

## Hebrews 11:1-3, 6 - Faith is... Men of Faith Study #1

I think it is very fitting that we are beginning this Men of faith study on 9/11

A) Because 9/11 is about looking back to Remember that horrific day in our nation's history.

B) But it is not enough to just look back and remember - we have to also consider what we learned from that day

1) And apply it to the fabric of our lives

C) That is what Hebrews 11 is about - this chapter is commonly called the Hall of Faith

1) It mentions the lives of OT saints who followed God - who had faith in God - lived for God -

D) Men and women who often went against the grain of culture and their society in order to pursue God

**Hebrews 11 invites us to look back and look at their lives - the good and the bad**

A) To see what we can learn about the life of faith.

B) But if we only look back this will be only an intellectual exercise. -

1) This will only be about information

C) So we need to each week come prepared and surrendered to not only look back to learn

1) But to also be ready apply what we learn from their lives to help us be men of faith.

D) In the coming weeks we will learn from Abel how to be better worshippers of God

1) From Enoch - what it means to walk in intimacy with God

E) We will learn from Noah about being last days believers

We will learn from Abraham about taking steps of faith

A) From Moses about forsaking the world - and living for a heavenly sitting

B) We will learn from Joshua about the faith needed to attempt the impossible - be victorious in battle

C) We will learn from Samuel about hearing God's voice and responding to it.

D) These studies if applied have the potential to shape our lives in profound ways.

E) Tonight is our intro into this series - Title: Faith is

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

6 But 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 diligently seek Him.

Now it is important that we consider this chapter in Context with the whole book of Hebrews

A) And with the verses leading up to this chapter

B) The book of Hebrews is written to Jewish believers in Jesus who because of persecution -

1) were being tempted to abandon their faith

C) Following Jesus was a cost - it cost them - family relationships - ostracized by their families - joined a cult

D) Then as Roman persecution arose in the first century it could cost them their livelihood - lost Jobs

E) Eventually their lives - 100,000's followers of Jesus were martyred under Roman Emperors

So many of these believers were being tempted to forsake Jesus and go back into Judaism

A) So the writer of Hebrews is writing them to encourage them not to do that

B) And his methodology is to point to the fact that everything that they held dear in Judaism was a shadow pointing to Jesus

C) Jesus is better than the angels in relationship to God - Son -

1) Better leader than Moses - Full deliverance - Better High Priest than Aaron - Better Rest than Joshua -

D) Established a Better Covenant

E) Why would you hold on to the shadows .....real thing

1) Analogy my family

**So for 10 Chapters - He is admonishing these people - don't give up keep going - Hang in there.**

A) His admonishment comes to a head in chapter 10 - <sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

B) Guys lets hang in there - lets endure and stir up one another to press in and press forward - as we see the day approaching

C) Time to ramp up not - ramp down  
He continues in V. <sup>35</sup> Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. <sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

<sup>37</sup> *"For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.*

<sup>38</sup> *Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back,*

*My soul has no pleasure in him."*

<sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

This is the context leading into Chapter 11 - Keep going - don't give up don't check out

A) The just shall live by faith!

B) Then in Chapter 11 He is going to give us example after example of what Kept these men in the Hall of faith going

C) What kept Noah going - building an Ark for 120 years - the world never saw rain

1) What kept Abraham going - Moses and Joshua Gideon etc.

D) What was it about their faith that kept them going in the midst of great difficulty and trial -

1) battles and set backs

E) We will learn that what kept them going is what needs to keep us going.

**Here is what is also interesting: Chapter 11 is bookended by this exhortation in Chapter 10**

A) And the example of Jesus in Chapter 12 - How Jesus endured the cross despising the Shame - for the Joy that was set before him.

B) That Joy was a desire to please his father - and to add us to his family!

C) Jesus endured Endure is to not barely make it - Hupomoneo - Conquered - Jesus kept going victoriously -

1) Because he endured we can endure

D) So with that as a back drop let's consider these opening verses to the Hall of Faith

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

A) Warren Wiersbe suggest that Hebrews 11:1 is "not a definition of faith but a description of what faith does and how it works.

B) K. Wuest: Greek scholar translates v.1 this way "Now faith is the title deed of things hoped for, the proof of things which are not being seen."

C) Amplified picks up on that same idea: 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].

Interesting concept - faith is the title deed.

A) If ever Bought a house (surreal right) -

B) Signing all those papers - afterwards - what did we just do? Is this even real?

C) Then you are given the title deed - Your name on it - Owners! - I own this.

D) There is a surety to our faith - We OWN THIS - possess something of infinite value and authority

**Faith is only as good as the object of your faith -**

A) Faith in Man is flimsy at best - faith in finances - fleeting - gone in a moment

B)But Our faith is in almighty God - Faith in his person - His power - His promises

Consider the pillars of our Faith

A)#1 The reliability of the Bible - 2000 yrs - 40 different authors different backgrounds - 3 languages - 3 continents -

B)Controversial subjects - what is life - what happens after we die - how can a man be saved - All the authors say the same thing

C)The Bible is the inspired Word of God - God breathed

So our Faith stands on the reliability of the Word of God

2 For by Faith the elders obtained a good testimony.  
A)Faith has a backward look.

B)It declares that God has done mighty acts in days gone by.

C)Faith also has a forward look. It declares that God can be trusted for the future...

D)The Elders (apostles) and those listed in the Hall of faith obtained a good testimony - they looked back  
1)They moved forward based on what they could see to be true of God in the past.

E)As they moved forward they learned - those things were true of God in the present.

Brain Bell - Faith is learning to live by insight instead of Sight.

Example: My wife and saw the movie Reagan on Friday

A)Moving moment in the movie - 1989 Berlin - MR. Gorbachev - take down this wall.

B)That was the end of communism - well a few months later -

1)Eddie myself Pastor B and 3 others from our church - Invited to go to Eastern Europe

C)6 people from California -- no idea about Eastern Europe how to reach - what were the needs

D)But there was a story in the Bible - that inspired us - 1 Samuel - Jonathan and his armor bearer - doesn't need an army - many or few

1)let's just see what the Lord might want to do!

E)That was our mantra - no agenda - plan - lets just see

1)Tibor - Yugo - monkey place - 2 churches planted - led to around 40 more

Same idea led George Bryson to take 100's of teams into Russia - 10,000's of Russians saved - former Soviet Union

**One of the first Pillars of our faith is the reliability of the Bible - what it tells us about God**

A)He is the same yesterday today and forever.

B)Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word - the more we study - more our faith grows

**C)Pillar #2 is the Power of God**

3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

D)God's power is seen in Creation - The Design speaks of a Designer -

If God can speak this world into existence is there anything that will come up in my life, your life that is too hard from him to do!

A)Faith Believes in a Big God -

B)When you believe in a big God - you are prone to take big steps of faith!

C)Over and over again in the Bible we see people taking big steps of faith because they believe in the power of God

D)Joshua at Jericho - how crazy was that - March and don't talk

E)Gideon and his 300 against 85,000

1)David against Goliath

Faith allows you to take steps that seem irrational because it is attached to a God who can do the impossible.

A)Alexander Maclaren describes Faith as the hand that grasps.

B) We have seen 100 times in movies - the guy is hanging off a cliff or the side of a building

C) The rescuer shows up - says - Grab my hand - I will pull you up!

D) You are grabbing the hand believing that it will hold you and pull you up.

**Our faith is based on the reality that our God has the power to pull us up**

A) The Power of the Resurrection - the power that brought Jesus forth from the grave - is available to you and me - daily lives

B) The Resurrection is probably the Key Pillar of our faith - means everything else is true -

C) I can believe in Creation - because Jesus taught God created the world -

1) Jesus Rose - I can believe him

D) All the key aspects of the faith - Controversial today - Salvation - Marriage - Gender -

1) Jesus taught it - His word was proven by the Resurrection

**PILLAR #3 The Promises of God-** God is the ultimate promise keeper

Believing that God has the power to do what he says he is going to do.

A) Faith is believing that God will keep his promises, despite circumstances that seem to be contrary.

B) WW True Bible faith is not blind optimism or a manufactured "hope-so" feeling.

C) Neither is it an intellectual assent to a doctrine. It is certainly not believing in spite of evidence!

1) That would be superstition.

True Bible faith is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.

D) So it can lead to Taking steps of faith that don't make sense.

E) The Civil War - don't go - Denise says go - really?

1) God blew our minds! Started another church in that city!

There was once a missionary named John Paton - he was seeking to translate the Bible for these South sea islanders

A) He was having a problem trying to find a word in their vocabulary for the word faith or believe

B) He had no idea how he would convey that to them.

C) One day while he was in his hut translating, a native came running up the stairs into Paton's study and flopped in a chair,

1) Exhausted after a long jungle hunting excursion.

He said to Paton "It's so good to stretch myself out and rest my whole weight in this chair."

**D) In that moment - John Paton had his word: Faith is resting your whole weight on God.**

Key passages like Acts 16:31 which says - Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

A) Was translated - "Stretch yourself out" on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved (Acts 16:31).

B) John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever "stretches out" on Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)

C) That word went into the translation of their New Testament and helped bring that civilization of natives to Christ.

Faith is putting your whole weight on God. If God said it, then it's true, and we're to believe it.

A) Promise believers vs Promise Keepers

B) The Emphasis is on him.

C) John MacArthur "The person of faith lives his belief. His life is committed to what his mind and spirit are convinced is true."

**Pillar #4 The Love of God**

A) God is with us - God is for us.

B) Romans 8<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

“What then shall we say to all these things? If God is for us, who can be [successful] against us? He who did not spare [even] His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?” Romans 8:31-32  
AMP

C) This is why the Love of God is a pillar - the more you understand how much he loves you -  
1) the more inclined you will be to trust him.

D) Cast all your cares upon him - because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:8

Ok - I know that God is all powerful - I know that he can do anything - but does he really care about me?

A) Yes he gave you Jesus - his very best - he will give you all things

B) The more you know Him - walk with him the more you will trust him

C) The More you trust him the more you will follow him -

D) The more you will be willing to take steps of faith.

My Problem: God can do anything - But does he want to do that for me!

A) That doubt can hinder me from taken steps of faith

B) Another thing that hinders me is - in my mind I think I know how God should perform

C) Blessings - if I do X and Y God is going to do Z

D) What I am learning is that God's ways are higher than mine - different than mine

He is writing a better story!

A) One of the great Joys in my life is getting to encourage other pastors

B) 35 plus years ago - Greg O - Pastor to Pastors

C) Cohort ? Step of faith - 6 guys - representing over 3000 people

D) This time 8 guys -

E) March Conference -

6 But 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 diligently seek Him.

### **Diligently is with Maximum effort**

A) Let's be men who are stirring up each other to go for it with Jesus

B) Faith - Forsaking All I Trust Him  
Do we trust God?

A) Trust him for Provision enough to tithe?

B) Trust him enough to step out in faith - when he calls us to do

C) Now of course there are going to be times when our faith falters

D) We fail - Peter walking on Water - But hey he walked on water

E) Don't want to be reckless - but at the same time I don't want to play it safe.

1) Risk takers for Jesus