

Now Faith

February 24, 2013

I. Review:

A. Faith comes from understanding the gospel

1. The gospel is the good news of God's promised blessing; the gospel is based on promise.
2. We are blessed because Jesus redeemed us from the curse.
Gal 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"-- in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

2 Peter 1:3-4 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature ...
3. The principle of reversal – Jesus became like us, lived a perfect life, and bore the penalty for sin on the cross, so that mankind can receive all of His riches and blessings both in this life and the one to come.

B. Lessons of faith righteousness

1. God expects mankind to respond in faith to the gospel (Heb 4:1-6).
People in the Old Testament had good news (gospel) preached also to them.
This good news didn't profit them because of their unbelief.
Unbelief and disobedience are one and the same thing.
2. Abraham responded to the gospel (Gal 3:6-9).
3. We need to study the Old Testament to understand principles of faith (Rom 10:16-17).

II. Definitions

A. Three Greek words

Pistis = primarily a firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing.

(It is used 244 times in the New Testament, it is a noun and it is usually translated faith.)

Pisteuo = to believe, to be persuaded, to place your confidence in, to trust

(It is used 248 times in the New Testament, it is a verb and signifies reliance upon and not mere intellectual assent).

Pistos = In the active sense, it means trusting or believing. In the passive sense, it means faithful, trustworthy

(It is used 66 times in the New Testament)

B. The Bible definition – Heb 11:1

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

C. Other translations of Heb 11:1:

Heb 11:1 What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see. (NLT)

Heb 11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (NIV)

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (NKJV)

Heb 11:1 NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses]. (AMP)

"Now faith is the assurance of things we hope for, the proof of the reality of the things we cannot see." (Williams)

"Faith is the substance, the foundation, the title deed, the assurance of things hoped for. (Oliver Green)

"Faith is being sure the things we hope for, being convinced of the things we can't see." (Beck)

"Now faith is the title deed of things hoped for, the conviction of things which are not being seen." (Kenneth Wuest)

"Faith means that we are certain of the things we hope for, convinced of the things we do not see." (William Barclay)

III. Comments from the commentators:

"Faith is a hope that is absolutely certain that what it believes is true, and that what it expects will come." (Barclay says this is what faith is to the writer of Hebrews)

"Faith is trust in the unseen. It is not trust in the unknown, for we may know by faith what we cannot see with the eye." (Wycliffe Bible Commentary)

"Faith apprehends as a real fact what is not revealed to the senses. It rest on the fact, acts upon it, and is upheld by it in the face of all that seems to contradict it. Faith is a real seeing." (Marvin Vincent)

"Faith and hope go together; and the same things that are the object of our hope are the object of our faith. Faith is a firm persuasion and expectation that God will perform all that He has promised to us in Christ; and this persuasion is so strong that it gives the soul...possession...of those things. Believers in the exercise of faith are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ dwells in the soul by faith; and the soul is filled with the fullness of God." (Matthew Henry)

A. Faith operates in the "now."

Heb 11:1 Now faith is...

Faith is a now response to the challenges and problems of life that contradict God's promises.

1 Cor 13:13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three;

2 Cor 6:2 for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"--

Heb 3:7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE..." (Heb 3:15; 4:7)

Gal 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Col 2:7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

B. Faith is Assurance of things hoped for

Hupostasis = a standing under (literal meaning)

It means the foundation, assurance, title deed, and guarantee of things hoped for.

It means that which stands, or is set under a foundation.

It is the quality of confidence which leads one to stand or endure under anything.

C. Faith is the Conviction of things not seen.

Elegchus = a proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested.

"that by which invisible things are proved and we are convinced of their reality." (Thayer)

D. From The Preachers Sermon and Outline Bible: (vol.11; p.127)

According to the most commentators, these two words mean assurance and conviction. Therefore, faith would be defined as

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Look closely at what is being said and note that faith is being described as an act, an act of the mind and heart. That is, our heart and mind believe something and we have assurance and conviction that it is true.

This is certainly true; faith is an act of the mind and heart. But many of the earlier interpreters understood "substance" to mean real being, substantial nature, the real nature of the thing.

Vincent points this out and even says that it suggests the real sense, but he backs off of the meaning and concludes that faith is basically an act of what he calls "moral intelligence directed at an object" (Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol 4 p 510).

This is not to argue with God's dear servants who stress that faith is primarily an act of the mind and heart. It is only to say that Scripture seems to be saying that faith is more than an act. Scripture seems to be saying that it is the actual possession of reality. Is this not what the definition "title deed" is saying? The person who holds the title deed to property actually possesses the property. It is his already. Certainly from God's perspective, we already possess His promises; He has already seated us in the heavenlies, and we already possess eternal life. It is not that we are going to possess it; we already possess it.

The point is this: holding the title deed the property and possesses something is more than assurance and conviction. It is possessing reality, actually holding something that is substantial and real. It is possessing the land, the promises of God.

Faith is possessing the substance of the promises of God, the evidence of things not seen. If I possess them, the substance is there; the evidence is there. The substance and evidence, the fact that I already possess them, are my assurance and conviction.

This is important to note and bears repeating: the substance and evidence, the fact that I already possess eternal life, is the basis of my assurance and conviction, of never tasting and experiencing death.

It is both an act and a possession of the things believed. It is believing and trusting in that which actually exist -- in that which we can possess. We may not be able to see it, but it is real and

existing, and we can possess it by believing and having faith in it. We can possess it now-- we cannot see it, but we can actually possess the very substance of it by believing and entrusting our lives to it.

Faith is trusting; believing; having confidence in; and possessing all that God is and says.

Faith is hoping for something and possessing it because God is (exist) and has promised it.

Faith is not:

"I think so, I hope so."

"It may be so; it may not be so."

"It might be true; it might not be true."

Biblical faith does not deal with what is unreal, imaginary, fanciful, visionary, superficial, or deceptive. Biblical faith is the knowledge, experience, and possession of things hoped for. True biblical faith deals only with truth and reality.

Faith is:

Knowing what is real.

Experiencing what is real.

Possessing what is real.