

What is Faith?

Good evening everyone. If you will find the book of Hebrews chpt 11 we will be studying from there in just a min. I want to thank the elders for giving me the opportunity to speak with you this evening. My aim this evening is speak the truth from God's word and I hope that if anyone finds anything I say to be contrary to the truth you would bring it to my attention. I also want to welcome any visitors we have tonight and to say that I am not the regular evangelist here at Pleasant plains and hope that if like what you here you should here the regular guy.

Heb 11:1-6

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ²For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. ⁵By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. ⁶And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

The Hebrew writer is telling us how important faith is to our relationship with God. Since we know how important it is we need to understand what it is. The religious world would have us believe that all we need to do to be saved is have faith. Lets look at God's word and see what he has to say on the subject.

What is Faith?

- I. Faith is more than just belief
 - a. There was once a small country church in a rural farming community that had been suffering from a horrible drought. The elders at the church had decided to have a special prayer service to ask God for an end to the drought and pray for rain. Everyone was patiently waiting for the preacher to begin the service when a loud noise came from the front steps. He stopped what he was doing and went to the door to see what was going on. There he saw struggling under the weight of a large umbrella, oversized goulashes and a full rain suit was Elderly Sister Smith trying to make her way up to the door. The preacher asked why she had burdened herself down with all the gear. Her simple answer struck him like an anvil. We are praying for rain. He looked down at her and then at the rest of the congregation and did not even see a single umbrella in the crowd. Who in the congregation showed real faith that day?
 - b. Heb. 11:7- By Faith Noah constructed an ark. Was it just the belief that God would save him or the building of the ARK.

c. Heb. 11:17- By Faith Abraham offered up Isaac, believing that God could raise him back if necessary.

d.

II. Faith is based on evidence

a. Rom. 1 :18-20- Paul tells us that God left evidence of him in creation

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world,^[a] in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse

b. Jn. 5:31-47- Jesus lets his action bear witness of his words. He let the scriptures bear witness of him also.

³¹ If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. ³² There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true. ³³ You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. ³⁴ Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. ³⁵ He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. ³⁶ But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. ³⁷ And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, ³⁸ and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. ³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. ⁴¹ I do not receive glory from people. ⁴² But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. ⁴³ I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. ⁴⁴ How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? ⁴⁵ Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

III. Faith involves patience

a. Heb. 11:12- Abraham and Sarah had to have patience to get the promised son.

Remember the problems that came when Sarah took things into her own hands with Hagar Gen. 16:1-6

b. Gen. 37 – Remember how long it took Joseph to understand God's plan.

c. Is. 40:31-

but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.

IV. Faith is not dependent on our circumstances

a. Job 1:13-21

¹³ Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁴ and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants^[c] with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." ¹⁶ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." ¹⁷ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." ¹⁸ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

²⁰ Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshipped. ²¹ And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

²² In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

b. Book of Ester- It was easy for Mordicai and Ester to trust God when things were well, but to serve God even if it meant death

c. Daniel 3:16-18- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not going to serve the Gods of Babylon even if it meant their deaths in the furnace.

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.^[d] ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."