

Introduction:

- *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."* (Heb 11:1, ESV)
 - Faith is! Not faith was or will be. Faith is.
- Webster defines Adventure - as a venture/activity involving danger or risk. Faith loves that! In fact, you would be hard pressed to find faith in the Bible that is absent of danger or risk.
- Faith is an experience that seemingly may 'set one' up for loss or harm **IF** God does not come through.

I. Faith Is A Sacrifice

- A. A sacrifice is something that is given up. It is a sacrifice because it appears to cost us for walking in faith. Faith is an experience that, seemingly, may look like failure initially but results in success. When something is sacrificed its value is given up to something else. Giving us the appearance of having lost. IE. When Peter climbed out of the boat to walk on water...Mt 14:27-ff. This step out of the boat could cost Peter his life. But the Lord caught him as he started to sink. Faith always appears to cost you but it pays off.
1. Mark 12:41-44 is the story of the widow that Jesus observes and teaches his disciples from. *"And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box."* (Mark 12:43, ESV) Jesus was amazed at this woman.
 2. The comparison:
 - a) The rich gave out of their abundance. It did not really cost them to give.
 - b) She gave out of her lack. In other words, she gave out of her livelihood. It was costing her to give but it paid off.
 - c) Jesus looks at the measure not the amount! *"All the others gave what they'll never miss; she gave extravagantly what she couldn't afford—she gave her all."* (Mark 12:44, The Message)
 - d) Those who walk in great faith will always be those who are liberal/generous in giving. You can't look at the amount, you must see the measure. IE. Sylvia - the church hugger. Would from time to time put a \$5 bill in my hand. I knew she did not have that kind of cash to give. It was the "widows mite!"
- B. Jesus calls his disciples attention to this woman's sacrifice but more so her faith! Faith is alive, it is active. It daringly moves with confidence to shift/change things.

II. The Basic Principles of Faith

- A. *"By 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."* (Hebrews 11:4, ESV)
1. Able had faith! And the beautiful thing about this is that God is the One who says that Able had faith. Able did not say he had faith, God did. People with great faith most times do not know they have great faith. IE. The centurion understood authority. The Syro-Phoenician woman understood mercy.

2. God commends μαρτυρεω – martureo - witness. God testifies of Able's righteousness because of his faith! He was the forerunner of Abraham's testimony or righteousness. IE. Able offered his best lamb. Abraham offered his one and only son. Greater sacrifice/ offering.
 3. Able offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. The greek word means 'many more' - Abel lavished his sacrifice upon God. First born lamb and fat! Gen 4:4.
- B. You can only give in relationship to the amount of faith you have. This is a basic principal of faith. A living faith must function in every area of your life. Because it is a basic principal, I believe it is the reason that God says test me in this. (Malachi 3:10)
1. Generosity is living with an open hand.
 2. *"The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed."* (Proverbs 11:25, NLT) Even as you give out of what you have been given, you will receive in return.
 3. Able's faith was manifest by the way he gave. He gave the Best! He learned giving from Adam who was covered with skins from animals prepared by God. The offering of a life came out of the garden had to do with Adam and Eve's sin.
 4. Again, you do not have to boast of your faith it will be obvious by those who watch you.
 5. What did Cane do? He knew everything that Able knew. He just thought the price was too high to sacrifice a lamb. He offered from the land, not of the flock.
 6. Faith is an excellent offering to God! Faith is giving what God requires of you. Able was able to do that and to do it with faith and joy.

III. Learning To Live With An Open Hand

- A. Take the test! *"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test..."* (Mal 3:10) ESV
1. Put me to the test! It is the one place in the Bible where God says test me.
 2. This is like the beginning point of faith, learning to trust God.
- B. Understanding the tithe and offering.
1. The tithe belongs to God. The tithe is His. If we keep that, we are stealing from God.
 - a) The tithe is the 10%, that is what tithe means. It is the first 10% off the top of our income.
 - b) It is called the cursed thing if we keep and the tithe if we return/worship with it.
 2. The offering is what we sow out of the 90% that belongs to us.
 - a) An offering can be sown anywhere and anytime.
 - b) It is multiplication seed.
 - c) *"For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you."* (2 Corinthians 9:10, NLT)
 3. You will never grow in faith if you cannot operate in these two things that God has told us to test Him in. Test - Heb - *"it denotes examining to determine essential qualities,*

especially integrity." Oswalt, J. N. (1999). R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 100). Chicago: Moody Press.

- C. God's promised response to our faith: Malachi 3:
1. I will open the windows of heaven for you.
 2. I will pour out a blessing until there is no more need.
 3. I will rebuke the devourer.
 4. All the nations will call you blessed.

Conclusion:

- The Adventure of faith starts with an open hand. Returning to God what is His and sowing our seed.