

Faith
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
February 6, 2010

What is faith?

Hebrews 11

- 1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
 - 1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (NIV)
 - 1 Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. (ASV)
 - 1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction (**a proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested**) of things not seen. (RSV)
 - 1 And faith is of things hoped for a **confidence**, of matters not seen a conviction (**a proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested**), (YLT)
- 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.
- 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.
 - We don't even think twice about the results – we assume things will react in a certain manner. We have no doubts!
 - When we walk into a dark room and flip the light switch, we **expect** the lights to come on – we have no doubts!
 - Two phrases to remember:
 - Let go and let God...
 - I don't know and I'm OK with that!
- 4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.
- 5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.
- 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.
- 7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.
- 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.
 - **Genesis 12**
 - 1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.
 - 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your

Faith
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
February 6, 2010

- name great; And you shall be a blessing.
- 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
- 4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.
- 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.
 - Abraham let go of any control, and let God lead him
 - Abraham didn't know what lay ahead and he was OK with that
- 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;
- 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.
 - Abraham's faith included looking for the city, the New Jerusalem, described in Revelation 21
- 11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.
 - Abraham's faith regarding the birth of Isaac was
- 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.
- 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.
 - These elders only received a partial fulfillment of the 'promise'.
- 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.
- 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.
- 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.
- 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,
- 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called,"
- 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

Faith
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
February 6, 2010

- Abraham exhibited his faith when he offered up Isaac
- 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.
- 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.
- 22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.
- 23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.
- 24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,
- 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,
- 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.
- 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.
- 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.
- 29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.
- 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.
- 31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.
- 32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:
 - Faith does not give automatic protection from trials and tribulations. Nor do the trials and tribulations mean that those persons have less faith.
- 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,
 - Daniel 6.22 = God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouth so that they did not hurt Daniel
- 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.
 - Daniel 3.23-26 = the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fire
- 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.
 - 1 Kings 17.22 = Elijah revived the widow's son

Faith
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
February 6, 2010

- Acts 22.25 = Paul challenged the Roman leadership
- 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.
 - Genesis 39.20 = Joseph was put in prison in Egypt unjustly by Potiphar's wife
- 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented--
 - 1 Kings 21.13 = Naboth was stoned to death because of false witnesses - Ahab wanted his vineyard
 - 2 Kings 1.8 = Elijah was described as a hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist
- 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.
 - 1 Kings 18.4, 13 = "... while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave and had fed them with bread and water"
 - 1 Kings 19.9 = Elijah hid in a cave
- 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,
 - Hebrews 11.2, 13 = No one has received the promise as yet.
- 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.
 - Hebrews 5.9 = "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him"
 - We will all receive the promises at the same time!!!

Have faith in God's Promises – He will do what He has promised
But, we must also look at what He does NOT promise:

Have faith in God's Promises – He will do what He has promised:

1. Deliverance from the evil one
2. Eternal life after resurrection
3. Strength when we need it
4. A land and a life that is beyond our comprehension
5. He can make good come from bad situations
6. Our sins will be forgiven

But, we must also look at what He does NOT promise:

1. Freedom from trials and tribulation
2. Freedom from death

Faith
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
February 6, 2010

3. Freedom from temptation
4. Riches and rewards during this life

At times, even strong believers have **little or no faith**:

Mark 4

- 35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side."
- 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.
- 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.
- 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"
- 39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.
- 40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"
- Christ was talking to His disciples = He equates fear with no faith. Faith here means trust in God's helping power in crisis.

Matthew 8:

- 23 Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.
- 24 And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.
- 25 Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"
- 26 But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?"

Matthew 14:

- 22 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.
- 23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.
- 24 But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.
- 25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.
- 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.
- 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be

Faith
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
February 6, 2010

afraid."

- 28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."
- 29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.
- 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"
- 31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"
 - Matthew uses the phrase "little faith" instead of "no faith"

Weak Faith:

Romans 14

- 1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.
 - Christians need to be careful how they discuss things with persons who are struggling with doctrine – their faith is weak

Dead Faith:

James 2

- 14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?
- 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,
- 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?
- 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
- 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.
 - faith without works is dead – it accomplishes nothing
 - It's not what you have to do to be a Christian; it's what you want to do if you are a Christian

In each of the NT stories about faith (a woman healed by touching Jesus' garment, a blind man made to see, the centurion who had no doubt that Jesus could heal his servant), the person had faith – and works – they did something!

Lessons Learned:

1. Abel = righteousness counts
2. Enoch = God can protect you in miraculous ways
3. Abraham = obedience is important

Faith
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
February 6, 2010

4. Sarah = it is ok to have doubts as long as you take action
5. Isaac = God will “test” us, but will not “tempt” us
6. Joseph = God can make good come from seemingly bad situations
7. Moses = we may be called to do something that we are not trained to do, have not the skills to do, and don’t want to do
8. Joshua = sometimes we may be asked to do things that don’t make sense to us
9. Rahab = God sometimes works through people who are not yet followers
10. Gideon = God may use the weakest and the least to overcome the strongest and most – and, it is ok to test God (with the right attitude, and more than once)
11. Barak = sometimes you need to recognize that God will work through someone else– don’t worry about who gets the credit
12. Samson = God gives strength when it is needed
13. Jephthah = don’t make rash vows
14. David = strive to be like “the man who was after God’s heart” and sins will be forgiven
15. Samuel = Faith does not give automatic protection from trials and tribulations; nor do the trials and tribulations mean that those persons have less faith
16. New Testament = Faith exhibited by those of variant doctrine is a first step toward salvation

In conclusion:

Romans 12

- 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.
 - God has given each believer a measure of faith

James 2

- 1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.
- 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,
- 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"
- 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?
 - we are not to show partiality

To paraphrase Paul’s attempt in Hebrews 11.1, we can say that faith is the confidence

Faith
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February 6, 2010

that things hoped for will occur, and the conviction that things not seen really do exist.

Let go and let God ...

You don't know what lies ahead – be OK with that!

Keep the faith!