

FAITH

Hebrews 11

Introduction

1. FAITH is an essential condition of the salvation of those to whom the Gospel is preached, In giving the Great Commission Jesus said “ ***Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.***” Mark 16:15.
2. It is important therefore that we know what faith is.
3. It is important also for us to know how we may obtain faith, and how to increase it if we have faith.
4. It is also important for me to understand how faith contributes to my salvation.

There are three questions we intend to discuss in this lesson.

- 1) What is faith?
- 2) How do I come by faith?
- 3) What part does faith play in my salvation.

I. WHAT IS FAITH

DEFINITION

1. The whole chapter of Hebrews 11 is devoted to the subject of faith, but it is too long and contains too much to be embraced in one lesson.
 - A. The writer begins by telling us what faith is, and as a good dictionary or lexicon will do, he follows up the statement as to what faith is by a long list of examples.
 - B. So that if any one should fail to get the idea from the definition, he would get it from the example. At any rate, by the use of the two methods together, he could not fail, by proper diligence, to understand the subject.
2. Unfortunately, reading the English translation of Hebrews 11:1 the definition is given in words that are somewhat obscure.
 - A. KJV. Heb. 11:1 “***Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*** “
 - B. What idea do you get from that language? We know what substance is. The substance of this pulpit is wood. The substance of this song book is paper. The substance of a speech is the chief thought or the principal thought that run through it.
 - C. The substance of this sermon is FAITH, but what is the substance of FAITH?

- D. It may be difficult then for us to understand how that FAITH is the substance of things hoped for.
3. The second part of the definition says FAITH is the evidence of things not seen. Can we understand this? It is difficult is it not?
- A. The things that are unseen concerning which we have faith— are such things as God, angels, heaven, hell, the wondrous things of the past, the unspeakable things of the present spiritual world, and the world to come— now faith is the results of the evidence which convinces us of these things.
- B. The NASV reads, Heb. 11:1 ***“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”***
 New Century Version: ***“Faith means being sure of the things we hope for and knowing that something is real even if we do not see it”***
- C. Edward Robinson in his Lexicon of the Greek New Testament gives one of the best translations found, ***“Faith is confidence as to things hoped for; conviction as to things not seen.”*** Now this is getting pretty clear!
- D. Faith is defined as having relation to two classes of objects:
 1) Things hoped for, and 2) Things unseen.
 The later class includes all the former. The reverse is not true. Illustration, Hell is unseen, but not hoped for. Heaven is hoped for and it is unseen to our eyes at present.
- E. So faith, then, has a relationship to these two classes of objects.

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. With this statement or definition of what faith is— let us go on and look at a few of the illustrations. We have time for only a few of these examples, and to see how well they fit the definition, and thus get a clearer conception of FAITH— one that impresses our memory better.
2. The first example the Hebrew writer presents is the fact that God created the worlds – v. 3. NASB ***“By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.”***
- A. Here is an unseen and wondrous event far back in the past. It suits the last part of the definition.
- B. The creation of the world is not a “hope” with us, so it doesn’t fit the first part, but it does fit the second part of the definition.
- C. Our conviction is that the worlds have been framed by the Word of God, and this is an example of our faith.
3. The next example is the faith of Abel – v. 4. ***“By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was***

righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.” NASV

- A. Abel had a confidence that through this sacrifice, God would count it ***“righteous.”*** This was something hoped for.
 - B. Also he must have had conviction to things unseen. He offered his sacrifice to an invisible God, and probably expected unseen blessings.
4. The next case is that of Enoch – v. 5. He was translated so as to be found. ***“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.”*** KJV
- “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.”*** NASB
- A. Here the author, seeing that nothing is said in the history of Enoch in the O.T. about his having any faith, feels the necessity of proving that he had; so he proceeds to say that “before he was translated... he had testimony that he was well pleasing to God.”
 - B. So if Enoch was well pleasing to God, he must have had faith, for the author says in verse 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.”***
 - C. In these words the writer brings out two elements of Enoch’s faith.
 - 1) He believed that God is – the conviction of an un-seen thing
 - 2) He believed that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him– confidence as to a hoped-for reward.
 - D. And under that “conviction” and “confidence” Enoch walked with God.
5. Noah’s faith is the next example in verse 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;”***
- A. Here the Hebrew writer brings in the very terms of his definition.
 - B. Here was conviction to an unseen disaster, threatening life.
 - C. Here was confidence in the hoped-for deliverance of his own family under the promise that God had made– this confidence moves him to build the ark.
6. The next example is that of Abraham– in v. 8; v.9-10; and 11-12.
- A. Two incidents in his life, and one in Sarah’s is brought out to illustrate Faith.
 - B. Verse 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.”***

Conviction as to an unseen and unknown country, and a confident hope of possessing it.

- 1) Abraham was moved by that conviction and confidence to make a journey of some 1300 miles.
- 2) ***“This is the land; it shall be thine for an inheritance for thy seed...”*** (Cf. Gen 28:13)

C. **Verse 9-10** is another example seen in the fact that Abraham lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs of promised, because he looked for a city with foundation. ***“By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”*** NASB

- 1) Around Abraham, the Shechemites and others around had cities. Melchizedek, the priest of God had a city. Abraham’s friends and the Hittites were living in the City of Hebron.
- 2) And here was Abraham, a man of great wealth, and he could have built a palace to live in, but he chose to live in a tent all his life.
- 3) He was 75 years old when he left his native land, and 175 when he died. For 100 years in lived in tents, because by FAITH the city he longed for was the one built by God, and not one that could be built by Abraham.
- 4) So he dwelt in tents without foundation, with the conviction and confidence that one day he and his heirs would have that city with foundation built by God.

7. There are many more examples of great FAITH in the chapter, but we must hasten on to answer the other parts of our questions. 1) What is Faith? 2) How do we obtain faith? and 3) How does faith figure into our salvation?

8. Now, what is the object of our faith?

A. Jesus put a question to his apostles in Matthew 16:13 ff. ***“Whom do men say that I, the son of man am?”***

“Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal his to you, but My Father who is in heaven.” Vs. 16 & 17, NASB

- 1) ***“Flesh...”*** If Peter had listened to Herod, the priests, or the scribes, he never would have come to this conclusion.
- 2) ***“Father...”*** God had revealed it to Peter by what Jesus had said and done. Peter’s mind bring open to hear the voice of God which spoke through all these wondrous words and deeds of His Son Jesus.

B. Then Jesus painted a very striking picture before the mind of the twelve. He presented himself as about to build a Church that he compares to a great walled city with gates

to it, and He paints Peter as the gate-keeper, and He is going to build that Church on a rock— solid foundation that cannot be undermined – and he depicts that before them.

- C. Then there is another city, with its walls and gates painted in dark colors, death pouring out of those gates to make war upon this first city; but he says it shall not prevail. He paints the picture in these words – Matt 16:18b - 19a.
- D. In that picture notice He makes Himself the builder of the city, and in the painting you will see Jesus standing on some high position, giving directions to all the workmen.
- 1) He paints Peter standing by one of the gates, with a bunch of keys in his hand.
 - 2) Then he paints a great ledge of rock lying under the whole city. What does that rock symbolize?
 - 3) Some say it is Peter, but it would spoil the picture to say that. You would have to take Peter away from the gate and change him into the great ledge or rock, to make him the foundation.
 - 4) Others say it is Jesus Himself; but that also would spoil this picture as Jesus as drawn it now. You would have to take him down from his place as the chief architect and builder and change Him into the great rock, and stretch Him out under the walls.
- True, in another passage, Paul pictures Jesus as the foundation of the church, but in Matthew we are looking at a different illustration – 1Co 3:11 ***“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”***
- In another passage, the picture is that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, listen to Eph 2:20 ***“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;”***
- 5) That is not the picture Jesus painted. Leave Him where he is, leave Peter where he is; and look at what Jesus as said concerning that rock!
- E. What is it? Undoubtedly it is that Foundation Truth which Peter had just confessed, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” For on that TRUTH the church IS built; on that truth it stands today!
- 1) If infidels could disprove the proposition that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God” the whole church would tumble into ruins the very moment they did so.
 - 2) But the fact is true and therefore the church stands on an impregnable rock, where, according to Jesus, all the powers of hades can never prevail against it. This is the picture Jesus drew.
- F. To you and to me here is expressed an unseen fact; for Jesus is now up yonder in Heaven sitting on the right hand of God, the head of the Church, and head over all things to the church, ruling all things in heaven and earth and under the earth for the benefit of the church.

- G. Our faith is conviction in regard to that unseen thing, conviction with regards to his death on the cross.
- H. At the same time, all our hopes rests on Him. Our confidence in Him, the things He has promised, the things we hope for, is the animating power of our life.
- I. FAITH in Jesus Christ then is conviction as to things unseen, confidence as to things hoped for.

II. HOW DOES ONE COME TO FAITH?

It would be useless for me to go on further in trying to show what faith is. How is FAITH born within a man? And then, once it is born, how is it strengthened and deepened until it becomes an absorbing and controlling power? This is our second question. And these same examples give us the answer to this question.

1. First, there is our faith that the worlds were created by the Word of God? How did we come by this FAITH? Not by reasoning about it, nor dreaming, not in answer to prayer. But we read, when boys and girls, in **Genesis 1:1** out of God's Holy Word, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" We came to faith from God's Word!
2. How did **Abel** come to his conviction and confidence that led him to offer his sacrifice to God? We're not told a lot in Genesis, but a littler more is revealed to us here in Hebrews 11.
 - A. We are sure Abel's faith didn't spring from his own reasoning, that if he sacrificed a lamb, it would be pleasing to God.
 - B. He came to understand what he must do by the revelation of God. He heard God's word and he had conviction and confidence in what God revealed to him.
3. **Enoch**– how did he come to his conviction in regard to the unseen God, and his confident expectation that God would reward him if he served him?
 - A. He must have come to his FAITH in the same way.
 - B. **Romans 10:17** "*Faith comes by hearing, ...*"
4. **Noah**– he had a conviction that a flood was coming and his hope of escape from it for himself and his family rested on conviction and confidence in God's word.
 - A. What a daring and presumptuous thing for Noah to have reached that by reason.
 - B. Not by workings of his mind, but God told him – **Genesis 6:7, 13-14.**
 - C. From God's Word then he come to his conviction and confidence.
5. **Abraham**– where did his conviction and confidence come from when he didn't know where he was going?
 - A. God told him – Gen. 12:1

- B. From where did he come to his conviction and confidence of a walled city. The record is silent about any such city. But his faith came by some revelation from God. Rom. 10:17, a revelation not given us in the scriptures.
6. But then someone asks, is it possible that our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is born in the same way?
- A. Well, just look into the workings of your own mind, and ask yourself how did faith originate in your mind– the conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
- B. Everyone of you must answer, “I came to my FAITH from God’s Word.” But for the Word of God, we would not have that faith.
- 1) John 5:24 “ *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life,*
- 2) John 6:45 “*It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*”
- C. Go to any heathen nation in the world, and no man has ever been found or will be, who has this conviction in him except it arrived at it from the Word of God.
7. So then, how did we obtain our confidence in the Lord? What gives us confidence that He will bless us if we give Him service and love?
- A. Is the word of God able also to give us this confidence? The question is, whether the Word of our Great God, the loving Father of heaven and earth, whose very nature is truth, can inspire us with confidence in His promises.
- B. My friends, if God’s Word will not do it, what power is there in heaven or earth that you can conceive of that could?
- C. We come to FAITH from the Word of God; and let me tell you, the more we read and study His Holy Scriptures, the more we lovingly meditate upon them and lay them away in the memory of our heart, the stronger our faith becomes– the better men and women we will be– the better able to stand up against the storms of unbelief that rage around us in this wicked world.
- D. “*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” Romans 10:17.
- E. “*Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.*” Psalms 119:11.

III. HOW DOES FAITH RELATE TO SALVATION?

Now for our third point, how does FAITH bring us the blessing of salvation of our souls in deliverance from sin, and life everlasting?

1. Now, this is a practical question.

- A. What part does my FAITH play in my salvation?
How does it contribute to my salvation?
- B. The examples also answer this question.
2. Was it through FAITH ALONE that Abel was counted righteous?
 - A. Would he have been blessed had he believed with all his heart every thing he believed, but never have offered his sacrifices?
 - B. It was because of his faith that he offered his gifts to God and it was said of him that he was righteous.
3. Did Enoch receive the blessings of translation through FAITH ONLY?
 - A. The language of the scriptures says that Enoch “*walked with God.*”
 - B. His faith caused him to “*walk with God*” and that resulted in his translation.
4. How is it that Noah and his family were saved? Was it by FAITH ONLY?
 - A. Noah’s faith led him to cut down some gopher trees and build the ark.
5. Abraham did not believe God and just remain at home, thinking that God would work it out some way to give the promised land to his heirs.
 - A. When called, Abraham obeyed and went forth, he traveled 1300 miles, dwelling in tents looking forward to the city of God.
6. Now about our faith! How is it going to bring us the forgiveness of our sins and finally bring us through our journey to everlasting life.
 - A. Now by causing us to offer a lamb, as Abel did. Not by building an ark as Noah did. Nor by taking a long journey as did Abraham.
 - B. How then? By causing us to act on the same principles which they acted on! Everyone of these acted in harmony with the object of his faith.
 - C. Abel in harmony with his faith, offered the sacrifices on the altar. Enoch, in harmony with his faith, walked with God. Noah, in harmony with his faith built the ark. Abraham in harmony with his, made a long journey, not even knowing where he was going.
 - D. So if our faith is to save us, our faith in Christ, it will be by causing us to act in harmony with that faith. Well, what is that?
7. If the object of our FAITH is our conviction and confidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who is ruling over heaven and earth, and if we act in harmony with our conviction, we will surrender our lives and all that we have and are, to His divine guidance and will.
 - A. Illustration: If we are convinced when a man tells us our house is on fire, we will act according to our convictions.
 - B. Now do we believe that Jesus laid down his life to redeem us from sin? If we believe

the Bible's message that he was crucified, buried, and resurrected for our benefit, won't we follow him devotedly?

- C. If we believe this, then to act in harmony with our faith, is to love our dear Friend, and render him our life in devotion and service.
8. And if that FAITH dwells in any man's soul, and he is not living in harmony with it, every day, every time he thinks of it, there is a great antagonism, a great conflict, within his heart, between his FAITH and his LIFE.
- A. Every believer in the assembly today, who has not began living a life in harmony with his faith, feels that antagonism right now. And it gives great unrest to the soul.
9. Not only are we to act in harmony with our FAITH to receive God's blessings, but our FAITH moves us to act that way. It impels us in that direction.
- A. When a man has to resist it and fight against his FAITH, he doesn't merely become indifferent to his own best feelings, but he tramples them under his feet, and he continues to do so, if he doesn't yield to the power of faith and give himself into the service of the Lord.
- B. I speak but what you know already by your own inward experience.

CONCLUSION

1. I said earlier that we do not have to do as the men of our text did, in carrying out our faith, and yet, we come very near it.
2. We are not called upon to bring a lamb to the altar, and lay our hands upon its head, and shed its blood and burn its flesh... but we do bring to God our sacrifice.
 - a. Romans 12:1. ***"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service."***
3. And after we have confessed our faith, are we not to do as Enoch did, to walk with God the rest of our life... Rev. 2:10b ***"be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."***
4. And are we not to act very much as Abraham did, when he was called? My brethren, we have started for a promised land; knowing that God has said, "It is a goodly land, and I will give it to you." How much like Abraham!
5. How easily we too can live by faith like these great examples. Jesus said, ***"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."***
 - A. Let your FAITH manifest itself in obedience— come as Christ invites you!
Come to confess you faith in Jesus as the Son of God, and be baptized into a new relationship with him as your Lord and Savior.

Sermons, delivered in Louisville, Ky, June 25, 1893.]