

Lesson Nine: What is Faith?

We know that faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Faith is the one act of man that pleases even impresses God. But what is it? First let's look at a couple of examples...

The Centurion's sick servant - *Luke 7:9*

The Syro- Phoenician Woman's demon-possessed daughter. *Matthew 15:28*

But what is faith? Is it measurable? Is it qualitative or quantitative? Can we really pick up mountains by faith and throw them into the sea? This will be interesting.

Up until now we have covered...

- How can we be sure we are saved?
- How can we overcome temptation?
- How can I get off the worry wheel?
- How can I find forgiveness?
- Is Jesus really the only way to God?
- Why Do Christians have so many problems?
- Why doesn't God answer my prayers?
- "Is there a sin that God can't forgive?"

So now let's talk about faith. It is an intangible or **abstract** concept like love. You can't purchase it, hold it in your hands or draw a picture of it but it is as real as an oak tree.

The word faith has a bible synonym – **Trust**. The world cannot operate without trust or faith. All people live a faith-based life all the time. Examples:

Let go to the classic faith chapter in the Bible – Hebrews chapter 11. We sometimes call this the Faith Hall of Fame. Let's read verses 1-6. ---- The previous chapter is necessary to get the setting and circumstances. The Jews were discouraged, disheartened and had even begun to be unfaithful in the church gatherings.

- v.23 - some were losing hope
- v.24 – some were forgetting God's faithfulness
- v.25 – some were avoiding the assembly

- v.32 – they endured suffering
- v.33 – They were mocked and ridiculed
- v.34 – They had seen their possessions plundered
- v.35 – Some were losing confidence
- v.36 – they were wearing out and getting tired of the struggle

So that is the scenario in chapters 1-10. Chapter 11 gives the encouraging remedy for their discouraging situations.

I. LET'S DESCRIBE 'FAITH'

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,*

The word "substance" means the assurance or the realization of things hoped for. Another word that can be used is **confidence**. Faith is having confidence and taking action based on what God has promised. Faith is **believing** what God said because He said and then taking actions accordingly.

Hebrews 11.1 *Now faith... "is the evidence of things not seen."*

- There are many things we do not **see right now** yet we believe in them.
- This does not speak of a creative power of **belief**. We don't create our reality by strong belief. 1 Peter 1.7b-9
- Faith is not lacking in **reality**. *Romans 10:17*
- Faith requires **thinking**. Christians do think.
- Faith engages our **emotions**.
- Faith leads to a **decision**.

LET'S SEE HOW FAITH WAS DEMONSTRATED

Heb 11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

- By Faith the **invisible** is seen.
- By faith we **understand** that what is visible came from the mind of the invisible God.
- The very first sentences in the Bible tells us what happened in **history** – We believe by faith that in the beginning God created everything we see.

Atheistic Evolutionists believe by faith that in the beginning nothing became everything without any help at all. That is a leap of faith if I've ever seen one.

- When the Bible says by faith we understand it is saying that you and I having an understanding of the **origin** of all of creation. If we deny God we don't understand more or better we just exercise a more unfounded faith. Listen to this: *Ps 33:6 -9*
- Creation itself is the first call for **faith**. If we refuse to believe that God made the worlds then we have failed at the first requirement of faith. We will end up worshipping the creation instead of the creator. We will show love and loyalty to the gift of creation and not the God of creation.

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE DEMANDS OF FAITH

Heb 11.6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- Faith is **Essential** – there is no interaction with God without faith. Without faith God will never be pleased with us.
- Faith begins the **relationship** - We must believe that he is... "That he exists."
- Faith brings **rewards** – God rewards our faith and he rewards our prayers of faith. When we show great trust in God by believing his promises and then taking steps of obedience our faith is rewarded.
- The way to show faith is to **Seek** God. The very fact that we look for Him or seek Him demonstrates our faith and it pleases God. ..."*he rewards those that diligently seek Him.*" (11.6).

Is 55:6 Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.

Je 29:13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

Am 5:4 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: "Seek Me and live;

Mt 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- People that are not seeking God will not **stumble** across Him.
- When seeking God we must let Him reveal himself and not traditions or culture. Where does God reveal himself? He reveals himself by the world's creation and by the word's inspiration.

LET'S FINISH WITH THE EXAMPLES OF FAITH

- Faith **believes**.
- Faith **receives**.
- Faith **decides**.
- Faith **does** something.

Jas 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

These people are in the Hall of Fame of Faith because they did something based in their faith. Without faith it is **impossible** to please God.

Illus.