

Hebrews 11

What is Faith?

Hebrews 11:1-3, 6

Introduction

The Hebrews 11 Chapter has been called the “hall of fame”, also, “the heroes of the faith”, and what is commonly known as “the faith chapter”. There are many other names given to this tremendous account before us.

This letter was written to Jewish believers who were still holding on to some of the old covenant practices.

Hebrews 1 through 10 labours on the fact that Jesus is superior to the old covenant. The old covenant points to Jesus who is the beginning of the new covenant, noting that Jesus is the better way. This new covenant is found in the blood of Christ who is the better sacrifice, and that the new covenant could only be entered in by faith alone in Jesus Christ

The Hebrew writer directs the attention of these Jewish believers to the old testaments saints to demonstrate that the just shall by faith.

The statement is found several times in the epistles, and one time in the book Hebrews, chapter ten, and verse thirty eight, “*Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*”

Having concluded chapter 10 at a theological standpoint, and indeed a Biblical truth that “the just shall live by faith”, the Hebrew writer proceeds with chapter 11 from a practical viewpoint.

Studying the lives of others in the Old Testament is one of the ways in which God chooses to teach us.

Romans 15:4 “*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*”

- ❖ Warren Wiersbe said, “*Scripture records the great Salvation narrative which employs a cast of thousands of characters who reveal human nature at its best and its worst. It shows how God worked in and through these individuals to reveal his mercy and*

love. The main message of the Bible is the grace of God as seen in Jesus Christ, the good news that Jesus can change people and make them new creatures”

As we look into the lives of our dear brothers and sisters in the Old Testament, the main focus is not only on what God can do in the life of His people centuries ago, but what God desires to do with His people today.

In this subject (Hebrews 11) we will look at three things:

- A. The Description of Faith – Hebrews 11:1-3
- B. The Demanding of Faith – Hebrews 11:6
- C. The Demonstration of Faith – Hebrews 11:4-40

❖ **Memory verse:** 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.”*

A. The Description of Faith, Hebrews 11:1-3

1. Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for...”

- a. In verse one we find more of description of faith than a definition of faith. Faith means to trust and to believe, but verse one describes what faith is in action; how faith works; how faith operates.

❖ William McDonald said regarding Hebrews eleven, and verse one, *“...It is a description of what faith does for us. It makes things hoped for as real as if we already had them, and it provides unshakable evidence that the unseen, spiritual blessings of Christianity are absolutely certain and real. In other words, it brings the future within the present and makes the invisible seen.”*

- b. Our faith and hope is built on the Rock – Jesus Christ.

❖ *Remember what the writer said, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.”*

- c. Our faith is in Christ and His Promises.

Faith (In Christ) is the Substance (Foundation) of things hoped for (a confident expectation). In others Words, we absolutely believe, what Christ promised will come to pass.

Christ said in John 14:3 “...I will come again, and receive you unto myself...”

- d. As Christians wait for the coming of Christ, they’re not crossing their fingers and hoping He might come, they know He will come.

Titus 2:13 “*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*”

2. Hebrews 11:1 “*Now faith is... the evidence of things not seen.”*

- a. Faith is not blind, faith is based on Fact. It is based on the Word of God. Without God’s Word, there can be no true faith.

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

- b. True Faith is fully trusting in God’s Word. It is obeying the voice of “*Thus saith the Lord*”.

❖ Warren Wiersbe said “*True Bible faith is confident obedience to God’s Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.*”

3. Hebrews 11:2 “*For by it the elders obtained a good report.*”

- a. The elders are the ones that have gone before us, the cloud of witnesses, and the ones that have exercised faith.

❖ CH Spurgeon said “*The names of those who lived in old time are handed down with commendation because of their faith. If they had had no faith, we should have had no report of them.*”

- b. The Old Testament saints were a perfect demonstration of verse one. Divine approval were upon the lives of those that lived by faith and obeyed the Word of God.

- c. In each instance, you will find the same workings of faith:
- (1) God speaks to them through His Word;*
 - (2) They were moved and stirred;*
 - (3) They obeyed God;*
 - (4) He testifies about them.*
- d. The two great examples recorded in the Gospels
- i. *The Centurion, Matthew 8:5-10*
 - ii. *The Canaanite Woman, Matthew 15:22-28*
- e. Faith in God and in His Word moves a person to do whatever pleases God.
- i. Abel
Hebrews 11:4 "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain..."
 - ii. Enoch
Hebrews 11:5 "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death..."
 - iii. Noah
Hebrews 11:7 "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark..."
 - iv. Abraham
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 11:17 "'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,"

- v. Sara
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."

- vi. Isaac
Hebrew 11:20 "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come."

- vii. Jacob
Hebrew 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."

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

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

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

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

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

- f. It is important to understand that the elders were not given a good report because they were doing wonderful works, but rather it was because they believed God.

Genesis 15:6 *“And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”*

- ❖ Hudson Taylor said, *“You do not need a Great Faith, you need Faith in a Great God”*

4. 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.”*

- a. Faith believes and understands that God spoke the world into existence.

- ❖ Barnes said *“After all the acts of faith which have ever been exercised in this world, perhaps there is none which is really more strong, or which requires higher confidence in God, than the declaration that this vast universe has been brought into existence by a word!”*

Genesis 1:3 *“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”*

Genesis 1:6 *“And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.”*

Genesis 1:9 *“And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.”*

Genesis 1:11 *“And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.”*

Genesis 1:14 *“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and”*

let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:”

Genesis 1:20 “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.”

Genesis 1:24 “And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind...”

Genesis 1:26 “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”

- ❖ *CH Spurgeon said “The world was not made out of the world. There was nothing to make it out of. It was created simply by the word of God, and our faith knows that. I question whether we should ever get in the matter of the creation beyond what is revealed to our faith. Reason is all very well, but faith mounts upon the shoulders of reason, and sees much farther than reason with her best telescope will ever be able to see. It is enough for us who have faith that God has told us how he made the world, and we believe it.”*

- b. We see God who is invisible through creation that is visible.

Romans 1:20 “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:”

Psalm 19:1 “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.”

B. The Demanding of Faith – Hebrews 11:6

1. Hebrews 11:6 *“But without faith it is impossible to please him...”*
 - a. Living by Faith is the only way in which a person can actually please God; it is impossible to please God any other way.
 - b. Faith waits on the Lord; faith hopes in the Lord; and faith seeks to do things God’s way.
 - ❖ *C. H. Mackintosh, “Faith glorifies God exceedingly, because it proves that we have more confidence in His eyesight than in our own.”*
 - c. God is absolutely pleased with those who utterly believe Him, why, because they are trusting in His integrity, His character, His judgments, and His Wisdom. Faith gives God His proper place in our lives.

2. Hebrews 11:6 *“...for he that cometh to God must believe that he is...”*

- a. Believing that God exists is a good start but is not good enough.

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

- b. Believing in God and following after Him is a must.

❖ *Someone said ‘The Beginning point of faith is believing in God’s character –He is who He says He is. The end point of faith is believing in God’s promises –He will do what He says He will do.’*

Exodus 3:14 “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”

John 8:24 “...for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

3. Hebrews 11:6 “...and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

a. God richly rewards and blesses those that seek and follow after Him.

❖ Ironside said “No man in any dispensation honestly sought after God failed to find Him, for He always revealed Himself to faith.”

Matthew 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Matthew 5:6 “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

b. Diligence is the key. God will not reward those who seek Him in a half-hearted manner. God always required a whole-hearted faith.

Jeremiah 29:11-13 “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. (12) Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. (13) And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

Romans 4:20-22 “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; (21) And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. (22) And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.”

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.”

Revelation 22:12-14 “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. (13) I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. (14) Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

C. The Demonstration of Faith – Hebrews 11:4-40