

FAITH

Sovereign Grace B.C., February 20, 2005

Bible B.C., LaPlata, MD, Jan. 1, 2006

Harmony M.B.C., December 15, 2013

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Heb. 11:1-2 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.

Demonstrate faith using a U.S. silver certificate to illustrate - faith is to our eternal inheritance, eternal life, what this 10 dollar bill is to the silver that was stored to back it up.

Faith is that essence of God's operant grace, given to us by Him as a gift, that which gives solidity to the things we wait expectantly for; redemption of the body, resurrection into eternal life, the opportunity to spend forever with the God who made us and the Christ who saved us. Without it, we cannot possibly please God (**Heb. 11:6**), with some of it the size of a grain of mustard seed we can force sycamore trees to be plucked up and be planted in the sea. or move mountains from place to place (**Mat. 17:20**). It is among the 3 most enduring things coming from God to us (**1Cor 13:13**).

Our text says that by faith the heros of the bible (the elders here means those ancestors of biblical fame who exercised faith) obtained a good report (both a witness from God, and a testimony from men as to their exercise of faith). It turns out, that everywhere in the bible we might look to find out what faith is, we discover that we have to look at what people of faith acted out in their lives as evidence. So, literally, acts of faith are the evidences of what we cannot see just by looking at a human. That is exactly what James meant (James 2:18) when he declared that he could show a person his faith by his works. That is the only way faith reveals itself among human creatures. It is not what is said about having faith, but what is done when we are called upon to demonstrate it.

We want to consider what this chapter of the Book of Hebrews says about faith. There are many lessons in these verses here, and we will look at a few today. May the Holy Spirit help us to learn from this historical record.

I. Heb 11:3 - 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.

- It is interesting (and instructive) that the Holy Spirit dealt first of all here with the concept of creation. It is on the subject of creation that men find a mountain of controversy, so the Spirit would have us to understand the real story about it as part of the teachings which only faith can accept and understand.
- We will never be able to present evidence to the unbelieving world that God spoke the world into existence.
 - > a. **HENCE THE BIBLICAL WARNING: 1Tim. 6:20** O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, **avoiding** profane *and* vain babblings, and **oppositions of science falsely so called:**
 - > b. **John 1:3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
- God has set it up so that things which we see were not made like it appears that they were (neither out of things that are here, nor by the processes that men think they were made)
 - > Illustrate using a glass of water - in that glass there are hydrogen atoms and oxygen atoms - looking at that water, you can't see the shape and function of either the hydrogen or the oxygen. Water looks like water. It does not appear to be made out of two very different invisible parts. Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (An interesting fact: science figured out the atomic structure of water and the structure of atoms in general, but they can't see them at all).
- The big secret is no secret to possessors of faith. **“By faith we understand...”**

II. **Heb 11:4** - By **faith Abel offered** unto God a **more excellent sacrifice than Cain**, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

- There will always be opposing viewpoints about **how to worship** God and conflicting viewpoints about who is the God to be worshiped, but **faith shows us the true way** and the **True One** to be worshiped.
 - > I want to illustrate this event between Abel and Cain (show the two versions of your name - contrast the scrawled name with the carefully printed name)
 - > Do you know what the difference between Abel's offering and Cain's offering was? Let's forget for just a moment the difference between a blood offering by killing an animal, and a crop offering out of what was grown in the field. The difference was **FAITH**.
 - > Faith led us to offer Christ as the sacrificial lamb (although most of us didn't necessarily understand that on the day of our conversion, that is exactly what

we did...we trusted Christ as our offering for sin).

> Faith continues to lead us to offer a more excellent service to the Lord

III. **Heb 11:5-6** - **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 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.

- Faith removes us from the threat and consequences of death;
 - > How was it that Paul said (Philippians 1:20) "...to die is gain?"
 - > There is a story about the martyrdom of Polycarp, the student of the Apostle John...in his prayer to God just before he was killed, he was reported to have said, "I give you thanks that you count me worthy to be numbered among your martyrs?" How was it that he could say this ?
 - > Faith makes us pleasing to God
 - > We are changed forever when, by faith we please God

IV. Heb 11:7 By **faith Noah**, being **warned of God** of things not seen as yet, **moved with fear**, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he **condemned the world**, and **became heir of the righteousness** which is by faith.

- Faith enables us to hear the warnings of God about things we do not really know about...have not really experienced
 - > Illustrate: in the natural world, we see animals acting out things they sense without actually knowing facts - birds feeding heavily in flocks just before a snowstorm, rats deserting a sinking ship, dogs barking less just before a storm, pigs gathering leaves and straw before a storm - all these things are a kind of sixth sense reaction to what has not yet occurred. By faith we are able to sense things about good and evil because the Holy Spirit witnesses to us.
 - > Faith teaches us the fear of God based on His messages to us, and enables us to prepare for calamity
 - > Faith action condemns the world of unbelief
 - > Faith ensures righteousness and all the inheritance God has for us as His righteous people
 - > How does that work? By faith we trust in Christ's righteousness to make us accepted by the Lord. Having been accepted because we believe this, we are co-heirs with Christ in all that God possesses.

V. **Heb 11:8** - By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which

he should after receive for an inheritance, **obeyed; and he went out**, not knowing whither he went.

Heb 11:9 By faith he **sojourned in the land of promise, as *in a strange country***, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Heb 11:10 For he **looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.**

- When nothing else in the world would make us do something that uprooted us from what is familiar and comfortable, faith has the power to do that very thing
 - > Christian history is full of stories about believers who uprooted themselves to go and do what the Lord had put in their hearts to do. Most of you here probably have your own story to tell. You may think no such challenge was ever put before you, but I'm guessing there have been such challenges. What about the first time the Lord laid it on your heart to tithe. What about the time the Lord laid it on your heart to speak to somebody about their soul.
- Faith enables us to live with a loose hold on this earth
- Faith can teach us view this world in a proper perspective (strange country)
- Faith empowers us to look for something better and more lasting

VI. Heb 11:11 - Through faith also Sarah herself **received strength to conceive** seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Heb 11:12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

- Faith enables us to find powers beyond ourselves and to realize the impossible
 - > Illustrate: In 2012, in Virginia, Alec Kornacki was outside working on his car when the jack slipped, causing the car to fall on top of him. His daughter, Lauren, who just happened to be leaving the house at the time, found her father unconscious underneath the BMW 525i, and did what any good daughter would do. She lifted up the car, "threw it" to the side, dragged her dad out, performed CPR, and saved his life! This is a kind of thing we hear about every now and then. Just like these people we hear about suddenly get a reserve of strength from somewhere, we, through faith find strength to do things in service to the Lord...in life itself...that we would never find from any other source.

VII. Heb 11:17 - By faith Abraham, **when he was tried, offered up Isaac:** and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*,

Heb 11:18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

Heb 11:19 Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

- Faith enables us to win when tested, do the incomprehensible, and achieve the impossible
- Faith teaches us that God can do anything

VIII. Heb 11:20 - By faith Isaac **blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.**

Heb 11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, **blessed both the sons of Joseph**; and worshiped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff.

Heb 11:22 By faith Joseph, when he died, **made mention of the departing of the children of Israel**; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

- By faith we have confidence in the future

IX. Heb 11:23 - By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were **not afraid of the king's commandment.**

- By faith believers are empowered to do what is right despite the ruling power of evil.

X. Heb 11:24 - By faith Moses, when he was come to years, **refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter**;

Heb 11:25 **Choosing** rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Heb 11:26 **Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt**: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

Heb 11:27 By faith he **forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king**: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Heb 11:28 Through faith he **kept the passover**, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

- **V. 24** - Faith can prevent us from being drawn by the allure of the world to pursue worldly fame and fortune
- **V. 25** - By faith, we perceive what are the right choices for the glory of God, and the good of our lives and souls.
- **V. 26** - By faith we come to the place to see what true riches are
- **V. 27** - By faith we learn to sacrifice the easy and safe way in order to follow Christ in the right way

- **V. 28** - Through faith we hide behind the blood of Jesus Christ, and judgment will not touch us.

XI. Heb 11:29 - By faith they **passed through the Red sea as by dry land**: which the Egyptians attempting to do were drowned.

- By faith we escape the snares and enslavement of this world in our daily lives.
 - > Though some folks portray this as how faith transports us through the experience of death into eternal life, I note that these Israelites passed over the Red Sea from Egypt to the wilderness, which more typifies passing from a state of enslavement to a state of freedom from the enslaving powers. This being true, even though the land they passed into was barren and inhospitable (as the world is to believers).

XII. Heb 11:30 - **By faith the walls of Jericho fell down**, after they were compassed about seven days.

- By faith we are made able to wait for God to open the way for us to go forward when obstacles loom.
- The same faith can give us the patience we need to wait on the Lord

XIII. Heb 11:31 - By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

- By faith outsiders find refuge within the kingdom of God by making peace with the Lord.