

Faith's Description – Part 2

Faith

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Bible Text: Hebrews 11:1

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Sometimes you have an attack but you're still here to talk about a risen Savior. We're talking about a real God, my friends. He's alive. He isn't dead. Hallelujah.

Let's run over to Hebrews 11. We're going to pick up where we left off. I tell you what, friends, it's going to be not so much faith in faith but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that's going to get us through. Somebody said, "I've got faith." Well, what is your faith in? Who is your faith in? If your faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ, that makes a big difference but if your faith is in your job or your faith is in yourself, your faith is in anyone else, do you know what's going to happen? Hey, folks, that isn't going to last. That's going to let you down. We've got something that is real, something that sustains, something that is solid, something that is satisfying. Something, my friends, that delivers us which is the Lord Jesus Christ through his precious word.

Let's go to Hebrews 11. Let's all stand. Let's see what God has for us today. We're going to start as soon as we're finished this. So, we're going to finish up this morning but we're starting a series of messages from Hebrews 11. I would invite you, I would encourage you to read that chapter and re-read that chapter and re-read that chapter, study that chapter, dig into that chapter because my desire is this: when we get done preaching this series of messages that we'll not only know what faith is but we will be victorious, become overcomers. A lot of us know what the word says but we're still battling, we're still struggling. I know we'll have a battle until the day that we die, but at the same time, there is a difference between living a victorious Christian life and living a defeated Christian life and that is based, my dear friends, on your belief system about what God's word has to say about faith and overcoming.

So, I pray that as we go through these messages, that all of our faith be increased. I know mine has been torn since I've been studying but I've been loving it. I've been lavishing all in it, just been all in the word and just happy about it. Let's get into it. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:1, we've all heard this verse at some time or another, "Now faith," not might or could be, but the Bible says,

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

This is part 2 of “Faith’s Description.”

Father, I pray for your help this morning as we try our best to try to describe, Lord, in our limited time about the definition of this word “faith.” What does it mean? What does it consist of? What’s the value? What’s the purpose of it? I pray, my God, as we begin to dive into your word as we’ve already started last Tuesday and will continue in the following Tuesday to preach this series of messages as you direct, I pray that you reveal to us what it means and the importance of not having faith in faith. No, no, but faith in you. Father, help us to learn how to really trust you, not to know what it says but how to actually trust you because all of us, Father, yes, sir, all of us will be in that area of our life where the woman did when she trusted in our Savior but after that, all of us will come to points in our life where we’re faced with the obstacles that we can’t do anything about and it’s then when we are going to either trust you or trust what we can do. Father, help us to learn the difference.

I pray, God, to feel your Holy Spirit and, My Master, I count it a privilege to share your word with your precious people and I thank you so much for the opportunity. May I ask, God, that you help me to rightly divide the word of truth. I pray, God, to fill me with the Holy Spirit. I pray, God, for you to guide my speech and my actions and my thoughts and all that I do. I pray, God, that you be the great Director and the Orchestrator and with that, God, we’ll shout Hallelujah. God, we bless your sweet name and, Father, I ask you one more thing that if there is anything whatsoever between you and I that would hinder you from using my vessel this morning, I am begging you in the name of Jesus, your Son, to cleanse me, to wash me and to use me under your direction. With that, God, we’ll thank you. Help us!

One more thing: if there is one among us who is not saved, they do not know for sure if they died right now they’d spend eternity in heaven, I pray, God, that this would be that day when they’ll get that thing solidified, make that thing settled today. It’s very important because none of us know the day when we’re leaving this earth and once we’ve left, there is no changing things then. This is the moment and this is the time. Help us. It’s in your Son’s name that we pray, Jesus, Amen.

You may be seated.

Faith’s Description. As I’ve stated before that many of us have read verse 1, as we recap a little bit, we’ve read verse 1 where the Bible says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” We go, “Oh, okay” and we haven’t got any clue of what we’re talking about. We know what it’s saying and then we try to say, “Well, what it means is this... what it means is that.” What does it really mean? Look at it real briefly: the Bible says, “Now faith is the substance.” It’s very important to know what that means because that could mean a lot of things to a lot of different people. But what does this word “substance” mean in this verse? The word “substance” in this verse means this: it means “confidence”; it means “assurance”; it also means “guarantee.” In

other words, my faith is the substance or my faith is the confidence, the assurance, the guarantee of what? “Of things hoped for.”

Now, what do those words mean? “Of things hoped for.” Those three words, one Greek word which means “to expect.” In other words, my faith is the substance, or my faith is the confidence of things expected, the guarantee of things expected, the assurance of things expected. In other words, where it’s saying here is that me, I am believing in that which I’m expecting to come to pass. I believe it’s going to happen. I have confidence that it’s going to happen.

Look at what the next part of the verse says: the Bible goes on to say “the evidence of things not seen.” The word “evidence” means “certain persuasion.” As we talked Tuesday night, it’s like a person going into court and when you go to court they’re going to have evidence to either prove or disprove your innocence or guilt. They have this evidence and they present it and this evidence is the proof whether or not you’re guilty, the proof whether or not you’re innocent. The Bible says that faith is a certain persuasion. In other words, we are persuaded, we are convicted of the things not seen. That word “things” means “deed, work or business.” “Not seen” means “sight.” In other words, I am persuaded by the things that I don’t even see.

How many of you saw Jesus this morning? Raise your hand. Nobody physically has seen Jesus that’s here in this room but by faith, we believe that Jesus Christ came, died upon the cross, was buried and was resurrected from the grave. But it’s not a blind faith. You see some people say, “Well, faith is like blind faith. You can’t see, you just believe it.” Wrong. Our faith is based upon God’s word. You say, “Well, I just believe.” Believe what? Everybody has faith in something. There was a time when if you worked in certain places, you were just about guaranteed that you’d retire there. They didn’t have lay-offs like they do today. Listen, it would shock me for somebody to work somewhere for 40-45 years now. But, my friends, when they would get that job, they’d say, “You know what? This is a certain thing. We have confidence. This thing isn’t going anywhere. I have faith in that job.”

Everybody in here has faith in these pews this morning. If you had no faith in that pew, you wouldn’t have sat down. There are certain sections that are a little wobbly around here. That’s why you don’t sit there. Nonetheless, my dear friends, what we’re saying is this: all of us have faith in something and your faith is only as strong as what your faith is in. When we say that we have faith we’re not just saying faith, we have faith in God. We have faith in God’s word.

That’s what the Bible says in Romans 10:17. Let’s run there real quick. This is what the Bible says and we’ve heard it quoted but let’s look at it. The Bible says this in Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hoping.” No, “by hearing.” “So then faith cometh by hearing,” and the next question is hearing what? “Hearing by the word of God.” So then faith cometh by hearing the word of God. It’s what God’s word says. Based upon what God’s word says, we either believe it or we don’t.

John 3:16, “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.’ When someone hears that verse, they now have a choice to either believe what it says, the word, or not believe. They are going to make a choice based upon what they’ve heard from God’s word. It’s a simple little sentence but sometimes we read so fast we don’t think as we’re reading. In other words, my dear friends, the Bible says faith, that word “faith” here means “assurance, confidence,” so faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. In other words, if you believe his word, we have faith in his word. We are trusting what his word says.

The word says in Philippians 4:13, “I can do some things.” No, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” If you actually believe that, your belief will be shown in your actions. Somebody says, “Well, that’s what you say.” No it isn’t. You guys know I’m preaching the Bible up in here.

Listen to what the Bible says in James. Look at James 2:17. When you have something you believe in and it works – I have confidence in this book because everything I’ve ever trusted in this book has actually taken place. God has not lied to me one time. Not one time. Look what the verse says right here in James 2:17. You can read the whole chapter later but read verse 14 first, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath,” what? “Faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” Can your faith save you without your actions? The Bible goes on to say, my friends, in verse 17, “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” That word “dead,” my friends, means “being a corpse.” It’s dead. It’s of non-effect.

We got to the funeral home and we see a dead body and we’re scared. “What are you scared of?” “That body.” “It’s dead. It can’t hurt you.” “I know, but I’m scared.” “Why would something dead scare you?” If there was a lying man right here and it was dead, some would say, “Ohhh, ahhh,” like when you see a dead mouse. People would be jumping and running. If you see it laying over like this with it’s head down, it’s dead. Some of you know what I’m talking about but some of you all don’t. Nonetheless, why in the world would you be scared of a dead mouse? He’s dead.

It’s the same thing with faith, my dear friends. The Bible says right here that if faith doesn’t have actions behind it, it’s dead. It’s a dead faith. Look at what it goes on to say. Look at verse 19, he gives an illustration, he says, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well.” Everybody gives a little cheer, praise God! Glory! Hold on, let’s look at your company. The Bible says, “the devils also believe, and tremble.” Are the devils saved? No. They know God is God but they aren’t saved, my dear friends. So, just because you believe that there is a God, just because you believe that Jesus Christ actually existed, doesn’t mean that you’re putting your faith and your confidence, your life is in his hands, that you’re believing that what he did on the cross was sufficient enough to get you into heaven. You’ve got to trust what he did and believe in your heart. If you believe that, you put it into action.

Let me show you. The Bible says in verse 21, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works?” That word “wrought” means “to cooperate; to be a fellow worker.” Watch it: the Bible says, friends, he says, listen, “Seest thou how faith cooperates with his works?” It’s a fellow worker; they work together. The Bible says this, “and by works was faith made perfect or complete?” Your faith is completed in your action.

We all know this illustration, it’s a good one: I believe that is a chair. I believe it was made for sitting. I believe it will hold you up. I believe. How do you know I believe? When I come over and put my derriere in this seat, I’ve put my faith in this chair. A lot of folks believe that Jesus exists, they believe that he’s supposed to hold them up, you know he can do it but until you put yourself in him, that’s when you put your faith into action. That’s why sometimes we’re so confused. “Well, I mean, I’ve always believed in God.” You were not born saved. The Bible does say that we have all sinned. My friends, you and I, the Bible says that when Jesus came, he did not come to condemn the world, the world was already condemned. But he came so that the world might believe in him, put its faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, put its faith in Jesus Christ. Not just saying, “Yes! Yes! Yes!” No, put, put, put. Put your belief into action.

How many of you have a car that is over 15 years old? If you did not believe that it would get you to where you need to go, do you know what you’d do with that car? You’d get rid of it. You wouldn’t be looking at it. Now, I’m sure there are times when you probably start it up and you’re like, “Come on. You can do it.” You know what? It’s a car but after a while it hasn’t got any life to it no more.

Folks, our faith works. We’re not saved by works but our works prove our faith. A guy tells a young lady, he may say to her, “I love you, girl. I mean, when I see you, my heart goes pitter-patter. It skips seven beats extra. When I see you, my hair just curls up on its own.” I never used any of those. “I want us to be together forever. I love you.” And she says, “When are we getting married?” He says, “Well, I’m not ready for marriage. Love and happiness and all this kind of stuff. Well, you know, I do love you and I want us to hang out and be together and just live and all that stuff. I want the benefits of marriage but I don’t want to get married. But I do love you. I love you. I love you.” “Then let’s get married. Show me.” “Well, baby, I’m liking this. I’ll take you here. I’ll do all this kind of stuff.” She’d be like, “Well, I want you to show me right here. Show me the ring or if not, I’m going to be going away. You’ve got to go.”

See, if he really loves her. By the way, love is an action word. If he really loves her, then he won’t mind doing that. If he loves her. But if he just wants to keep her until he’s done with her, until he finds somebody else that’s better then it’s like, “I can move on. I know that once I do this thing here, it’s a whole lot harder to get rid of her here. If I haven’t got this here, I can go. What’s wrong with you? We’re done. Leave me alone.”

Love is an action word. Faith is also an action word. When you believe in something, then what you do, my dear friends, you show your belief by your actions.

The Bible goes on to say, verse 22, “Seest thou how faith wrought” or cooperates, “with his works, and by works was faith made perfect or completed?” See, some of our faith isn’t completed yet because we haven’t put it into action. The Bible says, “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” Verse 24, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” The Bible goes on to say, “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

Let me ask us: how is the faith? I’m not talking right now about your saving faith when you trusted Christ as your Savior, right now I’m talking about your faith as you walk with him day by day. The Bible also says that after you and I are saved, born-again, blood bought, that now we are to walk by faith. So, we see that we’re saved by faith and we have our actions are followed by faith. We also have to walk by faith. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:7, this is a good verse, it’s a living verse, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” How are you walking? Many of us walk by what we see but the Bible says that we are to walk and that word “walk” here means “to go” or “to live” by faith. Not by sight, that word “sight” means “view.” I like this word here: “appearance.” Well, it appears to me, what? Like this isn’t going to work. Have you ever sat down and calculated: AT&T, Comcast, insurance, mortgage, kids, food, gas. Alright, let’s see what our check looks like. That’s what you feel like doing because you’re like, “Wait a minute. I’m looking at this and we have all this and it isn’t working. It isn’t working. It is not working.” I’ve got to look in my wallet. You look like you’ve got a lot of money and it isn’t going to hurt you that much. Some of us are like this, “Oh well, I know I have two jobs but I can’t pay these bills.” We’re going to get the kids, the babies, everybody has to hustle. You sell some candy tomorrow. I buy some from Sam’s Club but you go out there and say, “We’re taking up candy for, what was that for?” You’ve got to hustle.

But is that what we probably should be doing first? What we should do first is go to Matthew 6. You see, I’m not going to just make up stuff. Look at Matthew 6 and look what it says here. Matthew 6:33. Now, the verses before that talk about all these things we’ve just mentioned: food, finance, fashion, fitness. All of that is before here but verse 33 says, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” But seek him first. But we don’t seek him first, we seek all the other things. “Let me see what I can do.” We find we can’t do anything and we break down. For some of us, we go to drastic measures; for some of us we go into a deep depression; for some of us, my dear friends, everything, the whole world just falls apart.

But he keeps saying, “But seek me first.” If you believe that verse, because that’s the word, remember, “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” If I’m going to believe this, then I’m believing it based upon what his word says. His word, this is the promise: he said, “You seek me first but everything else is basically taken care of,” he’s saying, “but you’ve got to seek me first.” This is what we do, Brett you be God, just go where you want to go. Now, I’m seeking him. I catch up with him, “I need you to help me. God, help me.” And he helps me. Then, after he’s helped me, I say, “I’m okay, I’ve

gotta do this real quick but I'm going to catch back up with you. I'm gonna read my Bible a little bit later. I'll be at the church but I've gotta take care of this thing with this kids. I've got this stuff going on...we've got that family thing going on. I'll catch up." Notice how far I'm getting away? Do you remember the play we saw the other night?

It's not my intention to leave but stuff starts getting in the way and all of a sudden I find myself way over here. All of a sudden, here we go again. Here I go again. Here we go again. Sometimes, we get way over here and then we say, "You know what? I'm not going to even bother God. I mean, I've gone back to him too many times. He doesn't want me to come back to him again. So, you know what? I made my bed, so I'm just gonna lay in it." Show me here where it says "you make your bed and you lay in it." It isn't there because in reality, when you tell her to make up her bed, do you want to get back in it? Hello? You may have made the bed but you don't want to get in it. Don't lay in it, my dear friends. "I made all this mess so I just gotta stay in it." That's basically what we're saying.

I'm not going to stay in this mess! What in the world, my dear friends, why would I stay in that mess when I've got God who says I want to bless you? I've got a God that says I want to help you. You say, "Well, brother, I've sinned too much." Do you believe his word? "Yes, I believe his word." 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." How many times?

The more you stay clean, the more you like it. When I'm riding down the road now and I see the police, do you know what I do now? The only thing I do to worry about the police is to see if I'm speeding. The first thing that I do is check my speed and if my speed is looking fine, I'm like, "I'm good to go." But now, as some of you all know, when my tags were expired and I'm not going to say how many months, you probably already know that too. You've been out in the parking lot checking and saying, "You're behind. They ain't paid up." Now if he pulls me over, I see the lights, I check speed and before I even check speed, my first thought is, "Oh man, I hope it ain't gonna look at that license plate that says it's expired." Do you know what? I'm glad I'm not doing this though: I see a light, "Oh, oh. Put that up. Put that down. Get that down. Get this over here." You say, "Get what down?" You know what I'm talking about. "Put that under the seat. Put that back over there. Throw it out the windows." I'm not worried about none of that now and I like that kind of feeling. I like the feeling that I'm doing right, my friends.

I had my license for four years and I'm riding around but my license is expired as can be. I had an accident, 1989, but when I got in that car wreck in 1989, my first thought was, "I'm going to jail" because I was driving Jolene's car and at that time, I was under the age of 26, you had to be of the age to drive her car, I was not 26 so I was not covered by the insurance. My license, as far as I knew, was suspended and then it was my fault when I pulled out and that car hit me. I'm like, "I'm going to jail" and plus I didn't clock out when I left work to go to get gas and something to eat. I had all this stuff going on and I'm thinking I'm done: I'm going to lose my job, I'm going to jail, the whole nine yards. We had just gotten married. We had been married only a few months then. Then I'm like, "Okay." He comes over there and he checks everything and runs everything and I'm like,

“Man, I’m done.” He said, “Well, where’s your license?” Listen, when your license is all messed up you don’t even care. I’m like, “I ain’t got it on me.” So he ran my name through and he said, “Well, your license is expired.” I’m like, “Huh?” Expired is a whole lot better than suspended. “Yeah, it showed up expired.” I didn’t say, “What! It ain’t expired. It should be suspended.” I’d been in church for only a few months.

Long story short, instead of me losing my job, instead of me going to jail, the only ticket I got was for the accident, for pulling out into traffic. Instead of insurance dropping us and a whole bunch of other stuff that took place, this is what we did before that happened: me and Jolene, this is the first time I remember us going through this situation here putting our faith and trust in God for a situation, we got on our knees at the couch and we prayed and I said, “I’m guilty.” I said, “God whatever you decide is what I deserve because I’m guilty. Whatever happens.” I knew I was guilty. I was actually working it out. I pleaded mercy. I pleaded grace. “But God, I know I’m guilty so whatever happens, we’re going to accept it.” And we prayed that way and that’s where we were at: whatever took place, we were going to accept that. God worked it out. She called her insurance, told them the situation that I didn’t have my license and all that stuff and they said, “I tell you what. Have him,” this is State Farm, they said, “Go and tell him to get his license. When he gets his license, then we’ll work it all out.” All this kind of stuff. They were working with us and it took about three weeks to get that whole license thing straightened out. What I had was tickets that I owed in several states. Anyway, we got all that stuff straightened out. I went and paid the ticket that I got. The insurance covered the other lady’s car and took care of our car. When the whole thing was said and done, we came out, listen to this, \$20 ahead, plus a whole set of tires, 4 brand new tires. The guy who fixed the car, he saw our tires and he said, “I can’t take your money. You need to get them tires fixed. Keep the money to get the tires fixed.”

Listen: faith works but also the Bible shows us – I’ve got to give you this one: faith is essential in prayer. Look at what the Bible says in James 1:5. Your faith is essential when you pray. It’s one of the most vital ingredients of when you pray. Look at what the Bible says in James 1:5, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” Watch this, this is where we’re at, watch it: “But let him ask in faith, nothing,” what? “Wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” He says, “When you pray, believe.” He says right here that the person that’s wavering in his faith, don’t let him think he’ll get things. That’s what happens a lot of times, “I believe. I don’t. I believe. I don’t.” Listen, you can’t do that. Simply believe.

Believe what? His word. What does the word say? What does the word say? That’s why it’s so important. Before you start running down there to the divorce court, you know what, find out what does the word say. Before you go over there and cuss him out, find out what does the word say. Before you go over there and kick somebody’s door in, my dear friends, what does the word say? And based upon the word, let that be the actions that you take. But oftentimes, we say, “I’ll tell you what I’m gonna do.” What are you

going to do? “Well, I’ll tell you what I’m gonna do.” But realize there are consequences that come with our actions. We’ve got to stop here.

What are you saying, Preacher? Faith’s Description – and there’s so much more but we’ll stop here. If you want to have faith, you need to know first of all, what is it? And then what is the object of your faith? What am I placing my faith in? Remember we covered it last Tuesday, get last Tuesday’s message where we talked about praying and asking God to increase our faith and all of the other things. But listen: faith is very vital in the Christian life and it is who you have your faith in that determines whether or not you’re going to get the victory. If it isn’t in Christ, who knows how it’s going to turn out but if you trust in him, God’s got it.