting fact about what the word Abracadabra means:

The word is of Hebrew or Aramaic origin, being derived either from the Hebrew words 'ab' (father), 'ben' (son), and 'ruach hakodesh' (holy spirit), or from the Aramaic 'avra kadavra', meaning 'it will be created in my words'.