

The Truth About Faith

Heb. 11:1

Intro: Today we begin a new series – **Faith Factor** -- for the next couple of weeks we are going to look at faith and what it means to a Christian to, “...**walk by faith, not by sight**” (2 Cor. 5:7).

Today’s message, as a way of introducing the series we are going to just make sure we know what faith means; I mean real Bible faith.

I say that because the word faith is tossed around in Bible circles and is used to mean a number of different things; for example:

“He has been a faithful Sunday School teacher for many years.”

“She has been faithful to her ladies Bible Study and has not missed a meeting for 10 years.”

“He is a real man of faith – he reads his Bible every day and had memorized 100’s of verses.”

So we are going to look at what the Bible tells us faith really is.

[Read Heb 11:1/pray/dismiss Jr. church]

Now, if we use the definition of the English word *faith* all of the above statements are true, along with many other uses; such as – someone who is loyal or someone who is very confident in themselves. Unfortunately the Greek word we translate as *faith* has a somewhat different meaning, it is one that is also found in our English meaning, but the Greek word can only be used in one way:

Thayer Definition:

conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man’s relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervour born of faith and joined with it:

Relating to God: the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ;

Relating to Christ: a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God; the religious beliefs of Christians; belief with the predominate idea of trust (or confidence) whether in God or in Christ, springing from faith in the same

In reality **Real Bible Faith** has a lot more to do with you confidence and trust in who God is than we really like to think about. In fact the Scripture tells us, “... **ithout faith it is impossible to please him[God]...**” (Heb 11:6).

Now if I were to walk around and ask each of you if you are saved and you answered “YES” and followed that with a second question “by what are you saved?” you would of course tell me, “by fait.” And that is true.

But fait, real Bible Faith, is much deeper than that. You see, the Bible is full of promises from God to His people that most of us never realize in our life because every one of them depend on our being able to take a leap of faith to take them.

There is a scene in Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade where Indy and his father have been captured by the Nazis inside the cave that leads to the Holy Grail. Their lead investigator points a gun at Indiana to force him to take on the three challenges necessary to make it to the grail. When Indy refuses, he shoots

Indy's father instead. Now only the Grail can restore Indy's dad.

Indiana has passed the first two tests, and is about to embark on the final and most difficult challenge.

Scene:

Indiana emerges from a cleft in the rock and finds himself standing on a ledge at the edge of an immense chasm. He refers to his notes: "Only in a leap from the lion's head will he prove his worth."

Indiana looks at the distance between the ledge he is standing upon and the one he needs to reach. He says, "Impossible. Nobody can jump this."

His friend tells him that he has to hurry, because his father can't make it much longer.

Though the movie has little to do with Biblical truth in this scene Indiana Jones does in a very human way demonstrates the **Three Elements of Real Bible Faith**.

What are **The Key Elements of Real Bible Faith**?

I. **The First Element: Faith is Built on a Foundation of Confidence** V.1

A. **The substance**

1. The word translated *substance* actually means:
 - a. *Support, confidence, confident, foundation, firm trust*
 - b. An additional sub meaning of – *person, real being, nature of a person*
2. So it can be said that the *substance* of faith is a **confidence built upon a Foundation of Confidence** a

real person in whom we place all our trust – the person of Jesus Christ

3. **Faith starts** with believing in God's character – that he is who he says he is.
 - a. Then, because we believe God and His character
 - b. We then believe His Word
 - c. When we believe His Word we then realize that when he tells us that we all have sinned and fallen short – we have
 - d. When he tells us that of his gift of eternal life through Jesus – we have
 - e. When he tell us that all we have to do is call upon His name to be saved – we do
 - f. When then have that **Confident Foundation to begin our walk of faith.**
4. **Faith then grows**
 - a. Every time we believe God's promises – that he will do what he says he will do our faith grows and our foundation is strengthened
 - b. When we believe that God will fulfill his promises even though we don't yet see any evidence, we demonstrate true faith and or faith grows and is strengthened
- B. Our text tells us that, "**...faith is the substance of things hoped for...**" (V. 1) other translations say...
 1. *Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for...* (ASV)
 2. *Now faith is **[the] substantiating** of things hoped for...* (Darby)
 3. Young Lateral Translation may say it best, "*And faith is of things hoped for **a confidence..***". (YLT)
- C. Regardless of which translation you read, one thing is sure – **faith is the title deed to all that God has promised**

1. Faith is hoping for something and possessing it because God is and has promised it.
 2. John Powell says – “Most of us, in our desire for meaningful faith, seem to be saying to God: ‘Show me, and I’ll believe!’ This approach never works. God has made it very clear to us, in the life and teaching of his Son Jesus, that the process must be reversed. He is saying to us: ‘Believe in me, and I’ll show you.’”
 3. **Faith produces present possession of future eternal life**
 - a. John 3:36 **“He that believes on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.”**
 - b. I have everlasting life now; even before I die because I have **Faith** in God’s promises found in His word
 4. **Faith produces possession of answered prayer**
 - a. 1 John 5:14-15 **“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us. [15] And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”**
 5. Faith is substance not a stab in the dark.
- D. **ILL: According to V. 26, Moses considered “the reproach of Christ [Messiah] greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.”** Moses took a stand on the **Concrete Conviction** of the Messianic hope, and forsook all the material things he could touch and see for a Messiah who would not come to earth for more than 1400 years.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were confronted with the choice of obeying Nebuchadnezzar, whom they could see very well, or God, whom they had never seen. Without hesitation, they chose to obey God. Man’s natural response is to trust his physical senses, to put his faith in the things he can see, hear, taste, and feel. But the man of God puts his trust in something more durable and dependable than anything he will ever experience with his senses. Senses may lie; God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

In the Indiana Jones movie all Indy had to trust in was his notes; and he had a **concrete confidence** in the notes which were in a book his father had given him.

As Christians we need to have **Concrete Confidence In the Notes from our Father... The Bible.**

The First Element: Faith is Built on a Foundation of Confidence

II. The Second Element: That Confidence Creates a Confident Vision

- A. **The phrase ‘hoped for’** means; “to expect or confide:— (have, thing) hope (-d) (for), trust (Strong’s). “in a religious sense, to wait for salvation with joy and full confidence; hopefully to trust in;” (Thayer’s). “To hope, expect with desire;
- B. **The phrase ‘things not seen’** means; “behold, beware, look (on, to), perceive, regard, see, sight, take heed” (Strong’s). “to see, discern, to be possessed of sight, have the power of seeing; to perceive by the senses, to feel; to discover by use, to know by experience” (Thayer’s).
- C. These two phrases combine to give us our second **Element of Faith: A Confident Vision**

- D. Saying we have confidence in God's word is one thing; actually being able to see His promises as already being fulfilled is another.
1. Before Biblical Faith can begin to have a life changing impact on our lives we must have the ability to see God's promises being fulfilled.
 2. Matthew 21:22 **"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."**
 3. In this verse Jesus says that if we ask something by prayer, **believing**, that means seeing it as having already been fulfilled.
 4. Faith is the ability to see things fulfilled with the Spiritual eye.
- E. **"The evidence of things not seen"** means that the person believes in the reality of something that he or she cannot see, taste, hear, or touch.
1. The "things not seen" include eternal life, future rewards, heaven, and so forth but also current blessings
 2. It also means stepping out by faith to accomplish something bigger than our natural eyes can see us doing because we believe it is what God wants us to do. **[Missions trip]**
 3. Faith regards these to be as real as what can be perceived with the senses.
 4. This is what is at the heart of the meaning of what Jesus said when He told His followers, **"...If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive"** (Matt. 21:21-22).

5. Faith means that if God promised something, he will fulfill that promise.
 6. Faith allows Christians to make God-honoring decisions based on unseen realities.
 7. This conviction about God's unseen promises allows Christians to persevere in their faith regardless of persecution, opposition, and temptation.
- F. **ILL: Better Vision:** Faith gives believers confidence to see more clearly. Faith is like putting on Fisherman's sunglasses that remove much of the glare so that you can see the fish better. Faith enables you to perceive realities most people cannot because they can't see beneath the surface; they are blinded by the glare of sinful attractions.

The Military uses Night-vision goggles that penetrate the darkness surrounding them, enabling them to identify enemies or see danger ahead. Faith enables you to follow God's clear leading, even though Satan attempts to deceive you and places pitfalls in your path.

[example our finances]

Corrective lenses in glasses compensate for weaknesses in your eyes. Faith corrects your perception so that God's teaching makes sense to you, and you can see his leading in your daily activities.

Want to improve your vision? God is the great optometrist. Utilize his lenses of faith. The lenses he crafts are just right for you.

- G. In the movie Indy's friend tells him that he has to hurry, because his father can't make it much longer. Indy looks out over the chasm and says, "It's a leap of faith." The step is overwhelming. All of his senses tell him that he will die if he steps out.

The First Element: Faith is Built on a Foundation of Confidence; The Second Element: That Confidence Creates a Confident Vision

III. The Third and Final Element: That Foundation and Vision Empowers us to Live Confidently

- A. **The word Evidence could also be translated conviction.**
- B. It implies a response, an outward manifestation of an inward assurance.
1. **The person of faith lives his belief.**
 2. **His life is committed to what his mind and his spirit are convinced is true.**
- C. Hebrews 11:1b in our KJV...*the evidence of things not seen*" other translations:
1. ASV - Hebrews 11:1b ?...*the conviction of things not seen.*
 2. Darby - Hebrews 11:1b ?...*[the] conviction of things not seen.*
 3. YLT - Hebrews 11:1b ?...*of matters not seen a conviction*
 4. Martin Luther said of faith, "*Faith is the 'yes' of the heart, a conviction on which one stakes one's life.*"
- D. **Conviction** is what we live our lives by.
1. A conviction is a firmly held belief
 2. A firmly held belief enables us to live in this world.
 3. We walk into a building and immediately exercise this element of faith in a number of ways:
 - a. Are conviction that the architect who designed the building designed it to remain standing
 - b. Are conviction that the contractor who built it use the materials the architect dictated and that he exercised great care

- c. Are conviction that the materials were all of the highest quality
- d. Are conviction is really tested when we step on to the elevator.
- e. **ILL:** Last week a number of people were stranded in the St Louis Arch. I have taken that "lift" up to the top of that arch and I can tell you I was convinced that it would hold. The chairs that take you to the top have to make a slight adjustment every so often to keep you upright while following the curve of the arch.

Had I been one of those people stuck last week I don't know if I would ever be able to get in an elevator again let alone go to the top of the arch again.

When I got in that lift chair this element of faith, this element of **Confident Living** was displayed.

- E. Paul demonstrated **Living Confidently**.
- F. **He had A living Faith**
1. 2 Timothy 1:12 "***For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed. For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.***"
 2. You read through the Book of Acts begin in Chap 13 and you will find that once Paul turned is life over to Christ he didn't just trust Him with is eternal soul; he trusted Christ with everything about him.
 - a. His physical well being:

- b. ***“Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;”*** (2 Cor. 11:25).
- c. His every need:
- d. ***“...I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. ¹⁹But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*** (Phil 4:11-13, 19).
- 3. Paul **Lived Confidently** because he could see God’s promises being fulfilled long before they were.
- G. This **Element of Faith** is not merely you holding on to God—it is God holding on to you.
 - 1. Psalms 37:5 ***“Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”***
- H. Faith is **Living Confidently**.
 - 1. It means believing God is Who He says He is and will do what He says He will do!
 - 2. The rest of this chapter in Hebrews is called the Faith’s Heroes Hall of Fame and every one of them displayed this **Element of Living Confidently**
 - 3. Augustine said – *“Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe.”*
- I. **The natural man cannot comprehend this kind of spiritual faith.**
 - 1. We see Him who is invisible (V. 27), but the unsaved man does not, because he has no means of perception.

- 2. Because he has no spiritual senses, he does not believe in God or the realities of God’s realm.
- 3. He is like a blind man who refuses to believe there is such a thing as light because he has never seen light.

Conclusion: In the movie, Indy looks out over the chasm and says, "It's a leap of faith." The step is overwhelming. All of his senses tell him that he will die if he steps out.

His father, lying on the ground, says, "You must believe, boy. You must...believe."

Indy steels himself, closes his eyes, and steps straight out. Incredibly his foot lands on something solid. There has been a bridge before him all the time, obscured by the surrounding rock. His footing unsure at first, but gaining confidence with every step, he crosses the bridge.

As we go forward in this series we are going to look at a real example of what Indiana Jones does – Pete, when he steps out of the boat. The subtitle of this series is ***If You Want To Walk On Water You Have To Get Out Of The Boat.***

My question for you today, *“Is your faith real biblical faith?”* The kind needed to take a leap of faith like Indy did? The kind of faith all the heroes in Heb 11 did? The kind of Faith Peter displays?

Faith that can do that has three elements: **Faith is Built on a Foundation of Confidence; That Confidence Creates a Confident Vision Which Empowers us to Live Confidently**