

## Putting Our Faith in Action

Text: Heb. 11:1-7

1. Christians recognize the importance of faith in their lives.
  - a. It is necessary to please God -Heb. 11:6 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.
  - b. It is necessary to obtain salvation- Rom. 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
  - c. We are supposed to walk by faith instead of sight -2 Cor. 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.
2. Even though faith is such a vital component of the Christian life it appears some do not truly understand what it means to put faith into action.

### I. WHAT IS FAITH?

#### A. CONSIDER HEBREWS 11:1.

1. (Heb. 11:1) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
2. Is this a definition or description of faith? In the final analysis it doesn't really matter.

#### B. THERE ARE TWO KEY WORDS IN THIS VERSE:

1. The first is "substance."
  - a. This comes from a Greek word (hupostasis) which literally means to "stand under."
  - b. Faith supports the Christian just as foundation holds up a building.
  - c. Our faith is secure when it is founded on God's word
    - (1). Rom. 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
    - (2). Heb. 6:17,18 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

2. The second key word is “evidence.”

a. The Greek word here is variously translated as proof, evidence and conviction.

b. Heb. 11:3 shows us that faith gives us the evidence of things we cannot see.

c. Good synonyms for faith are firm persuasion and trust.

### C. FAITH IS INHERENTLY LINKED WITH ACTION.

1. Heb. 11:4 – “By faith Abel offered . . .”

2. Heb. 11:7 – “By faith Noah . . . prepared an ark”

3. Heb. 11:8 – “By faith Abraham obeyed”

4. James 2 is an extended discussion of the relationship between faith and works.

a. True, saving faith proves itself by works of obedience.

b. Dead faith is nothing more than believing without doing -James 2:17-20 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

c. If we are not putting our faith in action then we are no better than demons- James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!

## II. HOW DOES FAITH RELATE TO WORSHIP?

### A. ABEL GIVES US A GOOD EXAMPLE OF FAITH IN ACTION – SPECIFICALLY WORSHIP.

1. He worshiped in a God pleasing manner because it was by faith.

2. Since faith comes by hearing God’s word Abel’s sacrifice was according to God’s commands.

### B. TO PLEASE GOD OUR WORSHIP MUST BE IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH.

1. (John 4:24) “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

2. This rules out instrumental music, women preachers and theatrical performances that please man, not God- Gal. 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

### III. FAITH IS A NECESSARY PART OF THE CHRISTIAN'S DAILY WALK WITH GOD.

#### A. ENOCH'S LIFE SHOWS US THE IMPORTANCE OF WALKING WITH GOD.

1. (Heb. 11:5) By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

2. (Gen. 5:24) And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

3. This walk with God lasted 365 years! His was a committed life of faith.

#### B. RECENT POLLS SHOW VERY FEW AMERICANS PRACTICE THEIR RELIGION.

1. That is, they do not live committed to serving and worshiping God.

2. This is seen in their indifferent attitude toward church attendance, work, worship and Bible study.

3. The polling data reported that only 19% of Americans have any consistent practice of their faith.

4. How does this compare to members of the Lord's church? Hopefully the percentage is higher!

#### C. WHAT IS A WALK WITH GOD?

1. His word directs our steps

Jer. 10:23- O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.

Ps. 119:105- Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

2. It means "that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10).

### IV. HOW DOES FAITH RELATE TO WORKS OF OBEDIENCE?

A. NOAH'S FAITH CAUSED HIM TO WORK Heb. 11:7- By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his

household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

1. Noah's salvation is attributed to God's grace Gen. 6:8- But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

2. However, it is also attributed to his faith and works (Heb. 11:7). There is no contradiction.

3. (James 2:24,26) You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

#### B. THE RELATIONSHIP OF WORKS TO SALVATION CONFUSES MANY PEOPLE.

1. The Bible speaks of different kinds of work and we must know which is being considered.

2. (Gal. 2:16) "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

3. Is this at odds with James 2:24? No! Galatians 2:16 refers to works of the law of Moses.

4. (Eph. 2:8-10) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

5. Here Paul is speaking about works of merit which man does thinking he can earn salvation.

6. We must work Eph. 2:10- "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" but they are works of faith (obedience) which prove our faith is real!

7. 1 Thessalonians 1:3 specifically mentions the "work of faith."

C. THE FAITH THAT SAVES IS THE FAITH THAT OBEYS GOD -Heb. 5:9- And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

1. To have as our eternal home we must put our faith in action.

2. Consider an illustration about the connection between faith and works.

a. A hunter sees deer tracks but does not shoot at them since he knows they are not the deer.

b. The tracks are merely evidence that a deer exists in the area.

c. In the same way, works prove that faith exists. If there are no works, then there is no faith!

1. There is a huge difference between a faith described as a “leap into the dark” and a faith based on evidence.

2. True faith is always based on God’s word which serves as the evidence.

Source: Thomas C. Miller, “Transmitting Faith Into Action,” in *Practical Christianity*, ed. Charles L. Brown (Knoxville: East Tennessee School of Preaching, 1998), 119-131.