

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to Hebrews 11

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this letter that was written to a group of Jewish believers

who because of persecution and difficulties –

they were wavering in their relationship with Christ.

And they were contemplating returning back to Judaism

They were being tempted by the old religious system – the Old Covenant –

The problem was that they had been delivered of the Old Covenant – and it didn't make sense for them to go backwards to a system where they would be told, "Look for Messiah, look for the Savior – and when He comes embrace Him"

So, now that Jesus has come, they have embraced Him but they are having all these fillings of going backwards – things have become too difficult in their eyes – they miss their families, they miss their status among society, they miss the formality of religion, they miss partaking in all the religious feasts

And so the writer is telling – don't do it

You need to endure

So up until our study last week – the writer of Hebrews has been laying the biblical foundation as to why they shouldn't go back

However, beginning with our study last week – the writer transitions from giving them theology to now giving them application – this is the how-to portion of the letter.

Guys – this is how you are going to endure –

And for the next couple of weeks – as we study this chapter, we are going to be looking at example after example of individuals who endured.

These are not individuals who simply made professions of faith – we are going to see the practicing of faith

When God has chosen to display true faith to us, He chose to not use professions but the practicing of faith – the outward expressions of faith that these individuals displayed.

How were they able to endure – how were they able to go forward and not backward – and the answer is by faith

So in our text this evening – the writer of Hebrews is going to provide for us a definition of faith

Let's pray...

Now, before we get started – I want to remind us that the chapter breaks were not in the original letter – or verse numbers.

Those were added much later to help us navigate through the bible

And yes – it makes it easier going through the bible

but sometimes they put a chapter break in a place that they really shouldn't have.

Case in point – the beginning of ch 11

So, before we get into ch 11

I want us to turn back to verse 35 of ch 10

Because really – this is all one thought of the application of living life by faith

And it begins here in verse 35

**[Heb 10:35-39 NKJV] 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, [And] He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by ...**

**faith;**

The writer is quoting Habakkuk here –

We are justified by faith and we are to live our Christian walk by faith

Not by works

Not by religion

But by faith

**But if [anyone] draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.**

Now we get to ch 11

**[Heb 11:1-3 NKJV] 1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

So back in verse 38 – the just shall live by faith

Beginning here in verse 1 – the writer tells us what faith looks like and how is faith lived out in the life of the believer.

So – if you want, you can draw a line between the faith in verse 38 and the faith here in verse 1

- They are connected

And he begins by providing for us a description of what faith is

The Greek word that the writer uses here for faith is a word that means to trust, to have confidence, to believe

And so, faith is the foundational principle, along with truth, in our relationship with God

Faith implicitly takes God at His word

Faith is supernatural confidence and reliance on the One who has made the promise

It is not an uncertain hope for something that may come to pass

It is a trust that brings absolute here and now

It is the certainty that what God has promised will happen and we are so certain of it happening – that it is almost as if it already happened

For the unbeliever – seeing is believing

For those who walk by faith and put their trust in Jesus Christ, believing is seeing

Faith is a gift that God gives us

It takes something we cannot see and it becomes a part of who we are

Now – regarding faith, there are a few things I want us to consider.

One of the things we have to truly grasp regarding faith is that the object of our faith is Jesus Christ

We are going to learn that in a few weeks

**[Heb 12:2 NKJV] 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [our] faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

You see church, faith is only as valuable as the object that we place it in

If we put our faith in man, we will be greatly disappointed

If we put our faith in politicians – we will be greatly disappointed

If we put our faith in the stock market or on money – we will be disappointed

But when we place our faith in God – we will not be disappointed

Because He remains faithful

The next thing we must grasp about faith is that faith is the requirement for salvation.

**[Eph 2:8-9 NKJV] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.**

In the book of Acts 16,

Paul and Silas were arrested, they were praying and singing hymns and suddenly an earthquake occurred, and all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were broken –

The jailer was about to kill himself as he was responsible for everyone who escaped – he feared the worse and Paul said, “We are all here”

**[Act 16:30-31 NKJV] 30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."**

Salvation is accessed by faith.

Part of the whole armor of God – is the shield of faith

We are able to stand strong by believing in God

Next week – Lord willing, we will be looking deeper at verse 6

**[Heb 11:6 NKJV] 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.**

The writer is not saying that it is going to be much harder to please God without faith, he is saying it is impossible

Let's look at the rest of verse 1

**faith is the substance of things hoped for,**

Next to the word substance – you can write the word confidence

Faith is the confidence that I have in my future – that my future is held in the hands of – not my own hands, not the hands of another man

But in the hands of a holy God - He who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think (Eph 3:20)

It's our "faith" that makes our "hope" "substantial".

Faith gives confidence to hope.

Faith is the solid foundation that our hope is built on.

Turn with me to Genesis 28

I am going to show you an example of an individual who at the time lacked faith / really didn't have the confidence of things hoped for -

Here in Genesis 28

Jacob – as he is on his way to uncle Laban's house, he takes a nap and he has this dream with a ladder that went from earth to heaven and angels going up and down the ladder

And then God makes a promise to Jacob

God told Jacob He was going to provide for him

That He was going to watch over him and bring him back to the land.

**[Gen 28:18-22 NKJV] 18 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21 "so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. 22 "And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."**

God made a promise to Jacob but Jacob responded to God's promise with conditions.

If God will be with me, if God protects me, if God provides for me and returns me home – then the Lord shall be my God

That is not faith

Faith is giving of ourselves to God regardless of what we get from it.

It is understanding who God is and wanting to be part of God's plan and entering into God's purposes and giving of ourselves fully and never holding anything back

**the evidence of things not seen.**

The word that is used here for evidence is the word for sure conviction or proof –

faith is the conviction or proof about something that we can't see

faith gives us the ability to accept them and believe them and acknowledge that they are true.

Write this verse down -

**[1Pe 1:8-9 NKJV] 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see [Him], yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of [your] souls.**

We say, I know God – but we can't see God

We have a relationship with Jesus – but He is no longer physically with us

We say, I believe in the Holy Spirit – but He lives within us

How do we know and believe and see all these things?

We know and believe and see all these things because God has given us the instrument of faith to see them.

Many people don't realize this but whether we are believers or nonbelievers, we all have convictions that are based upon faith.

Think about how many times we get on plane and fly anywhere?

Most of us just jump on a plane and don't think twice whether the plane is going to reach its destination

We drive over a bridge – never second guessing the structural integrity of it

We turn on a light switch – not fully understanding how electricity works – but we fully expect that the lights will come on

So there are things in our lives we exhibit faith without even thinking about them, we exhibit faith without fully understanding how a plane flies or how a bridge can withstand a load or a light switch works

The problem for many is that they stop short when it comes to their Creator –

And the reason that they stop short is because to put one's faith in our Creator you have to admit to a lot of things

- You have to come clean about their own lifestyle
- You have to come clean about your own rebellion
- You have to come clean about your own failures

How much more so should we be exhibiting faith in our Creator, who has shown us through the changed life of the believer - what He is able to do.

**2 For by it (speaking of faith) the elders obtained a [good] testimony.**

Now, the elders here refers to the men and women that are listed here in this chapter – all the ones that we are going to study over the next few weeks

So the writer is saying that by faith – these men and women were good witnesses,  
 Much in the same way that you and I develop a good testimony – through faith – not  
 religion or works (that is the key!)

Now, remember who the writer is writing to –

Jewish believers who wanted to go back to religion.

Religion is all about what I can do for God – it is an outward appearance

It is man coming before God and saying – I have done this for you and have done this  
 for you and so forth – so you must accept me

Jesus talked about this -

**[Mat 7:21-23 NKJV] 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the  
 kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 "Many  
 will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name,  
 cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 "And  
 then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice  
 lawlessness!'**

So – we can easily say that works is like a picture album – where we get just snippets  
 of our life

However, our walk by faith is the entire video or the entire movie

That is why Abraham is listed here – he lied twice saying that Sarah was her sister because he was trying to protect himself

That is why Sarah is here – she laughed when she was told she was going to be a mom at her old age

But what does the bible say about Sarah –

**[Heb 11:11 NKJV] 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.**

When God sees us – He sees us in those places of obedience

He sees our potential

He sees our progress

Not necessarily all of our failures.

The problem is this – God may see us one way – but we might see ourselves a different way.

And we may look at ourselves and think that we are a total mess

One failure after another failure

We look at our Christian walk and feel defeated because we have so much further to grow and mature still

But when God sees us – He says, “but look at how far you have come”

“Don’t you remember where you came from before I redeemed you?”

“Don’t you remember what I delivered you from, what I saved you from?”

Church – faith pleases God

That is how He desires us to live

And when God looks down upon us – He sees what He has done in our lives and He doesn’t focus on our failures.

We have a tendency to focus on our own weaknesses and our own failures

And we live our lives in a perpetual state of condemnation

**[Rom 8:1 NKJV] 1 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**

I had you make a note of the word now –

Every time we read Rom 8:1 it is now

We will never read it in a moment that isn’t now

There is no reason for us to beat ourselves up

There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ

Jesus Christ took the beating on our behalf

Jesus Christ willingly sacrificed His life, shed His blood, so we no longer need to live a condemning life

**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.**

As the writer of Hebrews is about to begin to provide us with examples of those who walked by faith –

He takes us back to the basic foundation of our faith – he takes us back to creation

You see, without faith – it is impossible to understand Gen 1

How can we possibly understand Gen 1

How can we possibly understand Gen 1:1 – In the beginning God?

How do we KNOW that God created all things?

We know it by faith!

God made all the things that we see out of things that we can't see.

All things were created out of “nothing”.

We might have trouble understanding this because we weren't there to "see it", but we come to understand it through "faith", through trusting God's Word, through trusting God.

We don't understand it by facts

We don't understand this by trying to figure it out

We don't understand this by seeing this with our own eyes

That doesn't mean there isn't going to be any evidence of God's hand in creation.

**[Rom 1:20 NKJV] 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible [attributes] are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,**

How do we know that God created everything?

Because He tells us that He created everything

He was there and He tells us what happened

And by faith – I believe God's Word

And church – that is the unfolding of the entire bible

That by faith in Jesus Christ – we have all that we need

Everything is found in Him

He is our all in all

In Jesus Christ, we have all the necessities to make us right with God and right with others.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I

accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

