

The Description of Faith

Heb 11:1-2

October 22, 2017

Introduction:

This chapter is known as God's great Hall of Fame. Those mentioned in this chapter became great through a life of faith in God. The key to any of us being great in the eyes of God is faith. Therefore, we need to understand what faith is!

The importance of faith - Believers are to:

1. Live by faith

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. (Heb 10:38)

2. Walk by faith (and not by sight).

2Cor 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight --

3. Pursue faith (1Ti 6:11; 2Ti 2:22).

1Tim 6:11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. (2 Tim 2:22)

4. Abound in faith

2Cor 8:7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also.

5. Rest your faith on God's power

1Cor 2:5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

6. Fight the good fight of faith

1Tim 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Without faith you cannot be a Christian, 28 times Christianity is called the faith.

2Cor 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?
(Ac 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 16:5; 1Cor 16:13; Gal 1:23; 6:10; Eph 4:5, 13; Phil 1:25, 27; Col 1:23; 1Ti 1:2; 3:9, 13; 4:1, 6, 12; 5:8; 6:10, 21; 1Th 2:13; 2Ti 3:8; 4:7; Tit 1:13; 3:15; Jude 3).

So, we see that faith is very important. It is the essence of Christianity. It is the vehicle that releases the hand of God upon this earth.

But faith isn't passive it is very active, faith works for us in the following ways:

1. Faith is a shield (Eph 6:16).
2. Faith is our breastplate of righteousness (1Th 5:8).
3. Faith empowers obedience (Rom 1:5, 16:26).
4. Faith enables us to receive forgiveness from sins (Lk 7:50, Ac 15:8-9).
5. Faith enables us to stand (Rom 5:2; 11:20).
6. Through faith we become sons of God (Gal 3:26).
7. Through faith we are sanctified (Ac 26:18).
8. Through faith we are righteous (Rom 1:17; 3:22; 4:5,9, 11; 9:30, 31; Gal 3:11; 5:5; Phil 3:9).
9. Through faith we are justified (Rom 3:24-30; 5:1; Gal 2:16; 3:24; Jas 2:24).
10. Faith enables us to receive salvation (Eph 2:8; 2Ti 3:15).
11. Through faith we have confidence to have fellowship with God (Eph 3:12; Heb 10:22).

12. Through faith Jesus dwells in our (Eph 3:17).
13. Through faith (and patience) we inherit all of God's promises (Heb 6:12).
14. Through faith we please God (Heb 11:6, 39).
15. Through faith we heal the sick (Jas 5:15).
16. Through faith our souls are preserved (Heb 10:39; 1Pt 1:9).
17. Through faith we are protected by God's power for salvation (1Pt 1:5).
18. Through faith we resist the devil (1Pt 5:9).
19. Through faith we are victorious (1Jn 5:4).

Heb 11:1 is a definition of faith:

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

Faith is substance_of things hoped for

Substance [Gk. Hupostasis]; means the foundation, assurance, title - deed, the guarantee
This word is used five times in the New Testament (2Cor 9:4-5; 2Cor 11:17; Heb 1:3; 3:14; 11:1), three times it is translated confidence.

Faith works together with hope

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for

Rom 4:18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."

Rom 5:1-2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Rom 8:24-25 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Faith works through love

Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

1 Cor 13:13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Faith is the evidence_of things not seen

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for,

Evidence [Gk. elegchos] "a proof, proving, test,"

Faith apprehends as a real fact what is not revealed to the senses. It rests on that fact, acts upon it and is upheld by it in the face of all that seems to contradict it. Faith is a real seeing. (from Vincent's Word Studies)

Other translations of this verse

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (New King James Version)

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Revised Standard Version)

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

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

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 (Amplified New Testament)

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)

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

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).

Experts Comments

Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament

Faith is described in Heb 11:1-3. True biblical faith is not an emotional kind of wishful thinking; it is an inner conviction based on the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). In v. 1 the word substance means "assurance" and evidence means "proof." So, when the Holy Spirit gives us faith through the Word, the very presence of that faith in our hearts is all the assurance and evidence we need! Dr. J. Oswald Sanders says, "Faith enables the believing soul to treat the future as present and the invisible as seen." Through faith, we can see what others cannot see (note vv. 1, 3, 7, 13, and 27).

Willmington's Bible handbook

11:1-3, 6 This thing called faith. Having climaxed his presentation of Christ our High Priest by declaring that "a righteous person will live by faith" in him (see 10:38), the author gave several real-life examples of such faith (11). Faith is the "confident assurance" or "substance" of things hoped for and the "evidence" or "proof" of things we cannot yet see. Faith is trust in the unseen, not the unknown (11:3; see 11:27). Faith is necessary for trusting God and accepting his salvation (11:6).

Through faith we gain God's approval.

Heb 11:2 For by it the men of old gained approval.

"gained approval," "obtained a good report"

This is an important word in Hebrews 11, It occurs:

Heb 11:2 For by it the men of old gained approval.

Heb 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

Heb 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

Heb 11:39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

The summary in Hebrews 12:1 calls this list of men and women “so great a cloud of witnesses.” They are witnesses to us because God witnessed to them. In each example cited, God gave witness to that person’s faith. This witness was His divine approval on their lives and ministries. (The Bible exposition commentary; by WW Wiersbe)

Faith is the only thing that pleases God.

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Heb 11:39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

God declares the person of faith justified.

Rom 3:21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

(Rom 5:1, Gal 2:16, 3:24, Jas 2:24)

God declares the person of faith righteous

Romans 4:3-11 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. 8 “BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.” 9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” 10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, (Rom 1:17; 3:22; 9:30-31; Gal 1:1, 5:5, Pil 3:9)