

Faith II
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
January 31, 2009

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)
- 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 room and touch the light switch, we expect the light to turn on. We have no doubts and are, in fact, disappointed if the light does not come on. We assume something is wrong.

Why don't we have that type of faith in God? We should expect the result, and only IF it doesn't happen should we examine what is wrong.

Instead, we have doubts that the result we should expect will happen and seem to be surprised if it does happen.

In Hebrews 11.4-7 Paul recounts the stories from the OT about Abel, Enoch, Noah

- To build an ark when it is not raining takes a lot of faith!
- It reminds me of the lazy man with a hole in his roof
 - He can't fix it when it is raining
 - When it's not raining, it doesn't need fixing

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- o He does not reward those who are striving for the reward - He rewards those who seek to follow Him!
- o Our efforts mean nothing if we are out of sync with His will!
- In Hebrews 11.8-10 Paul recounts the stories from the OT about Abram - probably the most amazing tale of faith of the all
 - o **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 name great; And you shall be a blessing.
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 - 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.
 - Abram just left
 - Abram didn't question the direction
 - He didn't question where he was going
 - He didn't question whether it was a good move or not
 - He simply believed God would take care of him and provide for him
 - o Abraham's faith included looking for the city, the New Jerusalem, described in Revelation 21
- In Hebrews 11.11-32 Paul recounts the stories from the OT about Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab
 - o
 - 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:
 - o 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

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righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

- o **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.
 - o **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.
 - o **1 Kings 17.22** = Elijah revived the widow's son
 - o **Acts 22.25** = Paul challenged the Roman leadership
- 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.
 - o **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--
 - o **1 Kings 21.13** = Naboth was stoned to death because of false witnesses - Ahab wanted his vineyard
 - o **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.
 - o **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"
 - o **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,
 - o **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.

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- o **Hebrews 5.9** = "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him"
- o 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
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.

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- 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 14.31 - Peter trying to walk on water

- 31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

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

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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
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

To paraphrase Paul's attempt in Hebrews 11.1, we can say that faith is the confidence that things hoped for will occur, and the conviction that things not seen really do exist.

Keep the faith!