

FAITH

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The Bible gives us the meaning of the word faith in Hebrews 11:1, “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*” I will use just a few of the meanings put forward by the Random House College Dictionary and here is what it says *faith* is (1) confidence or trust in a person or thing, (2) belief that is not based on proof, (3) belief in God or in the doctrines or teachings of religion and (4) the trust in God and His promises as made through Christ and the scriptures by which man is justified or saved.

In Hebrews 11:1, faith is described as substance. Again I refer to the Random House College Dictionary. It says the word *substance* is, (1) that of which a thing consists; physical matter or material: form and substance, (2) a species of matter of definite chemical composition: a metallic substance and (3) something that has separate or independent existence.

These definitions seem to be describing opposites, since faith is not something you can physically lay hold of,

whereas substance is tangible. It is matter you can handle.

Yet we are told that *faith* is substance. Yes, literally speaking it is not seen and cannot be held on to because there is no substance that one can lay hold upon. That, however, is from a natural perspective. The wind I think is something that can be used as an example of something we do not see and yet we know it exists. We do not see the wind, but the evidence of the wind is seen everywhere. As it blows, its effects are seen and felt in the gentleness of the breeze or in the force of a hurricane leaving in its wake disaster unimaginable. But the question is, did we see the wind? I would like to think of faith similarly. The evidence is there for all to see even though the substance was not in sight from the standpoint of the natural.

Looking from the realm of the Spirit, we get a different view, Hebrews 11:3, “*By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*”

Visible things originated from the invisible. There was no world before God spoke it into being as hard as that may be to comprehend. That's just the way it was, and this is exactly what faith is about. The evidence is there to prove whether we want to believe, accept or not accept. Yes, there is evidence, there is substance, so there is proof.

It took, however, the substance and the evidence to believe. Now that we have learned that lesson, shouldn't we now not be like Thomas who said in John 20:25, *"Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."* May we learn from Thomas' experience, and from what Jesus said to him in, John 20:29, *"Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

Who Has Faith?

Romans 12:3, *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."* God is not partial He is a fair and just God. To everyone, He has given a measure of faith and I can truly see the reason why. Does not His word declare in Hebrews 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."* What we need to understand is this; the all-wise God left no reason for man to have an excuse as to why he will not or should not serve God. He knew that faith was a necessary ingredient for one to believe and come to Him,' so to every man, He has given what is needed, and that is a "measure of faith."

This is what Romans 1:20 says: *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."*

When a person says "I don't have faith" that really is not the truth. That one is making God a liar because He has given to everyone "a measure" that he or she may become a believer in God. He has not given to any, the world of faith because that is not needed to know Him or to do exploits in His name. What He has given is sufficient to be drawn to, and to receive Jesus Christ as one's Lord and Savior. After receiving Him and one feels the need for more faith, all one need to do is what the disciples did in Luke 17:5, *"And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.'"*

With that request made, and no doubt granted, the Lord went on to make a serious point; one that we all need to remember.

Luke 17:6, *"So the Lord said, 'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled*

up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you." You see, the mustard seed, though small it is, has something that is powerful, and that is life. That is the reason why after it is planted it can germinate and spring to life and become that huge tree it turns out to be. Oh, the value of that little seed. It is hard to think that the evidence could be as forceful and powerful as that. Likewise, faith, the mustard seed faith, will do awesome things; not by your might or power, but by the Spirit of God. Another point I would like to make, is as follows: There may be some of us, who would be contented with holding on to the mustard seed and say that we have the mustard seed faith. As good as that may be, my encouragement to you is, **plant the seed**. It will then grow and develop into a tree with many branches and lots of leaves and fruits. You can now be sustained as you are able to partake of the fruits originating from the seed. Unless you plant the seed, there will be no tree nor fruit. *"Lord, increase our faith"* (Luke 17:5).

Faith - As A Gift Of The Spirit

Faith is also listed as one of the nine gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:9, *"to another faith by the same Spirit..."* It must be noted that this is not the faith of which everyone has a measure. This faith one can refer to, as special faith that does not operate 24/7. It is a part of one's ministry; it is the tool that God puts in one's hand to do the task when there is the need. God will stir it up to accomplish His purpose at the time needed. This is one of the power gifts.

In operating this gift, when there is a need, there is such a strength and power that seem to take over, that whatever mountain, whatever the condition or the circumstance, it just seems that nothing can stand in its way for deliverance or healing of whatever sort. Yes, against the odds, faith stands. The odds are the stepping-stones upon which faith thrives. It defies the odds at all times. I believe Jesus demonstrated that time and time again in differing circumstances. Mark 4:37-40, *"And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?' Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace, be still!' And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?'"*

We see Jesus healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, walking on the water, and raising the dead. Of course, many other miracles were done, but how can one forget when He spoke about the temple, which was His own body, declaring in John 2:19, *"Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'"* He had the faith that He would raise up that temple. Against the odds, didn't he call Lazarus to come forth?

Fear Versus Faith

Fear has torment, 1 John 4:18, *“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.”*

The root of the matter is simply this; fear cannot operate where there is love: faith overpowers fear. Sometime ago when visiting a couple, I saw a little plaque that interested me. It said “Fear knocked at the door, faith answered, but there was no one there.” Faith will always overcome fear. Fear is driving the world crazy; people are becoming paranoid because so many scary things are happening. If faith is allowed to operate, it will do wonders. Listen to the words of this chorus; “Faith in God can move a mighty mountain, faith in God can calm the troubled sea, faith can make the desert like a fountain, faith can bring the victory. Have faith in God, have faith in God for the answer, have faith in God.” Yes! It is indeed faith that will give us the victory.

Abraham’s Faith

A true servant of God was put to severe tests at different times and because of his unwavering faith, he was able to lay hold on God’s promises.

Genesis 12:1, *“Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”*

The call of God to Abraham was one of making a complete break and going on what looked like an uncertain journey into an uncertain future. He was told to pull up stakes and go, not knowing exactly where he was going. In his obedience he demonstrated complete faith in God. In the natural he did not see the things God said to him then, but he ventured out, walking by faith and not by sight. He would bring forth a nation from his loins when at that time Abraham was elderly and Sarah had passed the time of childbearing. The child was born, and again Abraham was faced with another difficult decision. This son must now be taken up to Mount Moriah and be offered to God as a burnt offering.

Genesis 22: 5-13 & 18, *“And Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.’ (What a faith-filled statement he made. Abraham was going for*

the purpose of offering Isaac as a burnt offering. Naturally this would have been Isaac’s end. However, his dad’s statement expressed faith that both he and Isaac would return). *So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.*

But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, ‘My father!’ And he said, ‘Here I am, my son.’ Then he said, ‘Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?’ And Abraham said, ‘My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.’ So the two of them went together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. (As a result of Abraham’s obedience to God, his faith having been tested, not only Abraham but his seed becomes a beneficiary as God says to him), ‘In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.’”

Hebrews 11: 8-10, *“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”*

Other Men Of Faith

Job, as one who lived so very long ago was not afraid to make bold his statement of his faith in his redeemer and the resurrection he was awaiting.

Job 19:25–27, *“For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”*

Elijah had faith in God even when the impossible to the eye was present. He defied the natural and laid hold in the realm of the Spirit, and that brought deliverance.

Hebrews 11 gives us some insight concerning some of the heroes of faith. What they experienced should help us in becoming people of faith.

Verses 13-16, *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.”*

Because He is the God who cannot lie our faith in Him should say to us, what He has prepared is awaiting us; let us therefore prepare ourselves to receive it.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6).✝



The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, moving like the gentle winds; The evidence of life in the forest, by the rustling of the leaves; The breath of fresh air from the foothills to the mountains.

As I gaze across the land from the hills to the lonesome valleys,
I listen deep within my soul; I can hear the sweep of angels' wings,
As they bow humbly, in their worship of celestial praise,
The zenith of reverence uttered to the Creator of all things.
He is the immortal, invisible and magnificent as the Ancient of Days.

The Holy Spirit flows gracefully, like a brook from the start;
The fountains of life, satisfying the hungry, quenching each thirst.
Oh, how I long for a place in the deep recesses of my heart.
In search for answers as pilgrims, I look for the oasis in the desert
And the streams of life, flooding my innermost being
To the overflow, extending beyond the banks of many rivers;
Immutable, immeasurable, unstoppable and all encompassing,
Reaching the destitute, the thirsty, all dying within its borders.

The Holy Spirit is the comforter, pouring out the oil of healing,
Precious balm of Gilead, for the afflicted and the suffering;
Power to heal and to strengthen, by His ever-rich anointing,
From the ashes of bondage, to the realms of rejoicing.
The hurts of the past, to the forgiveness of the present,
The plains of the carnal, to the mountains of the spiritual,
A soul that was famished, masked by pride and conceit,
Can now be enriched from the outpouring of heaven eternal.

Robert Persaud

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