

58-11-02.wpd --The Faith That Counts with God  
faith, revelation, seeking God, reward, testimony  
Heb 11:1-7

Faith that brings us to God is faith that clings to His Word.

### **INTRODUCTION: (Text as Scripture Reading)**

--[I walked out of the Polling Place on and said to someone walking in, "*I gamble only once a year, and this was it.*" We vote **by faith** in politicians and proposals, but take a risk in doing so. We may be electing the wrong people or passing bad policies.]

**Faith is a *muscle*.** It grabs hold of what we think is true, even if it isn't. False faith is like stepping on ground that looks solid, but isn't. [**Bumpus Hell** is an area of boiling hot mud pools near Mt. Lassen. It was named after Mr. Bumpus who lost his leg by stepping on what looked like solid ground, but wasn't.] Believing and confidently acting on what is not true can never make it true. [**Someone has said**, "*Our greatest difficulties in life aren't caused by the things we don't know, but by the things we do know that aren't so.*"]

--We can know that what God tells us is *so*. *In His Word, faith finds its true home, a relationship with God.* **HOM.idea.** This is **title**.

--**Hebrews 11 defines the kind of faith God wants us to have--** "*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*"

### **I. God Wants Us to Have the Kind of Faith He Himself Has**

A. God is a *God of faith*, and **His faith brought the universe into existence-- v.3** (NRSV), "*By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.*"

1. Theologians say God made creation *ex nihilo*, "out of nothing," but I'm not convinced of that, because it says, "*the worlds were prepared by the word of God.*" (**God spoke** creation into existence with **absolute certainty** that **what He said would come to pass**. He made "*what is seen*," the physical universe, "*from things that are not visible*," the **commands** that came from His mouth.)
2. Just as His *word of faith* came before the visible things it created, so our faith must come before an understanding of those things-- "*By faith we understand...*" [**students who do not first trust** teachers can never learn and understand the subject being taught, and they usually fail the class!]
  - a. **God wants us to trust His account** of things, so **that we know reality** and **aren't misled by faulty explanations of it**.
  - b. **Figuring things out on our own** is a legacy of Eden's forbidden

- fruit, which gave us a way of knowing things apart from God.
- c. *True faith* re-establishes God as our Teacher, so that we learn to know and trust and live by the same Word, HIS WORD, that brought us and everything else into existence.
  - B. This kind of trust "is being sure of what we hope for" in the face of harsh circumstances into which God's promise is spoken. When fears of the unknown threaten, this faith is "*certain of what we do not see.*"

**TRANS:** This kind of faith counts with God. It's the kind God has Himself, an absolute certainty in His Word. Much is taught today about having "*faith in ourselves*," but that kind of faith is as frail as human nature itself. **Faith that clings to God's Word brings us into a proper relationship with the One who created us.** **V.2** says, "*This is what the ancients were commended for.*"

### **II. Past Testimonies of Faith Encourage Our Own Faith Today**

- A. **(Re-read v.4)** Abel is listed as a prophet-- Luke 11:50-51a, Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah... (**Prophets get martyred for telling what they hear from God**. [**Playing Perry Mason with the Cain & Abel story**: God must have revealed to Abel how to make sacrifices. Abel believed, practiced and preached it. Cain didn't believe Abel's revelation. So, when he sacrificed his own way, God didn't accept it and told him to do "*what is right*." In a fit of jealous anger, Cain then killed his brother.]
  1. Abel, like Cain, might have had his own ideas about sacrificing, but "*By faith he was commended as a righteous man*" for trusting and acting upon God's revelation to him, and he made that revelation known.... "But it got him killed!" YES, but his prophecy (which spoke prophetically of Christ's coming sacrifice) still testifies: "*by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.*" (**All of us eventually die, but we all need to leave behind a testimony of faith!**)
- B. **(Re-read v.5-6)** Enoch is famous in history for never having to face death, but his fame with God was a 300-year walk of faith.
  1. It says, "*before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.*" Then **v.6** explains the source of God's pleasure-- "*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*" (the key phrase describing his faith-walk is "*those who earnestly seek him.*")

2. Enoch's earnest seeking got him close enough to God, so that he, too, heard God's word and believed it enough to speak it to those who needed to hear it-- Jude 1:14-15, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (The closer we walk with God and the more we hear His Word, the more we will speak up for God in a world that speaks "against him.")

C. **(Re-read v.7)** Noah trusted God's Word and labored on the ark for 100 years-- Gen 6:9, This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. // Gen 6:13-14a, So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood.... // Gen 6:22, Noah did everything just as God commanded him. His faith did 2 things:

1. "By his faith he condemned the world"-- Noah's world didn't care about the will of an invisible God, BUT Noah's ark, a visible product of God's invisible Word, testified against their godlessness--2 Pet 2:5, [God] did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a **preacher of righteousness**, and seven others (When we act on our faith in God's Word, we are delivered along with whoever we can convince to believe that Word!)
2. Secondly, by Noah's obedience through faith in God's Word, he "*became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith*" (Noah eventually died, as did his family. Long earthly life isn't faith's real goal. It's to bring us into a relationship with God based on *righteousness*, a *righteousness* that we can't gain on our own. It's a *righteousness* we inherit from God Himself, if we will believe His Word the way He believes it, with absolute certainty.

### CONCLUSION:

--Faith is a muscle. No matter how powerful its grip, it can't change falsehood into truth. It can't bring us to a God of our own making, a God of our own or someone else's imagination.

--We are responsible for our faith. We don't just "believe," we choose to believe. **Faith that brings us to God is faith that clings to His Word.** Choose to believe God's revelation, and try to get as many others as you can to climb onto the *ark of salvation* with you.

Heb 11:1-7 (NIV) Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. {2} This is what the ancients were commended for. {3} By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. {4} By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead. {5} By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. {6} And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. {7} By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.