

**Text:** Hebrews 11:1-3

**Title:** Salvation by Faith

**Truth:** Faith in Jesus Christ and God the Father is Essential to Christianity

**Date/Location:** July 31, 2011 at FBC

## Introduction

Hebrews 10:39 said that Christians are those who have faith which results in the salvation of their soul. At Fellowship Bible Church, we talk a lot about the need of salvation and how to get it. But even as much as we talk about these things, there is always a need to review because so many voices out there are saying so many wrong and confusing things.

1. We teach that everyone needs to be saved. **Why?** Sin and death. Romans 3:10, 3:23, 6:23.
2. We teach that everyone can be saved. Because of **who?** Jesus. 1 Peter 3:18, 1 John 2:2.
3. We teach that salvation provides a myriad of benefits? **What?**
  - Forgiveness of your sin and a right standing with God, Rom. 4:8.
  - Removal of enmity between you and God and a relationship with God through Jesus, Romans 5:10.
  - Home in heaven and freedom from the presence of sin, Rev. 21:4.
  - Eternally long and eternally good life. John 6:58.
4. We teach that everyone can be saved very easily. **How?** Faith alone. John 20:31, Ephesians 2:8-10, Gal. 2:16. Illustration of a man stuck in quicksand.
5. **When?** Now.
6. **Where?** Anywhere.

The importance of faith in this whole equation should elicit the question "What is faith?" In this message I want to give you four characteristics of Christian faith (also belief or trust). Hebrews chapter 11 tells us what faith is by defining and illustrating it.

## I. Faith is Confidence of a Future Hoped-For Thing, v. 1a

- A. Other words: assurance or being sure.
- B. A distinction: Faith is not the thing itself that is out in the future.

- C. A caveat: Faith does not make that thing real. Faith is only as good as the object that it is placed in. The idea of *substance* or *reality* indicates that the thing hoped for is not a shadowy, unreal thing, but in fact is real. It will come or will happen.
- D. In Christianity, final salvation is out there in the future. There are a lot of aspects of salvation that Christians have right now (many we mentioned earlier). But some we do not have: sin has not yet been banished from our existence; our health has not yet been made perfect; we are not in heaven with Christ, etc. But believers are absolutely sure that those things are coming.

Just as sure, we could say, as you are sure that you are sitting there right now in your chair listening to me talk.

## II. Faith is Certainty About Things Unseen, v. 1b

- A. Other words: conviction or being convinced. Faith is *evidence* or *proof* of things not seen in that faith testifies as a witness to the existence and reality of those things that are not seen. Again, faith adds nothing to the reality of or truth of the thing. Rather, it is certainty about something that is real.
- B. Faith is to the Christian life what eyes are to the physical life. Eyes see visible things and give you certainty about them. Faith sees invisible things and gives you certainty about them too.
- C. A caveat: The Bible is not talking about “faith in general” here. The chair illustration will help me explain what I mean.
  1. Sometimes faith is illustrated as the trust that one has in a piece of furniture upon which they are sitting. You know—you had faith that the chair you are now sitting on would be sturdy enough to hold you up. Then you sat down, and lo and behold it did hold you up! That is faith, however, in something that is *seen*.
  2. We are talking about faith in things *unseen*! The difference with faith as the Bible defines it is that it does not have to do with our view of temporal things. It has to do with our confidence and assurance about things we have *not* seen. You can inspect the chair, quickly look it over for cracks, and so forth. But here we are talking about another level, and that level moves us to something that cannot directly be inspected.
- D. This passage is about faith that saves; Christian faith; faith in the true and living God and in His son Jesus Christ; faith that believes in what is

written in the Bible. These are not things just like chairs. Jesus Himself, the concept of universal sin and need of salvation, Hell, and spiritual benefits all are unseen or not “tangible” in that sense. Of course you can “see” sin but do you “see” the application of the text to you?

E. Jesus pronounced a special blessing in John 20:29 on those who believe without seeing Him. We are talking about things that eye has not seen nor ears have heard, but that God has revealed (1 Cor. 2:9-10).

### **III. Faith is How Old Testament Believers Lived, v. 2**

The ancestors are the Jewish people who lived in years gone by, from around 4000 B.C. to 400 B.C.

A. They were saved by faith too, just like we can be. Gen 15:6.

B. They were well spoken of or commended for their faith. They lived out faith in God. The idea is that they had a good reputation, and others (mainly God) spoke well of them because of this quality of faith.

C. Examples of Faith in Hebrews 11

All of these people had the kind of faith we are learning about.

1. Abel, v. 4
2. Enoch, v. 5-6
3. Noah, v. 7
4. Abraham, v. 8-10
5. Sarah, v. 11-12
6. Summary, v. 13-16
7. Abraham, v. 17-19
8. Isaac, v. 20
9. Jacob, v. 21
10. Joseph, v. 22
11. Moses, v. 23-28
12. Israelites, v. 29
13. Joshua and the people at Jericho, v. 30
14. Rahab, v. 31
15. Summary of six other names along with the OT prophets and their faith victories, v. 32-39
16. Our connection to them, v. 40

D. If they were approved by God for believing in Him, how do you suppose that you could receive the same kind of approval?

## IV. Faith is How We Know God Created the World, v. 3

- A. Faith not only looks forward in time. It also looks backward, all the way back to the beginning of time.
- B. It was then that God created the heavens and the earth. The books of Genesis and Exodus make it clear: in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). He completed the task in six days (Exodus 20:11). The major method of creation was God's speech (Genesis 1:3, 1:6, among others).
  - 1. By faith we believe this. Christians should be fully convinced that it is the case.
  - 2. Evolutionists also believe something. But it is something so far-fetched that their wisdom has turned to foolishness (Romans 1:22).
- C. The things we see were not made out of what was visible. In fact, it was made out of what was not visible. It was not visible because it did not exist. In other words, God spoke and something came out of nothing. To use the Latin term for this idea, creation was *ex nihilo*.
- D. All this is actual history. And, it is in God's word. So when we believe it, we are believing God and the truth.
- E. Salvation is based on a lot of historical events like Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. If you don't believe in them, or if you don't believe they are relevant for you personally, then you cannot be saved.

### Conclusion

Have you believed in Jesus as we've talked through this message on faith?  
Let me know if you have or if you want to talk about it some more.

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