

Introduction:

- *"Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation."* (Hebrews 11:1-2, NLT)
- Faith is believing in what you cannot see.
 - A. W. Tozer wrote: "A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One Whom he has never seen, talks familiarly every day to Someone he cannot see – expects to go to Heaven on the virtue of Another, empties himself in order to be full, admits he is wrong so he can be declared right, goes down in order to get up – is strongest when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest, and happiest when he feels worst. He dies so he can live, forsakes in order to have, gives away so he can keep, sees the invisible, hears the inaudible and knows that which passeth knowledge." No wonder the world thinks believers are crazy.
- We must become people of faith. We must people of greater faith. *"Most of us try to face full-time problems through part-time faith. It doesn't work."* Anonymous What stands out in Hebrews 11 are the two words: "By Faith..." They are used over and over of people in this chapter. Therefore we must assume that faith is to be important to our lives today.
 - We need faith that will allow us to believe when we don't see, obey when we don't understand, give when we don't have it to give, to go on when we want to quit, and faith to "Thank Him!" even before we have our answer to prayer.

I. "By Faith" - Grow into it!

- A. The process of faith. *"Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation."* (Hebrews 11:1-2, NLT) What we see in this passage is that faith is the reality of hope. Hope is a future directed word. Faith is a 'now word.' Hope points to something in the future, faith with outrageous confidence says I have now the very thing I am hoping for. If you have hope but never move to faith you will not receive what you are hoping for. One writer I read said this, "Faith is the full-grown offspring of hope." Let me break this down for us some more. I believe the process looks like this: first I have hope, then comes belief and finally I am walking in full on faith!
1. Hope -
 - a) is our anticipation of favorable and excellent outcomes. It is tied closely to our desires. It is what we want God to do on our behalf. Hope encourages the heart!
 - b) Hope is often inspired by other people's favorable experiences (their testimony). We hear that and our hearts are inspired to have hope too. Testimonies ignite hope.
 2. Belief is more than hope.
 - a) Belief is confidence in the ability of another. It is generally based on our knowledge or experience. Belief comes into being when you are convinced of God's ability to perform His Word. IE. Family doctor. Through experience you have a confidence they can help you feel better.
 - b) We establish belief by searching the Word of God and seeking His presence daily. This is how we get to know Him and to trust that He will do exactly what He promises. IE. David taking care of sheep. Meditated on God, wrote songs about God, believed God to protect him from lions and bears.
 3. Faith -
 - a) is the reliance we have on the word and intentions of another. Faith is based solely on one's relationship with God.*** It is what you fully, expect God to do on your behalf.

- b) True faith is the courage to act with only the assurance that the one you have place your faith in will do what is best for you. IE. The boys when little would jump off of things into my arms. They did not simply believe I would catch them...they fully expected me to catch them. Their outrageous faith was based solely on our relationship.
- B. How does this kind of faith come?
1. The heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11 are our example. When we look at their lives we see several things:
 - a) First we see they have a relationship with God. They seem to speak with Him often - prayer. They walked humbly before him - they Worshiped Him often. Their lives before God and before others inspired faith in their own children and grandchildren. So we see they had a relationship with God. God was not just a God called upon in times of trouble. Like I said earlier: *"Most of us try to face full-time problems through part-time faith. It doesn't work."* Anonymous
 - b) Second we see they acted in response to what God had spoken to them. *"So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ."* (Romans 10:17, NLT) They all had a Word from God that they were believing in. Their faith came through what was spoken to them by God.
 - c) They had weaknesses like us, but they persevered in faith and overcame as they walked with God.

II. By Faith - Learning from Heroes

- A. We can learn from these heroes in Hebrews chapter 11. First of all it is important to note that they are common ordinary people like us. They had 'flesh' issues. They had fears. They had family problems. They had doubts. But... they did not quit on God. They continued to hold onto the Word given to them. In spite of fear they moved in faith. They overcome by faith. They won a testimony because of faith.
1. This chapter is still being written in heaven. It is still possible to get your name in the chapter! Will you be known "By faith"?
 2. When you study those of Hebrews 11 pay attention to their humanity. See that they are real people. Sometimes I think we believe a lie that we cannot be like them because they were someone special. Each one of them has a story.
- B. An example of learning from them. IE. David did not make the story he just made the list. Heb 11:32. We get no story here. David just made the list! But lets look at his life.
1. *"The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!" ...*" (1 Samuel 17:37, NLT) Davids story is one of outrageous faith!
 2. David was not God's first choice, Saul was. *"How foolish!" Samuel exclaimed. "You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. Had you kept it, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever."* (1 Samuel 13:13, NLT) Saul's lack of faith cost him the kingdom and the throne. He sacrificed rather than waiting for Samuel according to the Word of the Lord to him. "By Faith" Noah obeyed. vs 7, Abraham obeyed vs. 8.
 3. Both Saul and David were confronted by Goliath. Initially this was Saul's date with destiny not Davids. Saul's fear not only stopped him but it stopped all Israel. It is amazing what one mans fear or faith will do to all who watch and listen.
 - a) Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin know for its warriors.
 - b) Saul was a head taller than other Israelites.
 - c) Saul was a proven warrior with numerous military conquests.

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- d) **Saul had the Word of the Lord he would deliver Israel from the Philistines. (1Sam 9:16)
- e) Yet with all this, he had one issue ...he did not trust God. Fear will overtake you if you allow it. There will always be some obstacles between you and your destiny! Faith is require to overtake your destiny!
- 4. Saul and his army was challenged for 40 days by Goliath. David shows up and in 40 minutes he is ready to kill the guy. Saul and the army focused on the problem. David focused on the reward. God always has a reward for those who walk by faith! Heb 11:6
- 5. David starts talking out loud. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?" 1 Sam 17:26.
 - a) Davids older brother is angry when he hears the courageous words of David.
 - b) Davids words eventually get to Saul. David spoke in faith and his testimony was made known to the king! When you speak faith your King will hear your testimony!!! Our confession of faith gives the King the right intervene and the right to act on our behalf!
 - c) Saul dismissed David because of his inexperience. He was putting his fear and his perspective on David. People do that regularly to people of faith. David did not wavier.
 - d) God prepared David not on the battle field but on the pasture!
 - (1) Never underestimate where God is preparing you! Take each day in the Lord seriously! You never know what you are being prepared for.
 - (2) David learned to trust God while protecting sheep. Killing lions and bears.
 - (3) David refused Saul's armor because God's armor fit better!
 - (4) What David learned in the place of preparation he continued to use in the place of opportunity!!! God equips us for destiny that he sets before us! David went into battle with the same equipment he arrived with. We must have this same confidence in God that David had. A confidence born out of relationship.
 - e) David responded by declaring his **confidence** in God's ability.
 - f) David knew he was in **covenant** with the living God.
 - g) David **concluded** with the statement that the Battle is the Lords. His faith, and his confession opened the door for supernatural to come into the natural realm. His faith and his confession accessed the ability of God.
 - h) These are all lessons we just learned from David. Study the heroes of the faith, learn from them! In fact, let me show you how close you are to them, though you are separated by time and culture. Lets look at the people of Hebrews 11.

III. People Known "By Faith"

- A. In Hebrews 11 we find three groups of people.
 - 1. The Famous vss. 4-31 They are named and a short synopsis is given of them and their faith.
 - 2. The Listed vss. 32-35 They are listed in a generic summary is given of them and their faith.
 - 3. The Others vss. 35-39 These people aren't even named. "Others" who lived/died by faith.
 - 4. All were famous because they were witnesses **μαρτυριον**, by faith. Heb 11:2, 39, 12:2
- B. All Were Known By Faith! We (You and I) are currently classified as others, but who knows what will be in the books of heaven when we get there!
 - 1. Though these individuals are widely separated by time and space (and by personality and individual achievement), they are joined by one common factor:

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- a) What they did, they did by faith. And this is why they won God's approval. They pleased God. *"And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him."* (Hebrews 11:6, NLT)
- b) Think about this: there is really nothing that joins Abraham and Rahab (the prostitute vs 31) except: At a crucial moment in time, they each acted in faith. God saw their faith and He rewarded it beautifully!
2. Living by faith often means that we will be moving against the prevailing stream of public opinion on most days.
 - a) IE. Noah built an ark, Abraham left Ur and his family, Moses rejected Egypt, and Joshua marched around Jericho.
 - b) The same holds true in our lives today. If you decide to live by faith: you will definitely stand out from the crowd; you will face opposition; and you will be ridiculed.
3. Hebrews 11 demonstrates that the life of faith is not a rare thing.
 - a) It's easy to look at Enoch or Noah or Joseph or Moses or David and say, "I could never do that."
 - b) Down deep in our hearts, we have believed a lie that the life of faith is restricted to a few "special" people. We think we could never qualify to have our names added to the list of Hebrews 11.
 - c) But that's the very reason this chapter is in the Bible, so that we would know that these are ordinary men and women who did extraordinary things simply because they had faith in God. They are made of the same stuff as us. The life of faith is within the reach of every believer. If we desire it, we can live like this too.
 - d) God loves it when his people dare to trust him. He loves it so much that he bears witness to the world that his people belong to him. IE. There is huge gap between us and them. And yet what won them approval wins us approval too. Faith! That's what God honors.
 - e) Gods wants us to be absolutely outrageous in our trust of Him!
 - (1) "Outrageous trust" is what you have when you build an ark hundreds of miles from any body of water.
 - (2) "Outrageous trust" compels you to leave your home not knowing where you are going.
 - (3) And "outrageous trust" sends you into the Elah Valley to face your Goliath.
 - (4) When did you last walk in outrageous trust? When will you walk there again?
 - (5) The question is: Will you be known, "By Faith?"

Conclusion:

- Ultimately, faith is believing. It's believing in God, even though you cannot see Him. It's trusting that God will never fail you, will never forsake you. It's believing in Jesus as THE Son of God who came into this world to redeem you, to forgive us of our sins . . . and when you say YES to Jesus, when you say "I BELIEVE" then you have salvation! You have the promise of what you cannot see . . . God's presence, today, tomorrow and forever.
- I really loved Kellys message on "Heart Attacks" two weeks ago. I only grasped how critical that message was to this series when I read Mark 11:25 this week. *"But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too."* (Mark 11:25, NLT) That scripture follows one of the most significant words Jesus ever spoke on faith. Great faith comes from a great heart! A healed heart. A delivered heart. The heart is where we have relationship with God at.
- Let's be a people who are known "By Faith"!