

This chapter has often been called The Hall of Faith

- **An obvious variation on The Hall of Fame**
  - That is an understandable name
- **These were men and women of God who had great faith (at pivotal moments)**
  - But they were not necessarily great people
  - They were normal people (90% of them were lay people)
    - They were people just like **you and me**
      - They had their good days and their bad days
    - And for their great faith that causes them to be included in this chapter
      - They all (almost without exception) had lapses of faith as well
    - If the whole of their lives were examined from Scripture, they could be just as famous for the failures as their faith (included in the Hall of Shame)
- **No, they were not great people (per se)**
  - They were normal people that had moments of great faith
  - But, they had a great God (and we do to!)

We will walk through their stories one by one starting next week

- For each one in this 11 week series we will have an original piece of art (Neil

But we will not be calling the series The Hall of Faith

- Because, we immediately think Hall of Fame
  - Which means: Exceptional, out of the ordinary, I can't do that
- **We will be calling it The Life of Faith**
  - Because these were real people, with real lives, and real problems like **you and me**
  - Faith is a real life issue—we make faith decisions everyday
  - We will be encouraged to continue in faith as we study their stories
  - Ultimately this will help us mature in our Christianity

In **6:12** the author states, *that you be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

- In this chapter, he will give many examples of those whom the readers can imitate.
- We are to imitate their faith

To help us understand that, lets get a handle on what faith is

## V e r s e 1

NIV

**1** Now faith is being **sure** of what we hope for and **certain** of what we do not see.

## NLT

**1** Faith is the **confidence** that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us **assurance** about things we cannot see.

## CEV (Contemporary English Version)

**1** Faith makes us **sure** of what we hope for and gives us **proof** of what we cannot see.

## NCV (New Century Version)

**1** Faith means being **sure** of things we hope for and **knowing** that something is real even if we do not see it.

## The Message

**1** The fundamental fact of existence is that this **trust in God**, this faith, is the firm **foundation** under everything that makes life worth living. It's our **handle** on what we can't see.

## Very simply: **faith = trust**

- It is not a trust that is based on knowledge
  - That is not to say that it is brainless or blind (it is not)
  - That is not to say that it does not involve knowledge (it does)
- It is just that the primary basis for this trust (**faith**) is not so much what you know, but rather what God has said
- It involves what has **not yet happened** and what **we cannot see**
  - You cannot observe those things
  - It is hard to say we base it all on knowledge (though there is a degree)
  - But we have the revelation of God's character and track record and written Word
- Faith makes the future immediate and impactful and the unseen visible and tangible
- **Example: Adam and Eve**
  - If we see faith as trust (and what theirs was to be based on)
  - They didn't know anything (they were new)
  - But they did have what God said, and they had relationship
    - But they didn't trust!
    - They were not expected to trust because they knew something
    - But rather because they had a relationship with God, and He had said something!

## Now faith is the assurance/substance of things hoped for

- The idea of **assurance/substance** is that of a **foundation**
- **assurance/substance** is the foundation of our Christian hope
  - Faith is to a Christian what a foundation is to a house:
    - It gives confidence and assurance on which we stand

For any **foundation** to be meaningful we have to know what it is made of

- There are many 'foundations', but what is yours made of
  - That makes all the difference in the world

- **Matthew 7:24-27** and Jesus speaking of foundations of sand and rock
- **In the same way, for faith to be meaningful, it has to have an object**
  - It is not faith in faith itself
    - It is not the common mantra: "You just gotta have faith man"
  - **The object of our faith is Jesus Christ**
    - The power behind any promise is the person behind the promise
      - The person behind the promises of God is Jesus Christ
      - 2 Corinthians 2:20 (NKJV)
 

For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.
    - (NLT)
 

For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding "Yes!" And through Christ, our "Amen" (which means "Yes") ascends to God for his glory.

## **When we examine the evidence we can see, we find that faith in Jesus Christ is reasonable and founded**

- It is not a mere feeling
- It is not a hunch
- It is not a "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" mentality
- It is not an "I hope so" sort of thing
- It is founded and reasonable
  - Faith is not brainless or sentimental
  - Nor is it a mere intellectual assent to certain doctrines
- **It is a solid conviction resting on God's words that makes the future present and the invisible seen**

Now faith is the assurance/substance of things hoped for (Future Events)

The conviction of things not seen (Invisible Realities)

The problem with the original recipients of this letter (and why it was written), is that they were caught up in the here and now. The tangible and immediate.

## **Conviction**

- Proof or evidence
  - **Of things not seen**
  - The world says: "Seeing is believing"
  - The Bibles says: "Hold on, are you sure there isn't more?"
    - **The righteous shall walk by faith and not by sight**
- A certain resolve of certainty
- What we are to be convinced about is: **things not seen**, but definitely real and present and impactful such as:
  - **the priestly ministry of Jesus**

- our access to God in prayer
- the full pardon of sins
- that God is in control and on the throne
- While we cannot see these things, we know they are really true and truly there.
  - The faith principle makes the unseen seen
  - And the future meaningful now as hope
    - Ex. Jesus and Pilate
      - The verdict of the future reversed the verdict of the moment
    - Nero's condemnation of Paul
      - Men name their sons Paul and their dogs Nero
  - Christian believe in a future hope (by faith/trust)
  - That faith in what will yet be affects the way we live now
  - We make decisions according to that trust
  - We forgo the momentary passing pleasures of sin because we have a weightier future hope and promise
    - One might say, "Why should I refuse te pleasure of the moment for an uncertain future?"
      - But the future is not uncertain because it belongs to God
      - Therefore, by faith in God it is the most certain thing and it is that upon which we act

Faith is a dynamic certainty about what God has said, done, and promised

### V e r s e 3

Not only is faith to be exercised with regard to present events or future events, but **verse 3** tells us that by faith we believe things about past events:

- No man was present to observe creation
  - Job 38:4
    - Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
    - Tell Me, if you have understanding...
- There is reason to believe of course
  - But faith is still required (creation was unseen)
- **Genuine faith produces genuine knowledge** that *the worlds were prepared by the word of God*
  - *Word* = rhema = the spoken word (God spoke and it appeared)
  - **We believe according to the written Word of God that God spoke the world into existence.**

So faith has to do with what we believe about the past, the present, and the future (this affects the way we live... and die)

### V e r s e 1 3 - 1 6

Verse 13 (*without receiving the promise*)

- Having seen them (their faith made the invisible visible)
- Welcomed them from a distance (their faith made the future a present reality)
- Confessed that they were strangers on earth (they lived as members of God's kingdom)

### Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

### Philippians 3:20-21

**20** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

**21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

### Verses 14-15

- The idea that going back into where God brought you from is not the solution
- But rather going forward in faith
  - let us press on to maturity (Hebrews 6:1)
  - Philippians 3:13-14
 

**13** Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,

**14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

### Verse 16

- Is your desire entirely made up of the here and now
- Or are you looking forward, in faith and trust, to the promises of God
- God is not ashamed to be called their God...
  - Revelation 21:1-5

## V e r s e 6

### Without faith it is impossible to please God

- See verse 2
- As I said before, these people had many failures
- An yet they gained approval or a good testimony with God
- Simply because they trusted Him at pivotal times

Faith/trust is usually required when there is adversity, challenges, or the temptation to not trust (the context here)

True Bible faith is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.

- **Faith operates simply:**

- God speaks and we hear His Word
- We trust Him and His Word and act on it
- No matter how difficult, uncomfortable, whatever the circumstances or consequences
  - The outcome may be unknown and the obstacles large, but we trust His ways and methods and do what is good and right
  - Our circumstances are not quite like the original readers
    - But they are very real none the less
    - We are dealing with issues like:
      - Do I trust God with my finances (Tithing)
      - Do I trust God with my sexuality (Purity)
      - Do I trust God with my recreation (Sobriety)
      - Do I trust God with my business (Honesty)
      - Do I trust God with my relationships (Forgiveness)
      - Do I trust God with my heart (Healing)
        - These are all faith issues

Faith is our right response to what God has revealed in His word

Without faith it is impossible to please God

- Who are you trying to please?

He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him

So when we think about our real life issues:

- Finances, sexuality, jealousy, business, bitterness, relationships
  - The question becomes: are you seeking God in these things?
    - That would mean doing God's will and doing it God's way
    - And trusting that He will bless and reward that

Trusting.

It is impossible to please God without simply trusting Him

- In the daily little decisions

A life that does not trust God, lives to please only itself in the present moment

- That is great loss
- What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

What and Who are you living for? The object, is Jesus Christ