

Faith's Description

Faith

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Thank God that someone is there and his name is Jesus. Amen? Amen. Dear Lord, praise him. Amen? Amen.

If you have your Bibles and I believe this is a crowd that does, let's run over to Hebrews 11 and verse 1 and let's all stand when we get there. Always remember, the altars are always open. Amen? Whether it's preaching, whether it's singing, or offering, it doesn't matter, if you feel the tap of the Holy Ghost, you come praying and talk to him. Amen? Amen.

Alright, look at Hebrews 11:1 and the Bible says this. The Bible says under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as I believe Paul wrote it, the Bible says,

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

We are going to talk on several series of messages dealing with faith and tonight we're going to cover the whole chapter. So, read the whole chapter. Re-read the whole chapter. We're going to start with verse 1. We're going to talk tonight about faith's description. Faith's description.

Father, I pray for your mighty help tonight and, Father, I'm so excited. I've got my heart stirred and my heart beating has increased not just for what we ask God tonight as we dive into the precious Word, as we begin to look at what the Word tells us about faith, I pray, God, that our faith will be increased. I pray, God, that our faith be multiplied. I pray, God, that we understand what it means to have faith. What it means to trust you. What it means to rely and depend upon you and you alone. And I pray, God, that tonight when some soul leaves here tonight, I pray that they find themselves being much encouraged and faith being greatly increased. With that, God, we'll thank you.

I already know this, Master, there are some folks tonight who've had their faith increased already and for that, God, we shout hallelujah. I don't care how big the problem looks, that key word "looks," we've got a God, you Father, that knows how to

take care of that problem. Help us tonight, Father, I beg you. Through your Holy Spirit for it is in Christ's name we do pray, Jesus. Amen.

Faith's description. Oftentimes I read this verse and somebody will tell you, "Hey, do you know what faith means?" "Yeah, go over to Hebrews 11 and look at verse 1." And they look over there at verse 1 of chapter 11 and they read the Bible, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We're going to yell, "Praise God! Hallelujah!" and on the inside we'll be saying, "What are they talking about? What does that really mean?" I mean, we're not going to dare say we don't know. But, my dear friends, we read that verse as it lays before us and oftentimes we are still perplexed, we are still confused, we are still wondering what does it mean to have faith?

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for." Well, let's find tonight faith's description. First of all, we begin by looking at the word "faith" in the dictionary itself. The dictionary says faith is "confidence or trust in a person or thing." In other words, for example: everybody that is in here right now, except for me, is sitting down. By the way, you would not have sat in that seat if you did not believe that that seat or that pew would hold you up. So, you were exercising faith. It had nothing to do with faith in Christ, it had to do with faith in the bench or faith in that seat. When you start your car, now some of us are a little nervous about it, but most of us when we start our vehicle up we just believe it is going to start. We have faith. That faith in that vehicle and it's starting up.

So, see, faith in itself, my friends, means having confidence but your faith is only as strong as what your faith is in. My car might let me down. By the way, that pew, some of them, a little shaky, might let you down. But, my friends, when you put faith and confidence in the godly universe, he'll never let you down.

Once again, it goes on to say that faith is a faith "in another's ability." We could say for example: some folks you have faith in, you have confidence in them. If you called them up, you believe that they would show up and they would help you. For example: we had a need tonight from Danielle and we had several of the men, I mean before I could hardly get it out of my mouth, hands raised up that will help. So, what we're doing is having faith in their ability to get the job done. Amen. No pressure. No pressure. But what we're saying is this: we have confidence that leads them. They look at it, they know more than me and Danielle put together. We're having confidence in their ability.

So, faith is having confidence in someone else's ability and in our case, we're having confidence, or faith, in the ability of the Lord Jesus Christ. The definition goes on to say to us this: "is belief in God or in the doctrine or teachings of religion." Now, that god could be any god that he's referring to here. It's also a system of religious belief whether it be Christian faith or Jewish faith or Moslem faith, etc. Each of those, my dear friends, have a faith system and they're trusting in something that's in that system of their faith. But faith, my friends, in itself could be a confidence in a lot of different things

What we're talking about tonight is biblical faith, Bible faith, what the Word of God has to say faith. Biblical faith is defined as this: it's from the Greek word pistis which means

“the faith or reliance upon Christ for salvation; assurance; belief; believe; or faith.” So, we say that we have faith in Christ. No matter what we’re having confidence or faith that Jesus Christ and what he did on the cross of Calvary was sufficient enough to provide a way for us to enter into the gates of heaven. We’re trusting that his blood that was shed was sufficient enough to pay the penalty for our sin. We’re having that faith and that confidence in Christ based upon God’s Word. So, our faith, our confidence is based upon the Word of God and remember the Bible says, “In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God and the Word was,” who? “The Word was God.” So, when we say that we have faith in the Word of God, we are saying that we have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ himself who is God. Hallelujah.

Now still, what is faith? The Bible says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for.” That’s why it’s important to do word studies. The word “substance” here means “confidence.” So, in other words, faith is the confidence of things hoped for. The words “things hoped for” are one Greek word which means “to expect.” Now, let’s back it up, so therefore: “Now faith is the substance,” or confidence, “of things hoped for,” or expected. So, in other words: I’ve got faith in what I’m expecting to take place. I’m trusting that it’s going to happen.

Now, watch this: the Bible says, “faith is the substance,” or the confidence, “of things hoped for,” or things expected, “the evidence of things not seen.” Now, what does that mean? Well, the word “evidence” means “certain persuasion.” If you were in court and they brought up evidence against you, this evidence is to persuade the jury that you’re guilty. Now, if this is concrete evidence, it will certainly persuade them that you are guilty. For example: if you’re on video tape. One of my relatives a long time ago was at a place and they did something that they thought nobody saw but it was on tape. And when the tape shows you doing some things that you have no business doing, you look up and it’s like, it’s you. Now, are you going to say, “That wasn’t me. That was my twin.” Your Mom says, “You ain’t got no twin. I was there when you were born.” Well, that tape is evidence of our guilt or, in some cases, of our innocence. Sometimes a person has been accused of something and they find tape or evidence that proves contrary.

So, the Bible says that faith is the evidence or certain persuasion of things. That word “things” means “these are works not seen yet.” In other words, you and I have certain persuasion of the things that we have not seen as of yet. How many of us have actually, stay with me, have actually seen the Lord Jesus Christ? Now, there are some folks who did, but the Bible tells us, Paul says, “I was the last one to see him out of due season.” But yet we believe that Jesus Christ came, died upon the cross, was buried, was resurrected from the grave. You know, we never saw it take place, but we are believing that God’s Word is accurate. But now we all have what we call, what some folks call, blind faith. No, no, no, no. Our faith is based upon God’s Word.

Now, God’s Word, the New Testament, was written, my dear friends, by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter and the list goes on. These were people that actually saw the Lord Jesus Christ. They believed that he was the Messiah. They believed that he was the Christ. They believed that he was the Son of God and they showed their belief, I’m

getting ahead of myself, through their actions. What actions? They gave their life. What person in his right mind would give his life for a lie? They saw him on the cross. They saw him beaten. They saw him placed in the tomb, then three days later, my dear friends, they talked with him not for one day but the Bible says for forty days. The Bible says that Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians that right now, there are over 500 people that are still living that talked and heard Jesus Christ speak. Hallelujah!

Paul beheaded. Peter was crucified upside down. He said he didn't feel like he was worthy to die the way Christ died. All the apostles were martyred, died deaths, except for one and that was John. We believe he died of old age, but nonetheless, every one of them gave their life for a lie? I don't know about you... But this guy said, "Well, they took the body." And think about that, "I know we took the body." Paul's like, "Hold on! Let me tell you all the truth. The body is down the road here by the big oak, make a right, go three paces and that's where it's at. I'm not going to die for any lie." But now, if I actually saw him and talked to him after he had died, after he had been resurrected and then I saw him being caught up into heaven, my friends, I would give my life, I'd die for him. The apostle says it tripled after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So, see our faith is not based upon no evidence, it is based upon the Word of God. It is based, my dear friends, we are trusting that God's Word is accurate. They have tried to disprove it but everybody that has tried to disprove it winds up being saved. There's a list of them from Josh McDowell to all the rest of them. I mean, they went out to disprove the Bible and wind up getting born-again. Now they're traveling the country preaching the truth about God's Word.

So, our faith is not a blind faith. Our faith is based upon the Word of God. We believe what God's Word said is true. And then not just on his Word which we will see in later messages, also by actual examples, illustrations of folks who trusted Christ and we watched them who trusted Christ, trusted God's Word, and we saw things take place that God said would take place as they believed him. But then we also have us. Many of us in here right now, we know where we're at. I'm just snorting cocaine lines, I'm drinking alcohol, I'm acting crazy running the streets and then trying to stop but I couldn't stop myself. As I began to pray and ask God to take away that desire that I had and I know that God did it because I knew I couldn't do it. Because, Brother Jim, I just stopped for three months, I just stopped for two months but when God came by, my friends, he rescued me and I have no desires whatsoever with that stuff any more because God came by and brought deliverance. Hallelujah!

So, I'm trusting somebody that I know did something with my soul and for my life. It's not a blind faith. It's based upon his Word. But also there's evidence of what God has done in our lives. We are living witnesses of what Christ has done for us. I think of someone who had just about given up on life and her sister was praying for her and said, "Won't you come and stay with me and let's go to church," and she started coming to church and moved in. She didn't know she was going to be the cook over there, but she moved in with her sister and her brother-in-law and all of a sudden, my dear friends,

she's smiling. At one time, my dear friends, she didn't think life was worth living but, my friends, when the Holy Ghost of God got a hold of her heart and her soul, things changed.

It's not a blind faith. The Bible says that faith, I haven't gotten anywhere near where I'm trying to get to, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the confidence of things that you expect." The evidence or certain persuasion of things or deeds not seen. That means sight, but you still believe it when it takes place. It's important to know about faith. First of all, my dear friends, what is biblical faith? Why is it important to know about biblical faith? Because 1. that's how you get saved. The Bible says in Ephesians 2:8. Look what the Bible says here in Ephesians 2:8. This was going to be in one part but I have to get a two-parter here. Look at what it says, "For by grace are ye saved through sight," I'm sorry.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God not of works, lest any man should boast."

We can't even boast about being born-again. We can't say, "I saved myself. I cleaned myself up. I pulled myself up with my own boot straps." I haven't got any boot straps. And, my dear friends, God came by and he saved me by grace through faith. I trusted him. Not by works.

Look at John 3:14. Look at what the Bible says here. Now, don't you mean 16? No, I mean 14. Look at what the Bible says here, God's Word says this,

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Watch it now, "That whosoever," what? "Believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Notice what it didn't say. It didn't say that whosoever becomes a Baptist. It does not say whosoever becomes a Presbyterian. It does not say whosoever becomes a Catholic and the list goes on. But whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

By the way, he didn't say temporary life. Everlasting life. The last time I checked, everlasting means eternity; it means without end. He is saying, "You'll be saved as long as you continue to come to church." Is it good to come to church? Yes. Is it important? Yes, but they were saved. He didn't say "if you get baptized." Should you get baptized? Yes. It's a command from God, but that isn't what saved you. He didn't say about you reading your Bible. He didn't say about your tithing, what you're giving. Should you do that? Yes, but that isn't what saves you. The Bible says believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will have everlasting life.

Now, watch this, verse 17,

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

Christ didn't come to condemn the world. Why? Verse 18,

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already.”

The Bible says because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. We try to make salvation so difficult. I'm going to talk to somebody. Listen: a man doesn't get saved, won't stop doing this and stop doing that, and come on to Christ and that's why some people don't come because they know, they still want to do some of those things. So, they say this, “Well, when I stop doing this stuff then I'll come. When I get cleaned up then I'll come.” How many of you took a bath or shower this morning, or at least last night? Okay. Now, praise the Lord, and your neighbor said praise the Lord. Now, did you get cleaned up before you got in the shower or the bath tub? That's ridiculous. Why in the world would I get cleaned up first and then get into the shower or in the bath? That doesn't make sense. My dear friend, neither does it make sense to get cleaned up and then come to Christ. When you come to Christ, hallelujah, then Christ does the cleansing, he does the scrubbing, he does the washing, my friends, when you and I come to a risen Savior who changes us on the inside and the out. He says, “Come on!” This is some good scrubbing stuff.

What happens is God does the changing. He changes our desire. He changes our walk. By the way, when you get saved, don't be misinformed on this as if you think you haven't got any more sin problems. You're cleansed but your sin did not get eradicated, your flesh did not get born-again. You've still got your flesh to contend with. That's the old man, the old nature.

How many of you have cats and dogs? How many of you had a dog or have a dog, taught your dog how to bark? Most normal dogs they just bark, it's their nature. We have to train them to shut up. It's his nature. Nobody teaches a cat to chase mice or a mouse. Nobody does that, it's his nature. It goes against his nature not to do it. You have to train them not to do things. If you put a hamster out there, sorry, bye-bye. It's his nature. They chase birds, dogs chase birds. Cats they like to chase birds. It's their nature. Folks, you and I have a sin nature. It's our nature to sin. Nobody teaches these little guys, little babies to lie. Listen, “Alright now, if you get caught doing something now you've got to tell us a lie.” And Noah, bless his heart, poor Noah, but guess what? Noah's going to start lying. He might be lying already, I don't know. Do you know what's going to happen? Noah is going to do something and his Mom and Dad are going to say, “Noah, did you do that?” And he's going to say, “No.” Then he's going to cry. Some of you learned that just crying and it's alright. It doesn't work at your house.

It's his nature and even after you get saved, my dear friends, you still have your sin nature to contend with. The Bible says in 1 John 1:8,

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

The Bible says in verse 10,

“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us..”

But hallelujah, verse 9 says,

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

If we confess. That’s his Word. Some of you say, “Well, Preacher, wait a minute. Why is it then that when I mess up, he’s got to forgive me but I still don’t feel like he’s forgiven me?” Do you know what it has to do with? Belief. Because we find it hard to believe that God could forgive us after we’ve messed up for the 49th time. But see, God isn’t like us. It’s hard for us. Remember when Peter asked, “How many times should I forgive my brother in one day?” Seven times sounds like a good number to me. It’s the number of completion. And Jesus said, “Seven times seventy.” That’s 490 times. In one day. We aren’t even on the second day. For two days and my soul, how much is that? $490 \times 2 = 980$ times in two days. And some guys say, “I’m going to practice that and see how that works.” Alright, there are consequences too. Some people look for loopholes. You can’t find a loophole with God’s Word.

“What are you saying, Preacher?” I’m saying this, listen friends: 1. It’s important to know about faith because we’re saved by faith. But not only that, and we’re going to have to stop here, I’ve got so much left but we’ve got to finish this one up. But also, the Bible shows us that we walk by faith. Look at what the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:7, the Bible says this,

“For we walk by faith, not by,” what? “By sight.”

We don’t go by what we see, we go by what we believe and what we believe is based upon what God’s Word says. See, we go by what he says. The Bible says, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,” in Isaiah 26:3, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.” That’s what the Word says. That’s a promise of the Word. We need to believe that Word and get our minds stayed on him and the Bible says he’ll give us that perfect peace.

We walk by faith and not by sight. Let me read this last verse and we’ll pick up the rest of this on the following Tuesday. Look at what the Bible says here, Luke 17:5. That’s why it is so important to pray for increase our faith. Look at what the Bible says in Luke 17:5. Basically, what we were talking about a little bit earlier about forgiveness and all that, let me read verse 4, “And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.” What did the

apostles say next? “And the apostles said unto the Lord,” what? “Increase our faith.” That’s hard. That’s a hard thing to do. He messes up and sins against me seven times in a day and comes to me and asks for forgiveness and you said forgive him. Lord, increase my faith. We have to ask God continuously to increase our faith. In fact, this praying, “God, increase my faith,” and we’re going to look at this later on but look at Romans 10:17 and the Bible tells us that “faith comes by hearing and hearing by,” what? “The Word of God.”

You see, folks, it’s the Word of God. That’s why faith is based upon God’s Word and as you read the Word of God, the more you read the Word of God, the more it increases your faith and your confidence in a holy God. “Lord, increase my faith.” He says, “I’ll tell you what, get in the Word. Get in the Word and your faith will be increased.” By the way, trials will increase your faith as well.

We’ll end with this, let me ask you this: would you have to say this tonight, I know I do, “Lord, I need my faith increased. Storms come. Trials come. The wind is blowing. Father, I need you to increase my faith. Increase my confidence. Increase my trust, my reliance, my dependence upon you because I have to be honest, Lord, there are times my faith is shaky. There are times my faith is unsettled.” But the Bible tells us, my dear friends, that when we come and we pray and ask God for something, he says, “Listen, don’t come and ask me doubting. Don’t waver.” So, “God help my faith to be steady. Help my faith to be strong, not in myself but in what your Word has to say.”

Folks, we need to pray, “God, increase my faith.”

We’re not done, this is a brief part of faith’s description.