

Legacy Baptist  
Church

## Hebrews 11:1-6 Understanding Faith

- Here we are in the heart of the application section of the book of Hebrews
- We have learned much, and in that time of learning been confronted with 3 primary warnings
  - HEBREWS 2:1 →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

### Hebrews 2:1-3

(1) Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. (2) For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of

- READ
- CONTINUE →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

Hebrews 2:1-3

reward; (3) How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

- READ
- WARNING 1 – Take this stuff seriously because God takes it seriously
  - Assume these truths into your life
  - Or, in short, have faith
- Then in HEBREWS 4 →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

### Hebrews 4:1

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

- READ
- WARNING 2 – Be urgent that you don't fall short of the promises of God
  - Be fearful
    - In the idea of reverential fear
    - That you would fall short of these things
    - In short, have faith
- Then the 3<sup>rd</sup> warning →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

Hebrews 10:35

Cast not away therefore your confidence,  
which hath great recompence of reward.

- READ
- WARNING 3 – Don't forsake that which you have seen and known by experience
  - Don't tread under foot the grace which you have been given
  - In short, have faith
- Believe it or not, the WHOLE BOOK OF HEBREWS is an argument for why faith is justified and essential
  - If you know who Christ is
  - If you know what He has done
  - Then you have NO EXCUSE to NOT commit yourself wholly to Him
- But what is faith?
  - That is the question which HEBREWS 11 answers
  - And we begin our exploration of it today with the closest thing to a definition that we are going to get
- Paul will answer this question "what is faith"
  - And also answer the question "why is faith so important"
- Most of the remainder of the chapter is then dedicated to giving examples of faith through the OT Scriptures themselves
  - Something which we would expect from HEBREWS
  - Because it is written to a Jewish audience that is intimately familiar with the Bible
  - So each of these accounts would be familiar
  - And Paul then has the privilege of showing where the faith is in each one
- So what is faith?
- We READ →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the **substance** of things **hoped** for, the evidence of things not seen.

**ὑπόστασις** – a support, confidence, essence

**ἐλπίζω** – to expect, to wait for

- READ
- So Paul describes the character of faith in two complimentary ways here
  - That faith is the substance of things hoped for
  - And faith is the evidence of things not seen
- This word “substance” is a word which means a support
  - Like a pillar
  - Or a foundation
  - Of the 5x the word is used in the NT, 3 of those times it is translated “confidence”
  - Faith is the manifest confidence in those things for which I am hoping
- And let’s talk about that word “hope” as well
  - When we use the word “hope” in the english language, it often carries with it the idea of a fearful longing
    - Wanting something to come to pass, whether or not there is any rational reason to believe it will
  - But this is not the word “hope” in our KJB
    - Hope in King James English is “desire with expectation”
    - A joyful and earnest expectation of good
  - NOT the idea that I wish someday that I could go visit the mountains
  - But rather the idea that I have a date on the calendar, my bags are packed, and I am simply waiting for the time to arrive →

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- So when Paul says that faith is the substance of things hoped for
  - He is not saying that faith adds some level of expectation to things which I have no reason to believe may come to pass
  - But rather faith is the outworking of my confidence that something **WILL** come to pass
- What is faith?
  - Faith is the actions that I perform in my life based upon the confidence I have in things that I have been promised
    - And the degree of faith I have is manifest through the extent that what I say I believe affects how I live my life
- Let's cover the 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase then we'll give some examples
- Faith is the substance of things hoped for →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the **evidence** of **things** not seen.

**ἔλεγχος** – proof, conviction

**πρᾶγμα** – deeds, matters

- Faith is also the evidence of things not seen
- Faith is the proof of deeds which have not been seen
  - This carries the same weight and meaning as the previous statement
  - That Faith is the outworking of things in my life that prove whether or not I believe the things which I have not seen are true
- And from these two statements we can begin to build a definitional framework for the idea of faith
  - Faith deals with matters which are unseen, but have been told to me with the expectation that they will affect my life
    - Things such as Christ's death, burial, and resurrection
    - Promises such as Christ's second coming
  - And the measure of faith in a man is the degree to which his belief in those unseen matters and personal promises affect his daily life
  - So that faith cannot be measured in how much a person SAYS he thinks something which he has not seen is true
    - But rather, faith is measured by how much those unseen things affect the way he lives his life
- So I could tell you that behind this curtain is a bomb that is set to go off in 7 minutes
  - And I could tell you this with all sincerity
  - And I could be earnest and honest in my statements that it is true
  - But the measure of whether or not I believe it is NOT what I say, but what I do
  - If I REALLY believed that there was a bomb behind this curtain
  - I would act on that →



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- I would get my family away
  - Or at the very least gather together to say my goodbyes
- But I'm not doing that, because no matter how much I say I believe it
  - Or even convince myself I believe it
  - My actions are revealing that I don't actually believe it
  - And that means I don't have any true faith in the claim, regardless of what I say
- The world around us today gives us ample evidence of the difference between saying and believing things
  - The powerful in this country are desperate to convince us that the world is going to be destroyed by climate change in short order if we don't give them absolute power and all of our money
  - And they get up and make this grand speeches with great swelling words of conviction
    - And many of them probably even THINK they believe this silliness to be true
    - And many of their followers actually THINK they believe this silliness to be true
  - But we know that they don't actually have any faith in it
    - Because they all, almost universally, still live in coastal cities
    - Still drive big cars
    - Still fly private jets
  - Regardless of what they say
  - And regardless of how they feel
  - They know that they don't actually have faith in these unseen and hoped for claims →

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- Because their ACTIONS give them away
- The same can be said for mask mandates
  - There are those in power who insist that masks are essential
  - But when cameras document their lives, we find that they put them on for the camera, and then take them off when they think the cameras have stopped rolling
  - And I am not accusing these people of being disingenuous
  - I believe they likely believe that this is the best thing for people
  - But what I KNOW is that they don't think the virus is as dangerous as they say they think it is
    - Maybe even as they think they think it is
  - Because their actions give them away
- OK, now I've given you the red meat
  - I've given you the easy and comfortable examples where you get to judge the actions and intentions of others
  - And feel good to be validated in your frustrations over the actions of people who you don't particularly like
- Now let's get to the real illustrations
  - The ones that matter because they actually address something that can do some good
- Jesus said in LUKE 6:44 →
-

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

Luke 6:44

For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

- READ
- If you want to identify a type of fruit tree, you simply need to identify the fruit it produces
  - A thorn bush will never produce figs
  - A bramble bush will never produce grapes
- The things that come out of your life invariably reveal what is inside of your heart
  - And you cannot cheat this system
  - If you want to know whether or not you truly believe something
  - If you want to know whether or not you actually believe something to be true
  - Then look at whether or not it affects the way you live your life
    - And you will know, without controversy, whether or not you have faith in that thing
- You can say that you believe the gospel
  - That Jesus died on the cross to save you from your sins, and was buried, and rose again
    - And that there is no salvation in any other
    - That there is no other name given among men whereby you must be saved →

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- But regardless of how much you say you believe this unseen and longed for promised
  - Regardless of how much you think you think it is true
  - What actually reveals whether or not you have any faith is in your actions
    - Have you repented from your dead works
    - Have you set aside anything and everything you might be trusting in to get yourself to heaven
      - To make yourself right with God
      - And trusted in Christ alone to be your sufficiency before the throne
    - Is this what the fruit of your life produces
  - Or is the fruit of your life
    - Though you say you believe Christ and the gospel
    - The fruit of one who is desperately attempting to earn his way into heaven
    - The fruit of one who is constantly attempting to assuage the frustrations of his own conscience by judging others, comparing himself against others, and doing deeds which he deems worthy of God's favor
- Do you really have saving faith?
  - Faith exists as the tangible substance that reflects what you really expect to come to pass
  - Faith exists as the physical evidence of those things which you have not seen but are convinced exist →

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- And of course faith doesn't stop at salvation
  - In fact that is only the beginning
- Run down any Christian doctrine and we can judge our relationship to it by the same standards
- Love your neighbor as yourself
  - Your faith in this command will be revealed by whether or not you are DOING it
- It is more blessed to give than to receive
  - Your faith in this command will be revealed by whether or not you are DOING it
- Go ye into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you
  - Your faith in this command will be revealed by whether or not you are DOING it
- Surely I come quickly, blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing
  - Your faith in this promise will be revealed by the manner in which you live your life
- We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad
  - Your faith in this promise will be revealed by the manner in which you live your life →

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- Because let's be honest with ourselves
  - If you know what God has promised
  - And you believe that you will be judged for the things you have done
    - Not to be saved – in that we are judged by our faith in what Christ has done
    - But until eternal reward and loss
  - If you believed that said day was coming
    - And it will be a day of terror
    - And of fire
    - And of loss
- Then you will live in light of it
  - And to whatever degree you do exactly that
  - That is the degree to which you actually have faith
- Now probably the best explanation of this idea in the whole of the Bible is found in JAMES 2
- In JAMES 2 we READ →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

James 2:14-20

(14) What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? (15) If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, (16) And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not

- READ
- CONTINUE →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

James 2:14-20

those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? (17) Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (18) Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my

- READ
- CONTINUE →



## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

James 2:14-20

works. (19) Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. (20) But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

- READ
- Now where people often get confused in this passage is that they interpret it to mean that you must do works in order to have faith
  - And so they say that works are required both for justification and for sanctification
  - But this is not what JAMES is saying by any means
  - And we always allow that which is most clear in the Bible to be the filter through which we interpret what is LESS clear
    - So we allow the clarity of EPHESIANS 2 to be the filter through which we understand JAMES 2
      - EPHESIANS 2:8-9 says, "(8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast."
    - And we allow the clarity of PHILIPPIANS 2 to also be the filter through which we understand JAMES 2
      - PHILIPPIANS 2:13 says, "(13) For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."
  - So the Bible says with clarity that it is not my responsibility to DO anything either to obtain justification, or even to bring about in my life sanctification
- So man is justified by faith
  - But faith is justified by works
- In other words, faith – and faith alone – is necessary to please God
  - We'll come to that in a few minutes
- But how do I know whether or not I have faith?
  - And this is where, as we have said already, works come in →

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James 2:14-20

works. (19) Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. (20) But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

- Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen
  - I cannot in good conscience say that I believe something to be true if that things is not fundamentally touching how I live my life
  - I cannot say I believe this chair will hold my weight and then, when it is time to sit down, refuse to sit down in it
  - I SAY I believe the chair will hold me up, but my WORKS reveal that I don't actually believe it
- I can SAY I believe "love thy neighbor as thyself"
  - But if a brother or sister is naked and starving
  - And I have clothing and food I could give them
  - And I say to them "depart in peace my fellow believer, and may God provide for you clothing and food"
  - But I don't give to meet their need
  - Then I don't really believe "love thy neighbor as thyself", do I
  - What I believe has been revealed by how I have acted
- Even demons believe in the truths of God, because they are true
  - But they have not FAITH in them
  - And we know that, because they act in contradiction to them
  - So it is with us as well
- Don't tell me what you believe, show me what you believe
  - Because you can tell me anything
  - But you won't fake how you live your life
  - The fruit of my actions will reveal the state of my faith →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- So faith is the substance of things hoped for
  - And the evidence of things not seen
- Now I am going to read VERSES 2-6, but the only verse I am going to address today is VERSE 6
- Then for the next several weeks we are going to look at the OT examples which Paul invokes to validate this thesis in the ears of the Jews who are listening to him on this day so many years ago
- Let's read VERSES 2-6 together →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

Hebrews 11:2-6

(2) For by it the elders obtained a good report. (3) Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (4) By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained

- READ
- CONTINUE →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

Hebrews 11:2-6

witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. (5) By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he

- READ
- CONTINUE →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

### Hebrews 11:2-6

had this testimony, that he pleased God. (6)  
But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

- READ
- As I said, I'll come back to the examples which give teeth to the concept of faith beginning next time
- There will be much to learn from the examples of God's people throughout the ages
  - And remember the context of the book
  - The whole of HEBREWS has been making the case that what we have now is so much better than what they had then
  - And if Paul is going to use those who had less than what we have as the proof of what faith looks like
  - HOW MUCH MORE, as Paul has already warned, should we take full advantage of what we have now
- But as we close out the passage for our consideration today
  - We once again see a statement of why this matters so very much
- Because, and simply put Christian
  - Faith is the only thing that pleases God
  - Without faith you have a 0% chance of pleasing God
  - The things that we do in this life only please God as they are done in faith
- You say that the Bible is important?
  - You are able to quote much of it
  - You understand the nuances of doctrines
  - And can even articulate it to others?
    - WONDERFUL
    - Through you many people may be able to understanding the things of God →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

### Hebrews 11:2-6

had this testimony, that he pleased God. (6)  
But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

- You will earn the respect and admiration of many a young believer
  - But you will only please God if the fruit of your life aligns with the truths you are stating
- You go to church
  - And are generous
  - And kind
  - And thoughtful
  - Obedient
  - EXCELLENT
    - These things will likely benefit you much in this life
- But they will only benefit you in the life to come if they are the fruit of your alignment with the claim of God upon your life
  - If you are giving to get
  - If you acting to impress
  - If you are obeying to judge
  - If you are kind to conform
  - You may have many benefits in this life
  - But let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the LORD
- So as Paul gives us these illustrations of faith throughout HEBREWS 11
  - And as we consider with carefulness the examples of those who have gone before
  - We should also do so with gravity
  - Knowing what Jesus said in LUKE 12:48 →

## Understand Hebrews 11:1-6

Luke 12:48

...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

- READ
- If God has given to men throughout the ages SOME of His revelation
  - And they have lived out faith in a manner that pleases God unto great reward
  - Or denied the faith unto great loss
- How much more should we live out faith in our own lives
  - Who have been given so much more through Christ's Son
- But let us also take heart in knowing that pleasing God is not an outworking of talent and ability
  - Just because I am a Pastor doesn't mean that I please God more than you
    - Because if you live your laymen's life in faith
    - And I live my Pastor's life out of some other motivation
  - YOU are pleasing God, and I am not
- Faith is the great universal leveler
  - Whereby each one of us
  - No matter how young or old
  - No matter what capabilities and talents
  - Have the same potential to please God
  - As we exercise faith in His revealed Word
- So let us do so
  - Let us look unto Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith
  - LIVE out His commands and promises in our lives as the One who has every claim on our obedience
  - And in doing so, let us please God