

Living a Life of Faith

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Epic Faith

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 11:6

All of the Christian life is a walk of faith; as a matter of fact the very start of our Christianity starts with faith in God's saving grace. Our very salvation is an act of faith. In Christian circles we make the worship of God the highest good, but in reality the highest good is faith for we can never really worship unless we have faith in God. The Bible tells us that we are to walk (or live our life) by faith and not by sight.

Faith is so important to living for God because without faith it is impossible to please God. We must believe that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Faith sees the **invisible**, believes the **incredible** and receives the **impossible**.

Many people miss the real purpose of faith. Faith starts with a desire to please God. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith understands that we were created for God's pleasure and that God loves us and wants a relationship with us. Faith believes that it is possible to please God. Faith also understands that if we bring pleasure to God, He brings pleasure to us. Faith is not the means to receive God's favor, faith is the currency of love. Faith is the measure of our devotion, commitment and trust. **Matthew 6:31-33** Love is reciprocal as we bring pleasure to God, He brings pleasure to us. We love Him because He first loved us. **1 John 4:16-19**

What is Faith?

Faith is simply believing what God says, trusting that if we do what God says then He will do what He has promised. It is knowing that we have what God has said before we see the results of our obedience. Someone described faith in this way: Forsaking All I Trust Him.

~ A. W. Tozer- Remember that faith is not a noble quality found only in superior men. It is not a virtue attainable by a limited few. It is not the ability to persuade ourselves that black is white or that something we desire will come to pass if we only wish hard enough. Faith is simply the bringing of our minds into accord with the truth. Faith isn't so much what you say you believe, but how you behave in a consistent manner. It is adjusting our expectations to the promises of God in complete assurance that the God of the whole earth cannot lie. A man looks at a mountain and affirms, "That is a mountain." There is no particular virtue in the affirmation. It is simply accepting the fact that stands before him and bringing his belief into accord with the fact. The man does not create the mountain by believing, nor could he annihilate it by denying: And so with the truth of God. The believing man accepts a promise of God as a fact as solid as a mountain and vastly more enduring. His faith changes nothing except his own personal relation to the word of promise. God's Word is true whether we believe it or not. Human unbelief cannot alter the character of God. Faith is subjective, but it is sound only when it corresponds with objective reality. The man's faith in the mountain is valid only because the mountain is there; otherwise it would be mere imagination and would need to be sharply corrected to rescue the man from harmful delusion. So God is what He is in Himself. He does not become what we believe. He is "I AM That I AM." We are on safe ground only when we know what kind of God He is and adjust our entire being to the holy concept.

Many have tried to define faith with ideas like- a feeling of optimism, positive thinking, hoping for the best and even "name it and claim it". Those are not faith. The Bible never gives us a definition of faith but it does give us a description of faith. You cannot define the taste of vanilla or chocolate but you can give a description. **Hebrews 11:1** - Faith is three things: it is substance, it is hope and it is the evidence of things we do not have yet or things invisible; like God and angels or a promise that we are in the process of receiving. **Hebrews 11:3**

- Substance - is exactly what the Greek word implies “sub” and “stance”. It is something beneath that you can stand on. Faith has reality to it. Faith is realization. Faith is not hocus- pocus and it is not spiritual smoke and mirrors. Faith has spiritual steel and concrete in it. Faith is substance. Many Christians are living without substance, hope or evidence in their life because they do not understand the nature of faith. You can’t live by faith without God first having given you a word. God’s Word is the substance of everything. **John 1:1-4**
What sets those who walk and live by faith apart from those who don’t is that they not only read the word but they get a word from God for their life. You cannot live a life of faith without a word from God. **Romans 10:17** Remember when this was written there was not yet a Bible. A Word was received by people preaching the good news and by God speaking to His people.
Before you can have the substance, hope and evidence that comes as a result of faith you must first have the substance that gives you faith and that is God’s Word to you. The substance of faith is the Word. Without the Word there is no faith.
God knows that you will not have the faith to do what He is asking unless you get a Word from Him.
- Hope- Faith is the substance of our hope and the Word is the substance of our faith. In our modern day way of thinking we equate hope with wishing about something we desire to come to pass, but maybe it won’t. In the Bible “hope” means absolute assurance based on the word of God. Faith is something real. It has something to stand on based on an absolute assurance, based on God’s word. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. **Hebrews 11:7-13**
- Evidence- Faith considers “God said it will happen” as actual evidence. People of faith know that what they hope for is going to happen. Faith sees evidence where the world can’t see it. Evidence is the proof of things not seen. Things not yet realized in the natural already have their fulfillment in the spiritual. **Hebrews 12:2, Philippians 1:6** The word for evidence also can be translated confidence, trust, belief, trustworthiness and persuasion. It is the divinely implanted principle of an inward confidence and reliance in God and all that He says. There is a great unseen world that is not apparent to our natural sight or senses. **Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:35-39, 2 Kings 6:11-20** Faith recognizes the invisible realm and trusts that God will answer prayer. Faith allows others to see the reality of the unseen—Proof and evidence that are the basis of our confidence.

Three Things that Faith is Necessary For

- 1) Faith is necessary for Spiritual wisdom. **Hebrews 11:5** Every person who walks by faith has put themselves in the position to please God. Our pleasing God is the substance of our testimony. **Hebrews 11:2** This comes from living a life of wisdom. The substance of our wisdom is the fear of the Lord. **Proverbs 9:10, Proverbs 4:7, Psalm 111:10** The proof of the fear of the Lord and the evidence of wisdom in our life is seen in a pure desire to please and obey the Lord. Obedience and trust are the fruit of faith. **James 2:14-26** Faith works and works follow faith.
- 2) Faith is necessary for Spiritual Worship. God would much rather you believe Him than praise Him. **1 John 5:1-5, 10-15**. The way to please God above all else is to believe Him and trust His word.

- 3) Faith is necessary for Spiritual **Wealth**. He is a rewarder of those who **diligently** seek Him. The measure of our blessing in Christ is in direct comparison to our belief, trust and obedience. **Matthew 9:29, Ephesians 4:13-21** Faith is the medium of exchange in the kingdom of heaven. Our spiritual life is no greater than our faith. God does for us and God does through us what we believe God for.

Understanding Mustard Seed Faith Luke 17:6, Matthew 17:20

All you need is a little Word and you have the substance of **big** things. It is interesting that Jesus often told people that they had little faith. This means that they didn't even have enough of His Word in them to contain the substance of a mustard seed.

The mustard seed is the smallest seed there is that grows into a tree and not a plant. It grows into a tree that is up to 20 feet tall and 20 feet wide. The mustard seed grows rapidly and produces a large **harvest**. Remember faith is always fruitful because the Word always brings increase. **Isaiah 55:11, Matt. 13:8** Here are some facts about the mustard tree:

- It can grow in arid, dry climates- This represents faith that is able to withstand or **recover** from difficult conditions. This is resilient faith.
- It can grow in clay or sandy soil- This means that mustard seed faith is **unaffected** by negative surroundings.
- It grows in hot dry weather- Mustard seed faith is not burned or scorched by the **trials** of life.
- It grows in cool wet climates- It thrives in optimal conditions.
- It is drought tolerant. It is able to weather seasons of lack.
- If it is cut down to the trunk it can grow back again- This is **unwavering** faith.
- Even if a mustard seed is planted on top of another seed, it remains the same. It doesn't take on the characteristics of other seeds.

Understanding Little Faith = Faith less than a mustard seed.

- 1) Little faith does not understand the basic concept that God loves us and that because He loves us He will take care of us. Little faith does not understand the concept of **covenant** love. **Matt. 6:30-34**
- 2) Little faith says that God's written and spoken promises **can't**, won't or don't come true. **Luke 8:13-14**
- 3) Little faith gives up **easily** on the things of God. **Luke 8:23-25** Little faith has trouble weathering storms of any size.
- 4) Little faith pays more attention to what is lacking instead of what it does have. It also has a hard time learning **spiritual** truths in natural circumstances. **Matthew 16:5-12**
- 5) Little faith sets out to obey God in big things but gets **distracted** by what is going on around them and allows doubt to creep in. **Matthew 14:28-33**
- 6) Little faith only sees the circumstances and cannot grasp and apply God's truths at the necessary moment. **Mark 16:12-14, John 20:24-31**
- 7) Little faith **limits** God. Little faith says this is not possible- even with God. **Matthew 19:25-26, Mark 9:19-27**

The Five Sources of Little Faith

- Hardness of heart
- Giving up easily
- Being overwhelmed by circumstances and unable to apply God's truth
- Deciding what is possible and impossible with God
- Pride and the seeking of respectability. **John 5:44** Pride is the source of all doubt and unbelief.

The Sources of Great Faith

- A **soft** heart, fruitful receptive soil.
- Seeing, believing and **acting** on God's truths despite anxieties and circumstances
- Believing that **nothing** is impossible with God.
- Persistence and endurance while waiting. Trusting God over the long haul.
- **Humility** and putting your trust in God alone.

Four Steps to leaving little faith and developing great faith.- R.O.P.E.

- 1) **Repent** of your pride, skepticism and unbelief. Ask God to help your unbelief.
- 2) **Open** your heart to the Word of God and open the Word of God. Seek God in His written word and allow Him to speak to you.
- 3) **Persist** in prayer. Never give in and never give up. **Matthew 7:7 (Amp)**
- 4) **Expect** great things from God.

Laws of Faith

These laws are learned from the heroes of the faith found in Hebrews chapter 11. These testimonies help us to see what faith in action looks like.

- ❖ The Law of **Existence** - you must believe that God is; also that He is active with regard to you personally. **Hebrews 11:1, 6**
- ❖ The Law of Just **Providence** - you must believe that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. **Hebrews 11:6**
- ❖ The Law of the **Invisible** - you must be prepared to believe in things beyond the experience of your senses, in things that have never happened before in your world. **Hebrews 11:4**
- ❖ The Law of the Future **Preparations** - you must believe that God is working for you and preparing things in advance for the people He loves who trust Him. **Hebrews 11:5**
- ❖ The Law of **Endurance** - you must be prepared to wait patiently until God's time and purposes are fulfilled. Faith hangs in there. **Hebrews 11:6**
- ❖ The Law of Assured **Conviction** - the ability to see the mountain sized problem as a mere stone in God's hand. To acknowledge that you have the answer with certainty. **Hebrews 11:7**
- ❖ The Law of Incomplete **Knowledge** - Abraham went out not knowing where he was going. **Hebrews 11:8**

- ❖ The Law of Reliance on **Rhema** (God's personal spoken Word) - Abraham believed God's personal Rhema word to him and it was counted to him as righteousness. **Hebrews 11:9**
- ❖ The Law of Heavenly **Ambition** - Faith is directed into God's purposes and to God's ends and cannot function properly if focussed on the here and now. Faith seeks the city that is to come. **Hebrews 11:10**
- ❖ The Law of **Possibility** - all things are possible with God -even raising Isaac from the dead. **Hebrews 11:11-12, 17-20**
- ❖ The Law of **Renunciation** - faith operates in renouncing all that is not faith and grasping God's purposes ONLY. Faith is uncontaminated by the courts of Pharaoh and the ambitions of this world. **Hebrews 11:13**
- ❖ The Law of **Hope** for the future **Hebrews 11:22**
- ❖ The Law of **Protection** **Hebrews 11:23**
- ❖ The Law of **Identification** **Hebrews 11:24-26,31**
- ❖ The Law of the **Journey** **Hebrews 11:27-29**
- ❖ The Law of **Victory** **Hebrews 11:30**
- ❖ The Law of **Miracles** **Hebrews 11:32-34**
- ❖ The Law of Trust for the **Big Stuff** **Hebrews 11:35-40**

Faith and the Law of Love

The Greatest Law that oversees the motive, attitude and heart of faith is love. All faith is rooted in God's love for us and our love for God and our desire to please the Lord. Love is never **compulsion**. It is commitment, not based on obligation but on a genuine desire for pure relationship. The substance of faith is God's Word but the substance of love is **God**. Love is not God, God is love. **1 John 4:7-13**

It is important to know that love is at the very core of faith because anything not of faith is **sin**. **Romans 14:23** Sin is not always outright defiance and rebellion. Sin means simply to miss the mark. The question then becomes the mark or bulls-eye of what? The answer is sin misses the mark of **love**.

If we do something not sure if it pleases God or not and we decide we will do it anyway, it is sin. If we obey God only out of fear then it is sin. For instance tithing or drinking. **1 John 4:17-19**, **Romans 14:14-23** It is ok to obey and have an **expectation** of reward because we know He rewards those who seek Him, that is faith. If we obey and our love is dependent on an outcome that is not faith or love, it is a conditional **ultimatum**, that has nothing to do with relationship. Anything not of faith is sin and anything of faith will be done in love.