

Faith: Learning to Trust God Like Our Heroes (Hebrews 11)

Sermon Notes for Message #1: The Meaning of Faith (11:1-3) – Pastor Jeff

- One of the most basic, profound and comprehensive truths in Scripture is faith and one of the most descriptive chapters on faith is Hebrews 11. It highlights various aspects of faith in the Lord lived out by Old Testament saints.
- Every religion in the world is a faith-based system, but only Christianity proclaims faith alone in Christ alone apart from any human merit, provides eternal life. Virtually every part of the Christian life involves faith: salvation (Eph. 2:8-9), living (Rom. 1:17), obeying (Heb. 11:8), overcoming (1 Jn 5:1-3), serving (Phil 2:17), praying (1 Tim. 6:12), fighting the good fight (1 Tim 6:12), growing (Col. 2:7), standing firm (1 Cor. 16:13), loving (Gal. 5:6), resisting the enemy (Eph. 6:16), and pleasing God (Heb. 11:6)
- Faith is used as a noun (a firm persuasion), verb (to trust or rely upon), and adjective (faithful or believing) and it is predominately revealed in three ways:
 - 1) *“the faith”*: the content of God’s gospel or message of truth
 - 2) *“faith”*: the act of trusting the Lord
 - 3) *“faithfulness”* or *“faithful”*: our reliability or trustworthiness
- Scripture also reveals two kinds of general faith and two kinds of religious faith:
 - 1) General faith is either natural (turning on lights because you believe in electricity) or supernatural (what God gifts us by which we trust – Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29)
 - 2) Religious faith is either bogus (a *“vain”* faith – 1 Cor. 15:2) or a bonafide faith (a faith in Christ that lives it out – Jms. 2:18)
- God’s kind of faith is essentially a confident trust in what God says is true about everything. The Hebrews writer gives us three features of the meaning of faith in verses one to three:

❶ Faith is a confident trust in God’s presentation of reality (11:1)

- Reality is perceived by a confident trust in what hasn’t happened yet (*“the assurance of things hoped for”*) and what isn’t seen yet (*“the conviction of things not seen”*).
- Faith is the means whereby spiritual truths bring reality to genuine believers (forgiveness, eternal life, Christ’s return, new redeemed bodies, etc.)
- Faith is a *“conviction”* that brings the unseen eternal realities of His spiritual kingdom to life (2 Cor. 5:7; 4:18; John 20:29)

❷ Faith is a confident trust in God’s pathway for approval (11:2)

- Faith is pleasing to God and you cannot please Him without it (v. 6)
- The Hebrews writer summarizes the heroes of faith when he says *“all these having gained approval through their faith”* (v. 39)
- The saints of old gave us an example we are called to follow: *“but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises”* (Heb. 6:12).

❸ Faith is a confident trust in God’s powerful Word (11:3)

- Trust continues to falter in culture and many wonder who can truly be believed. The Hebrews writer uses God’s creation of everything as an illustration of His powerful Word that can always be trusted.
- When God speaks, you get the truth and it comes with power (Psa. 33:6, 9)

- Faith is not ignoring your mind nor relying only on our mind, but trusting what God says to be true.
- God said He spoke the world into existence and out of nothing (Gen. 1:3-31)
 - Where did I come from? You came from God “*fearfully and wonderfully*” made you.
 - Who am I? You are a unique image-bearer of God, designed as a male or female to rule over God’s creation, reflect Him and to replenish the earth.
 - Why am I here? You are here to honor God by knowing, loving, serving and worshiping Him.
 - Where am I going? You are either headed for eternal life or eternal death depending on whether you have put your full trust in Christ as your Savior and Lord or not.