

## Sermon Outline – Sunday, December 01, 2013

**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. 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...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. - Heb. 11:1-3, 6**

I moved past a couple of specific instances referred to as to what role faith played in the actions and outcomes of a couple of the heroes of the faith – I will return to those blessed concepts shortly.

Faith is first called here **the substance of things hoped for**:

Gill suggests that 'faith' here spoken of is not:

- A mere moral virtue
- A bare assent to anything revealed, declared or affirmed in the Gospel
- A mere profession of faith (which sometimes is but temporary)
- The word or doctrine of faith

It is that by which the just man lives – and which has the salvation of the soul annexed to it. It is a confident persuasion, expectation, and assurance of the power, faithfulness and love of God in Christ. The Syriac renders the word 'substance' as 'certainty,' or what gives anything an existence, whether physical or mental. And so with respect to the faith and hope of the Old Testament saints, the certainty of the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, his resurrection, ascension, and session at God's right hand, are spoken of, as if they then were. And so are the certainty of heaven, and glory, and everlasting salvation, with regard to the faith and hope of New Testament saints: yea, faith gives a kind of possession of those things beforehand.

Faith is now called **the evidence of things not seen**. Of this Gill suggests it is the certainty:

- Of things done in the council halls of eternity: The Covenant forged and agreed upon by the triune God.

- Of things done in time, in creation, in providence: of the birth, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.
- Of things present: the being, perfection & love of God, the session of Christ at God's right hand, His continual intercession for His elect
- Of things future: the invisible realities of another world, of eternity spent in heaven, in the presence and adoration of our merciful God.

The faith spoken of here has both certainty and evidence in it. That's Gill.

**It is through this faith that 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.** And you can see cosmic dust and cosmic gas, if you look really, really close. One night, many years ago, I was watching Nova on PBS (for you young people, that's a tv channel that you can watch and learn things, if you can stomach the intermittent leftist fag-speak). Anyway, they had on there some old geezer who had apparently, in his hayday, been a bigshot proponent of the Big Bang theory – which is, in essence, the idea that the universe was created by a super-huge implosion; that large clouds of cosmic dust and gas swirled and compacted, over and over, until 'Big Bang' and ta-dah. So they asked him the question of the Big Bang Theory that any third grader is prone to ask, namely – where did the cosmic dust and cosmic gas come from? And that old geezer, knowing the folly of his problem with infinite regress (or, of breaking in somewhere in the middle of the story – never being able to explain the BEGINNING OF IT) – like:

**In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. - Gen. 1:1**

– He said, 'Well, when you found that...you've found God.' Thanks, Einstein.

We don't wonder where we came from – we don't really wonder where ANYTHING came from. We may not know every subtle nuance, but we understand the important parts. That makes us ignorant? That makes us backwards? No. That is a fantastic mental capacity that the Lord has bestowed upon us, and through it we understand things. The Holy Spirit of God, through Solomon, expressed the endless lack of understanding, through man's faithless intelligence, as set against the wisdom of the man of faith, thusly:

**And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books *there is no end*; and much study *is a weariness of the flesh*. – Eccl. 12:12**

What that means, beloved, in a free translation, is that you can study every philosophical and theological doctrine, system, ideology known to man, and all it's gonna do is make you chase your tail, so to speak. You're not gonna get anywhere. You'll learn and learn and learn – but you'll never come to a knowledge of the truth - because God didn't give you faith. The man of faith KNOWS, when he cuts through the clatter of his own folly, that the conclusion of the whole matter – that is, the matter of the purpose of one's life, is to:

**Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is the whole duty* of man.  
– Eccl. 12:13**

The man of faith is CERTAIN that:

**(for) God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be good*, or whether *it be evil*. – Eccl. 12:14**

Faith is a certainty of these things most grave – it is the way, or means, or instrument through which God causes His people to enjoy and to live in full recognition of their salvation. Consider the scripture:

**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God*: - Eph. 2:8**

Gill has some powerful things to say, here, beloved – certainly worth our time:

*For by grace are ye saved; This is to be understood, not of temporal salvation, nor of preservation in Christ, nor of providential salvation in order to calling, and much less of being put in a way of salvation, or only in a salvable state; but of spiritual salvation, and that actual; for salvation was not only resolved upon, contrived and secured in the covenant of grace, for the persons here spoken to, but it was actually obtained and wrought out for them by Christ, and was actually applied unto them by the Spirit; and even as to the full enjoyment of it, they had it in faith and hope; and because of the certainty of it, they are said to be already saved; and besides, were representatively possessed of it in Christ their head: those*

*interested in this salvation, are not all mankind, but particular persons; and such who were by nature children of wrath, and sinners of the Gentiles; and it is a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, its curse and condemnation, and from eternal death, and wrath to come; and includes all the blessings of grace and glory; and is entirely owing to free grace: for by grace is not meant the Gospel, nor gifts of grace, nor grace infused; but the free favour of God, to which salvation in all its branches is ascribed; as election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and eternal glory:*

*through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; salvation is through faith, not as a cause or condition of salvation, or as what adds anything to the blessing itself; but it is the way, or means, or instrument, which God has appointed, for the receiving and enjoying it, that so it might appear to be all of grace; and this faith is not the produce of man's free will and power, but it is the free gift of God; and therefore salvation through it is consistent with salvation by grace; since that itself is of grace, lies entirely in receiving grace and gives all the glory to the grace of God: the sense of this last clause may be, that salvation is not of ourselves; it is not of our desiring nor of our deserving, nor of our performing, but is of the free grace of God.*

Faith is the state of mind of a man who lives in full recognition of and hopeful, humble anticipation of his salvation. Salvation from what? An eternal sentence in hell! If you're saved from it, who isn't? Most men who ever lived! Is there anything they can do about it? No! Then why am I saved from it? The free grace, or favour of God, having nothing to do with meritless you – because it pleased him to manifest His power and glorify His name in this manner – from eternal ages past. Oh!

Take a minute to get past the reeling from the bigness of that, beloved, and we see clearly that faith is amongst the greatest of all gifts while we walk this waste howling wilderness. God could have saved some men without giving them the capacity of living in full knowledge and recognition of that salvation in their lives. But He chose to glorify His name in a much richer manner – a full, complex manner that no mere mind of man could devise. The faith that He bestows upon His sheep, from age to age, is another manifestation of His glory – His power. Base, despised nobodies living in full recognition of their worthlessness, and yet quickened by the certainty and hopeful anticipation of their salvation and thrilled

to the marrow on loving thoughts of their Messiah, their Redeemer, and all that is both expressed and implied by that salvation, living their lives of faith in the presence of all men – for both their contemporaries and all men who follow after them to see – either to their eternal delight and adoration, or to their eternal shame, the glorification of God’s Holy name through the faith of His saints. So those blessed saints mentioned in Hebrews 11 did what they did in full recognition, understanding and certainty of their salvation by His grace, having nothing to do with their own merit or will – or, by their faith. So when you read of those heroes of the faith in Hebrew 11, young people, plug in a good working definition of faith (for example):

***(Because he lived in full recognition, understanding and certainty of his salvation by God’s grace, having nothing to do with his own merit or will), 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. – Heb. 11:4***

Same with Enoch. Noah. Abraham. Sara. Isaac. Jacob. Joseph. Moses. Rahab. And all the rest. Plug it in.

That, beloved, is the faith that God has given us. The faith. The mindset of a person who knows that their Redeemer liveth. What more valuable token of our salvation is possible than being given the capacity to live in full recognition of that salvation? And this faith is exclusive. A man who is not the apple of God’s eye – the object of His eternal affection and pardon – cannot claim faith. Sure, he can bastardize that word – that old, crusty, hell-bound serpent can attempt to cheapen and confuse its meaning in the minds of the worldlings – but it’s a fool’s errand. They claim to have faith, but it is a wholly illegitimate claim – a fraud of the highest order.

**But without faith, it is impossible to please him... – Heb. 11:6**

The scariest of all situations, beloved. Very euphemistically put by the apostle. When there’s no pleasing God, the stamp of His great wrath abides upon you; not just for a little while, but eternally – going back and forward. Moses, in what we know as ‘The Song of Moses,’ foretold those thankless, faithless Jews what was

ahead for them, and he thus spoke to every thankless, faithless generation. Consider the scripture:

**And he (the Lord) said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.  
– Deut. 32:20**

And why did they not have faith? Surely, each one of them saw the plagues of Egypt skip over their houses – they saw the works of the Angel of Death, and their pardon from it – He having passed over their houses to kill the firstborn of every Egyptian house. They saw, with their own eyes, the manna falling from the sky in their time of hunger. They saw the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night leading them on. Yet they had no faith. God didn't give it to them. He gave them no full recognition, understanding or certainty of their salvation. It was impossible for them to live in that awareness, and therefore it was impossible for them to please God.

Hey phony Christians! All the conferences and books and W.W.J.D. bracelets in the world won't get you an ounce of faith. Hey phony religionists of the world! You are a faithless and froward generation. You have no faith. It is an exclusive gift from God – faith is not the mere belief in the existence in God. The devils know of God's existence, and tremble. *God's gonna hide His face from you* – a severe meiosis, or understatement for effect – for the notion that He doesn't care about you – His merciful gaze is not fixed upon you. *He will see what your end shall be.* Again, a severe meiosis – He knows exactly what your end will be. He fashioned it. And right now, He's glorifying His name by evidencing His longsuffering with all you vessels fitted for destruction. But here's your end – you're going to hell!

Blaise Pascal was a 15<sup>th</sup> century mathematician and philosopher – many of our younger computer types will have heard the name, as an early computer language was based upon some of his math work. He was also famous for noting that most people believe in God just in case He exists. It's called Pascal's Wager. The idea is that if you don't say you believe in God, and He exists, then maybe woops. If, on the other hand, you say you believe in God, and He doesn't exist, then no harm no foul. What utter drivel. And yet, Pascal's Wager is an apt description of the shallow, foul water that these people wade in.

**...for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. – Heb. 11:6**

The Lord, in His mercy, gives us the certainty that He is not only a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (again, not of our will, but of God's bestowment of saving faith upon our minds and hearts), but by implication here and explicitly throughout the scripture that He is the Destroyer of those who DO NOT diligently seek Him.

**And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? – Luke 6:46**

**This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. – Matt. 15:8**

Hey phony Christian (and by that I mean 'Christian'), You think the Lord is just pointing out, as brilliant, coffee shop conversation, that you're phony? Just as he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, He is a Destroyer of those who don't.

Living in full recognition, understanding and certainty of the reward – that's faith. No one but God's elect can lay claim to it. It is ours, beloved. Exclusively. You hear us Joel Osteen? Rick Warren? Kenneth Copeland? Joyce Meyer? Pope Francis? Billions of phony, lying Christians around the globe? You're faithless. Your notions of God and religion are dangerous, mindless child's play. NO man can claim faith, or salvation, for himself – and no man can bestow salvation upon another man. And no man who has a sincere claim of faith will claim universal salvation. If everyone is saved, then what are they saved from or for? You have no gravity – no sobriety - you have no full recognition, understanding or certainty of salvation – because God never gave it to you. It's the pinnacle of folly for any one of you to say that you have faith or that you are saved. A man of faith will have outward, encouraging fruit to like-minded and like-hearted men. Hence, the heroes of the faith, for faith without works is dead – or not really faith at all. And this is the object of their faith, and of ours:

**Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. – Heb. 12:2**

Gill says here: *Not with bodily eyes, for at present he is not to be looked upon in this manner, but with the eye of the understanding, or with the eye of faith; for faith is a seeing of the Son; it is a spiritual sight of Christ, which is at first but glimmering, afterwards it increases, and is of a soul humbling nature; it is marvellous and surprising; it transforms into the image of Christ, and fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:*

*and he is to be considered, and looked unto, as "the author and finisher of faith": he is the author or efficient cause of it; all men are by nature without it; it is not in the power of man to believe of himself; it is a work of omnipotence; it is an instance of the exceeding greatness of the power of God; and it is the operation of Christ, by his Spirit; and the increase of it is from him, and he is the finisher of it; he gives himself, and the blessings of his grace, to his people, to maintain and strengthen it; he prays for it, that it fail not; he carries on the work of faith, and will perform it with power; and brings to, and gives that which is the end of it, eternal life, or the salvation of the soul.*

Beloved, the marvelousness of the gift of our faith – the capacity given unto us by God to live in full recognition, understanding and certainty of the concept of salvation and see it applied to us, by His grace, is a token sufficient to get us through the most trying of times and the most onerous of obstacles, and we are given fantastic examples, in Hebrews 11, of the work of faith not only in His saints, but also as a manifestation of God glorifying His name. As we look at each other, and see the claims of that faith unto salvation written on our lives – in our words and manner of life – how ought we to treat each other? And we are perhaps, amazingly, amongst the only souls alive in this perverse generation who can lay claim to that faith. Praise be unto God. Amazing stuff.

**In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. - Luke 10:21**

I love you all. Amen