

Jesus is Better – Hebrews

Hebrews 11:1-7

“The Conviction of Things Not Seen” – June 3rd, 2018



Introduction

Before sin entered the world, Adam and Eve knew each other without shame, knew God's love for them, and knew His approval of them. Made in God's image to reflect what God is like to God's resounding glory, they had everything they needed in God and were able to freely give of themselves in love and service to others. But when sin entered the picture in Genesis 3, Adam and Eve pushed God out of the center, so they could be there. But a world filled with self-centered, glory seeking, proud people is a recipe for disaster, conflict and feuds. If we abandon God as our refuge, the world becomes a dangerous place. Racism, misogyny, bullying, betrayal, violence, envy, bitterness - almost ever feud in the home or on the battlefield comes from our attempt to gain back the approval we lost because of sin. The way back to God is through Christ, but this side of heaven, in a world that plays by a different set of rules, the way back is the way of *faith*.

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

Sermon Outline

- I. Understand what faith is (vv1-3)
- II. Believe the life of faith is the life that pleases God (vv4-6)
- III. Act on what you believe (v7)

Read & Discuss

- 1) Read [Hebrews 11:1-3](#)

Faith is not a blind leap into the dark, blind optimism, or wishful thinking. Because the content of Christian hope is based upon God's word, it is a leap into the light of God's revelation. Biblical faith can be defined as *confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences*. But prolonged obedience in a world that doesn't play by the same rules can be difficult – tempting us to drift, compromise and look more like the world than Jesus. Problem is, that ruins our *assurance* of things hoped for, leaving us to live the Christian life in fear, timidity, and doubt. How is the church designed to cultivate our assurance as Christians ([Heb. 3:13](#), [10:23-25](#))? How does growing in love and good deeds help us to be confident about where we stand with God?

Additional reading: 1 John 4:18, 2 Peter 1:5-10

2) Read [Hebrews 11:4-6](#)

In vv4-6, Abel and Enoch serve as illustrations that the life of faith is the life pleasing to God. v6 explains that faith believes the God exists (as He reveals Himself in the pages of Scripture) and longs to *reward* those who seek Him. Do you believe that? How would you and I live today if we *really* believed God existed, loved us completely, cared about our every action and concern, and wished to reward us for our faith? You might think, "Well, I do believe!" But ask yourself: how would you live differently if you *didn't* believe¹? Would there be much difference? If there isn't much difference what does that say of our faith?

How do you define success? What are the goals you're striving after? If the life of faith is the life that pleases God, that is *the* best definition of success. Everything else is 'meaningless, meaningless...utterly meaningless' (Ecclesiastes 1:2). One of the ways we are encouraged in this is by the examples we see in Hebrews 11, the *heroes of the faith*. We also garner strength by hearing the testimonies of grace from other Christians and reading good Christian biographies whether it's [Adonirum Judson](#), [Hudson Taylor](#), [Charles Spurgeon](#), or [Francis Grimke](#). Can you see how what you're doing, however ordinary it might be, has the potential to have *eternal* significance?

Additional reading: Colossians 3:24, Matthew 16:26

3) Read [Hebrews 11:7](#)

Biblical faith doesn't just agree with the truth, it trusts God and obeys His word. Noah modeled that when he built the ark in the middle of town though God's warning was in regard to things *unseen*. We may not be called to build an ark, but God's ways are often so foreign to the world, we will be overlooked, mocked, or find it difficult in our flesh to obey. It is a day by day, moment by moment fight to put faith into action by laying hold of the promises of God. But praise God, He lavishes us with promises to help in the various issues we face each day. What is it you face today that is a challenge to your faith? Listen to it...what does the challenge say about God, your future, or what you care about? Then, consider what God promises in that situation. What would it look like to take up God's promise and live in light of its truth? (If you're looking for suggestions on the promises of God, look [here](#) to get started).

Additional reading: 1 Peter 4:4, James 2:14

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <http://firstbaptistchurchuppermarlboro-preview.cloversites.com/sermons>

¹ I'm thankful to George Guthrie (Professor of New Testament at Regent College) for this question.