

“What Is Faith?”

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. **2** For by it the elders obtained a good report. (KJV)

The Bible speaks to this subject in several areas.

Peace and Hope

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4** perseverance, character; and character, hope. **5** And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Faith in Action

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about 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 brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel 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.

2 Corinthians 5:5 Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. **6** Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. **7** For we live by faith, not by sight. **8** We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. **9** So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. **10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Romans 10:10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. **11** As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” **12** For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, **13** for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Now with all of this emphasis on faith, it would be a good idea to fully understand the word and all of its implications.

Would you agree?

Noah Webster's (1828) dictionary defines **Faith** as, "Belief; the assent (agreement, acceptance or approval) of the mind to the truth of what is declared by another, resting on his authority and veracity (truth), without other evidence." Therefore, the "Evangelical, justifying, or saving faith, is the assent of the mind to the truth of divine revelation, on the authority of God's testimony, accompanied with a pleasant and warm acceptance of the will or admiration of the heart...to his guidance, and dependence on his merits for salvation. In other words, that firm belief of God's Testimony, and of the truth of the gospel, which influences the will, and leads to a total and complete reliance, trust and confidence on Christ for Salvation."

My brothers and sisters, **Saving Faith** then is believing what God says in **His Word** is true to the point that it influences "**your will**".

Church, in the Book of James, he agrees with this statement, and repeats it twice as he says, in James the second chapter.

Faith and Deeds

James 2:14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? **15** Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. **16** If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? **17** In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. **18** But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. **19** You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Biblical Example and Evidence of this Principle

20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? **21** Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? **22** You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. **23** And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. **24** You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

Faith in Action (Review)

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. **2** For by it the elders obtained a good report. **3** Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. **4** By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. **5** By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. **6** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (KJV)

My friends, in high schools around the world, "Science" classes teach that a "substance" is something that exists on its own without support or any external power. Thus, when it says in verse 2 "A good report", means that it was observable (visible, noticeable, apparent, and recognizable)."

Would you agree?

Now let's plug-in the definitions of these words into the verse. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for" that is, "Faith is [something in us that is visible and exists on its own without any effort from us because] of things hoped for." Yes, **Galatians 2:16** says, "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. "

My brothers and sisters, to say then that faith is the substance of things hoped for is to say that "Saving Faith" is the visible affect Christ has had on our lives (the change that occurs) because we have believed God and are looking forward to His interpretation, that is His revelations, disclosures, and eye-openers of history and things to come. You see, Faith is what keeps us believing God simply (and often only) because He said it, regardless of how hopeless the circumstances look around us. Yes, Faith declares that if nobody else gives God the glory, I must! Because I know God changed my heart like nobody ever has or could.

(Can I Get An Amen?)

Saints of God, if you believe that playing in the street is dangerous, you will keep your kids out of the street for their own safety – even though you may have personally never seen a child hurt playing in the street. But you have believed the reports of others and "by faith" you keep kids out of the street. When you believe God, you act like that. You act like Him because you believe Him and His Word to be true. Likewise, when someone puts their faith in the Bible, the Bible is read, loved and believed.

(Do You Believe?)

Church, the Bible's definition of faith is found in Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

You see my friends, "Faith" can't be seen, but there is evidence it exists. Church we can't see the wind, but we know it's there because we can hear and see it blowing through the trees. In like manner, faith can be 'seen' by the substance of the change it produces in our lives. For example, drunks become sober and as a result, filthy language stops; tempers that used to flare are brought under control; they begin to read their Bibles, and in turn, give their employer an honest day's work and love their spouses with an all-inclusive Love. You see, the substance of these changes point to what caused them to change: that is "Faith in God".

The phrase, "evidence of things not seen," is another way to say the same thing. Faith is the proof in your life of some obvious, but unseen-to-the-naked-eye force! It is this "proof" that encourages us to go on and convinces others of the reality of Jesus' saving power. They say if, "He changed someone else's life dramatically, then He can change mine also!" Saints that is why when a person truly gets saved his or her life will change.

2 Corinthians. 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new".

For that reason, their walk, their talk, the clothes they wear (as modesty returns), the music they listen to, their habits are changed. Yes their entire life style changes. They actually start to like church. Now to some that's a scary thought!

Why?

Church, this is what Jesus was speaking of when He said in the **Sermon on the Mount**, in;

Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.”

He was saying, “Let the world see the substance and evidence of faith in your life.”

My brothers and sisters, the Gospel is God’s command to us to believe on His only begotten Son and we are to come to Him based upon His command to do so. Yes, we are guilty of sinning against a Holy God whether we feel like it or not – and besides we are all more guilty than any of us have any idea of. We can become so good at what we do, so educated in what we know, so financially secure in our resources that we don’t need God. When you bring to God your fullness, He will resist you. But the Bible says that He gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

As I come to a close, we will never understand why some people reject the Word of God, because it was ‘written by men’ based upon what other writers (who are also men) have said. The **Devil** is certainly wise like a fox and it is only the Word of God that produces **Saving Faith**.

Romans 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Therefore, if we are to receive the best God has to offer, we must read the Word of God for ourselves, hear the Word of God by going to church, listening recordings, and viewing messages through various forms of media, but most importantly, we must believe the Word of God. His Eternal Word.

The Eternal Word

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. **4** In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Church, He, Jesus Christ is the **Living Word**.

The Word Becomes Flesh

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. **15** John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’” **16** And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. **17** For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

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