

Hebrews 4.1-2

The Essence of Faith

There is a picture here that we need to set our eyes upon for a time. It is a picture of what the promised land was to represent for the people of God. It is a picture of the promise fulfilled, a picture of the sure and steadfast power of God to do all that He says He will do. It has real-world benefits and real-world sorrows, but it also has other world benefits and threatenings tied up with it... the promised land held the veracity of God out for all to see. It was present and future, hint and fulfillment, shadow and substance. It was the reality that God would indeed give to the people of God houses they did not build, vineyards they did not plant, wells they did not dig... it was blessing they neither labored for nor deserved. And so it is with us, we too are promised blessings that are at the expense of another, we too are given a home we did not prepare, a vine we did not plant, a stream and fountain we did not dig... the similarity does not end there, for we also have all had the promise manifested to us, we have had the gospel

preached to us, and just like they, some have not entered into the promise for in them the gospel is unmixed with faith.

I. FAITH IS

Hebrews 11.1

- a. The substance of things hoped for – that which provides the basis for trust and reliance. It is the manifest nature of something. What is actually IS...
- b. The evidence of things not seen – the evidence normally based on argument or discussion as to the truth or reality of something...
- c. Thus faith become the marriage of what we KNOW something is, and what we are CONVINCED it is. Faith says "I don't know how, understand why or comprehend the full scope - but I still choose to trust You. I

still follow after, though I do not know where."

II. FAITH MEANS

- a. We do not have to have physical, tangible evidence of the specific promise
- b. We do, however have an anchor for our faith based on the proven veracity of the speaker.
- c. We believe Jesus because we have seen the proof of His character and the proof of what He said He was and would do. His past trustworthiness inclines us to the reality of His future trustworthiness.

III. FAITH BELIEVES

- a. That Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed to be.
 - i. God made flesh

1. Manifest for us –

John 14.9-11

2. The exact representation of God –

John 10.25-30

ii. The One who can keep us from falling –

Jude 24-25

iii. The voice of God to us calling us to trust Him –

Mark 1.38 – 39

iv. The power of God to deliver us from our present bondage

v. The sacrifice for our sin

Matthew 20.25- 28

b. That God will do all that He promised

i. The blessings

1. Forgiveness

a. Justification

b. Sanctification

c. Glorification

2. Both Allow us and Make us ABLE to be with Him

3. The current position of Grace in which we stand –

Romans 5.1-2

ii. The cursings

1. Punish those who reject Him

2. Pour wrath on those who disobey His law

3. Eternally cut off those who refuse to believe Him

iii. The benefits

1. Peace
2. Hope
3. Comfort
4. Joy

iv. The burdens

1. Will yield a harvest of righteousness

Hebrews 12.11

2. Will produce the character of Christ in us –

Romans 5.3-5

Romans 8.28-30

c. That living according to His word is better than what the world promises.

d. That the promised reward is worth more than the present cost

- i. Sorrow
- ii. Loneliness
- iii. Rejection
- iv. Pain
- v. Service without needed reward
- vi. Lack of "pleasures"

e. That Nothing but God in Christ will ever truly suffice!

IV. FAITH COMES

a. From God - it is a gift.

Ephesians 2.8-10

b. Through the Spirit

Galatians 5.5
2 Cor 4.13-14

c. By the word

Romans 10.17

- d. By the gospel of God being applied spiritually. A supernatural working of God, the salvation of even ONE sinner is a miracle more grand and vast than the whole of creation, displaying more of God's power and glory.
- i. Something from nothing is really something
 - ii. But purification of the most corrupt, the actual changing of a nature,
 - iii. The birth of a baby is a miracle, it is the testimony of God that He creates life... but babies are born all the time and we don't really get the message. But when God took Lazarus' corrupt flesh, 4 days in the tomb and stinking, rot had already set in, the desert heat had done its work and foul corruption had taken

its hold... and this man came forth clean and whole and alive... it was something that drew crowds and was the final spark that lit the fuse of the crucifixion.

John 12.9-11

- iv. Thus the gospel becomes a carrier wave for the faith that God bestows.
 - 1. faith then is the component which God communicates by the proclamation of the gospel and faith is that which was lacking in the children of Israel when they turned back from the promised land and rejected God.