

A Life of Genuine Faith

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Faith / Hebrews 11:1–2

50th Anniversary of Harwood Terrace Baptist Church

Introduction

1. **Faith** — “Is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen.” “Faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.”

2. Scripture is clear that faith is an objective thing. It is more than a personal feeling, idea or even something you believe. There is substance to it and once you have it you are forever changed.

3. **There are three kinds of faith possible in the life of a believer. In fact, two of these three are possible in the life of an unbeliever...But only Biblical faith combines all three into one.**

4. **Intellectual faith — To believe God can do something.** This kind of faith isn't hard to have once we open our eyes to something as simple as a flower. The exquisite detail and beauty of a rose tells us God is capable of great things. God encourages us to this kind of faith by the evidence He has left all around us... evidence of His character and power...

5. **One of the most amazing things about our world is the delicate balance required to sustain it, that is, to have a universe capable of producing and sustaining life as we know it. In**

the book *The Creator and the Cosmos*, astrophysicist Hugh Ross points out twenty five factors that must all exist within very narrowly defined ranges for life of any kind to exist. Just one of these is the number of electrons. Unless the number of electrons is equivalent to the number of protons to an accuracy of one part in 10^{37} , or better, then galaxies, stars and planets could never have formed. To get an idea of just how sensitive this is Ross asks us to imagine covering the entire continent of North America in dimes all the way up to the moon. Then do the same thing on a billion other continents the same size as North America. Now you have 10^{37} dimes. Now imagine that just one dime is painted red. You have mixed it in with all the others. Now take a friend a blindfold her and stand her in front of those of those billions upon billion of dimes covering a billion continents and piled to the moon and ask her to pick one out. Her chances of selecting the red one are one in 10^{37} . These are the same odds as the ratio of electrons to protons being at the precise level required for life, and this is just one of many parameters that must be so finely tuned. Ross and many other scientists believe this points to a universe which has been carefully and skilfully designed by a Creator.

6. Even satan and the demons of hell are

capable of this kind of faith. They know God can do anything and their intellect has risen to the level of intellectual faith in God's ability.

7. Emotional Faith — The desire for God to do something for us. Once we know God can do anything we begin to want Him to do things for us. We wish, want and desire for God to move. This kind of faith isn't hard to have. And once again even demons are capable of such faith.

8. Most people never go beyond intellectual and emotional faith.

9. Volitional faith — Acting as if a thing is so, when it is not so, in order for it to be so, because it is so. This is a matter of the will. This is action.

10. A man named Jack was walking along a steep cliff one day when he accidentally got too close to the edge and fell. On the way down he grabbed a branch, which temporarily stopped his fall. He looked down and to his horror saw that the canyon fell straight down for more than a thousand feet. He couldn't hang onto the branch forever, and there was no way for him to climb up the steep wall of the cliff.

11. So Jack began yelling for help, hoping that someone passing by would hear him and lower a rope or something. "HELP! HELP! Is anyone up there? "HELP!" He yelled for a long time, but no one heard him. He was about to give up when he heard a voice.

“Jack, Jack. Can you hear me?”

“Yes, yes! I can hear you. I’m down here!”

“I can see you, Jack. Are you all right?”

“Yes, but who are you, and where are you?”

“I am the Lord, Jack. I’m everywhere.”

“The Lord? You mean, GOD?”

“That’s Me.”

“God, please help me! I promise if, you’ll get me down from here, I’ll stop sinning. I’ll be a really good person. I’ll serve You for the rest of my life.”

“Easy on the promises, Jack. Let’s get you off from there, then we can talk.”

“Now, here’s what I want you to do. Listen carefully.”

“I’ll do anything, Lord. Just tell me what to do.”

“Okay. Let go of the branch.”

“What?”

“I said, let go of the branch.” Just trust Me. Let go.”

There was a long silence.

Finally Jack yelled, “HELP! HELP! IS ANYONE ELSE UP THERE?”

1. This is where we step out on the revealed truth of God and act as though a thing is so, when it is not so, in order for it to be so, because God has said it is so.

2. Biblical faith — Is intellectual faith and emotional faith which leads to volitional faith. Until you have volitional faith you have an incomplete, unbiblical

faith...such faith leads you nowhere.

3. **Faith** — Belief plus trust which produces a changed life (**hillbilly definition**)

4. **Biblical faith is the moment where Peter's feet left the boat and touched the water.**

5. Luke 17:11-14

Luke 17:11–14 NASB95

While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee.

As He entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him;

and they raised their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

When He saw them, He said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they were going, they were cleansed.

6. **A Jewish leper was required to go to the priest once healed of his disease in order to be declared well. These men came to Jesus believing He could heal them...wanting Him to do so...Jesus gave the word, “Go show yourself to the priest” but when He said these words all 10 still had leprosy. It was not until the turned and took a step to the temple that they were healed...once they had volitional faith they were cleansed.**

7. **Think of the moment you were saved...You**

believed Jesus died on the cross to pay for your sins...you wanted His forgiveness and to be a child of God...but it was not until you prayed and received what Jesus had done for you... offering your life back to Him that you were saved!

8. Believing, hoping, wanting...not enough! Saving faith and the faith by which the believer in Christ lives is one which believes, wants and trusts by acting upon God's revealed truth.

9. **Manley Beasley once said, "You can be saved from hell yet not go on with God and be destroyed. Not your soul. But your life can be shortened, shipwrecked and ruined. There is no neutral ground. No turning back."**

10. **There is only one way for the believer in God to live and that is by faith...a faith which makes a reality those things we know God can do and desires to do. Such faith makes a reality...brings to substance those things I hope for...**

The Witnesses

1. The writer of Hebrews gives us a list of those who have gone before us...those who lived not only an intellectual and emotional kind of faith but a complete faith which included volitional faith...they had Biblical faith.

2. **Their lives give a testimony to what God can**

do with a life that believes and trusts in Him.

3. And today, on the occasion of our 50th anniversary we too can look back in our own time and see the faithful witness of those who have gone before us. **Floyd and Ida Gilbert... Sonny Winn, Topsy Brown, Jack Mills, Wonnie Vardeman, Virginia Webb, Dale Chance, Jean Tingley — All of whom are in heaven today cheering us on as we finish our own race here on earth...the race of faith in Christ.**

4. They experienced many yes answers from God and...some no answers...just as those mentioned in Hebrews 11...but whether they obtained the answer they hoped for or not they had real and genuine faith in Christ...their life was lived believing and trusting that God's will was being done in their life.

5. **Faith is belief plus trust and trust and this means not leaning on our own understanding but instead acknowledging God as God and His will as best.** Proverbs 3:5-6

Proverbs 3:5-6 NASB95

Trust in the Lord with all your heart

And do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge Him,

And He will make your paths straight.

6. **Faith in the life of a believer is wanting His**

will and trusting it even when things don't appear to be going as we hope.

7. We have had our witnesses haven't we in that regard haven't we? But we still have out witnesses today...those who demonstrate extraordinary, Biblical faith no matter what the Lord's will for their life...

8. We see the Sewell's faith all these years since God took Jace to heaven...We see Maryann's faith in the face of her impending blindness... We see Brenda's faith as she battles cancer... And their witness, like those in heaven today, encourages us to have Biblical faith...to believe, trust and live in Christ...trusting His will...His plans...no matter what

9. **Part of what it means to be in a church "family" is to be a witness and encouragement so that others might have faith...real faith...a faith still in tact when the rubber meets the road and life is tough.**

10. We have, together, as a family, these past 50 years, lived our faith as Harwood Terrace Baptist Church... and the record of our faith is written in heaven...a testimony to God's character and power in the world in which we lived and live.

11. **Live — we aren't done just yet!**

Conclusion

1. **There is a necessity we see in Scripture...a**

principle that cannot be denied if one is to live the life God intends.

2. Looking to past victories of faith is wonderful...But these must have faith for a future...both as individuals and a church.

3. We cannot live on the victories of the past... we have to have faith in God so that we might be a part of what He wants to do today and tomorrow.

4. We must fast, pray and seek His face...know His Word...understand His will...step out in Biblical faith to do what is seemingly impossible...so that it might be said of us what was said of Mary when she believed herself, a virgin, to be pregnant with the Messiah...

Luke 1:45

Luke 1:45 *ESV*

And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

5. Our life should be one that can only be explained by God...explained by our belief, trust and life in Him

6. As we look back at who we have been and look around as what we have become let us turn our eyes to Christ in faith for who we are yet to be and for what we have yet to do...steps into the plans He has had for us since before the foundation of the world Ephesians

2:10

Ephesians 2:10 *NASB95*

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

7. Some in here have never had genuine, Biblical faith in Christ. You believed Christ could save you...wanted Him to do so but never really turned from your sin and gave your life to Him...believing Him to save you and make you born again.

8. Some of you have felt shipwrecked in your faith because you never knew how to move from believing and wanting kind of faith to a faith that involves the whole person...one that included your will...a faith where your life is “all in”

9. Wherever you find yourself this morning... Isn't it time to set aside the facade, doubts and fears. Isn't it time to be a part of what is real? Genuine, Biblical faith in Christ! You have seen it...isn't it time to have some yourself?