



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

FAITHFUL YET FLAWED FAITH THAT SEES THE UNSEEN • HEBREWS 11:1-6 •

MAIN POINT

Faith is believing the Word of God and acting upon it no matter how I feel because God promises a good result.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What's the difference between doubt and disbelief? Why is it important to know that difference?

Where did you see doubt creep into your life this week? How did you recognize and fight against it?

Faith is not part of the Christian life; it's the whole thing. In fact, faith is so integral to the Christian life that it can be boiled down to a practical definition—believing the Word of God and acting upon it no matter how you feel because God promises a good result.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Think about that definition of faith. Is that how you would describe it? Why or why not?

What are some of the practical ways your faith affects your daily decisions?

As Pastor Phil showed us, faith is the center of the Christian life. There is nothing we do, say, or anything else untouched by our faith. For that reason, we must make it our aim to move forward in an attitude of faith and not doubt.

Faith is first and foremost an active confidence the person and work of Jesus. Why is God's Word essential to a life of faith?

Does the way you treat the Bible display this importance? How?

Faith also involves action. Why is it important to see that faith is active in nature?

Faith also is not dependent on our feelings. What happens when we rely on our feelings too much?

If we don't read, know, and believe the Word of God then our faith will always be shaky because we won't have a firm foundation. In addition, faith always has an active posture. Our actions are the demonstration of whether or not we truly believe the promises of God. And faith is often exercised contrary to what we are feeling at a given moment. That's because our faith is based on truth, not on our own hearts which will often lie to us. We see this definition of faith expanded in Hebrews 11:1-6.

| READ HEBREWS 11:1-6.

Where do you see the different components of that definition in these verses?

Why must we recognize that faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain about the unseen?

What good reward waits for those who have faith?

These verses show us the primacy of faith for the Christian. Without faith, we absolutely cannot please God. That's because faith displays confidence in who God is and what He can do. For all those who choose to walk the road of faith, God promises a great reward. That reward is better than money, power, or comfort; the reward of faith is to more intimately know and relate to God Himself.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What are some active things you can do to grow your faith?

How important is community in developing your faith? What are some ways we can help each other's faith grow?

PRAYER

As you close your group, pray that the Lord would change your attitude. Thank God that our faith is not blind, but instead is rooted in His character. Ask Him to grow the faith of your group so that you might seek Him all the more.

COMMENTARY

| HEBREWS 11:1-6

11:1-2. In verse 1, we find a good, biblical definition of faith. Faith has always marked God's people and their relationship to God. Indeed, faith marks the difference between a person's receiving God's approval (salvation) or His wrath against sin (destruction).

Faith on the one hand is the reality of what is hoped for. Faith is a firm conviction concerning the promises of God, an unyielding confidence that He will do what He says He will do. On the other hand, faith is the proof of what is not seen. Faith endures even when a particular promise of God does not come to pass on our timetable. We live by faith as Christians because our faith rests in Him, not in ourselves or in our abilities.

11:3. Verse 3 drives us back to the beginning of creation. Although none of us were alive and present with God when He created the universe, we believe He is the Creator. We can't fully explain the "how" of God's creative work, but we believe, as Genesis 1-2 teaches, that God spoke the words and what He spoke came into existence.

11:4. The writer began his list of faith's heroes with Abel, whose story intertwines with that of his brother, Cain, and is found in Genesis 4. In obedience to God, the first human family, Adam and Eve, bore children. Their first two children were Cain and Abel. After the boys grew up and began working to support themselves, they each decided to present an offering to the Lord God. Cain, a farmer, made an offering to God out of that which he had grown. Abel, however, was a shepherd; he brought some of his firstborn animals as an offering to God. The record in Genesis 4 then reveals simply that the Lord approved of Abel and his offering but had no regard for Cain and his offering (see Gen. 4:4-5).

The inspired writer of Hebrews helps us to understand why the Lord responded as He did to the two men and their offerings. The Lord knew the condition of Abel's heart was that

of humble faith and obedience. Therefore Abel was approved as a righteous man. The Lord also knew what was in Cain's heart—or, more precisely, what was missing from Cain's heart. Cain revealed the absence of genuine faith in his heart by his subsequent actions. He was filled with a jealous rage that led him to slaughter his brother. Cain committed this murderous act despite the Lord's merciful warning to Cain about his anger (see Gen. 4:6-7).

Cain's act of ruthless violence displayed the stark difference between a heart of faith towards God (Abel) and a heart without faith and guided by sin. A sacrificial offering was Abel's outward expression of faith, while anger and murder were the expressions of Cain's unbelief. Actions reveal the true condition of the heart. Abel was a righteous man, and the righteous live by faith (see Heb 10:38). His testimony of faithfulness and obedience still serve as an example to us today.

11:5. Next, we come to the example of Enoch in verse 5. Enoch is briefly mentioned in Genesis 5:19-24 as one of the descendants of Seth (Adam's son who was born after Abel's death). Enoch was the son of a man called Jared and the father of Methuselah [mih THOOZ uh luh], whose fame was that of living to be 969 years old (the oldest person in the Bible)! Enoch's fame, on the other hand, was recalled more in spiritual terms. He "walked with God," meaning that he trusted in God and lived in continual obedience to Him. Enoch didn't have to experience physical death; God simply took him. Again, the writer of Hebrews helps us understand that it was by Enoch's faith that he found favor with God. Like Abel, Enoch demonstrated his faith in God through a life of righteousness. Likewise, both men's responses of faith serve as examples for us today. A heart that has been converted by the power and grace of God revealed in Christ is the same regardless of when the person lives. Faith is and always has been the response that God approves.

11:6. Having presented a definition of faith and two examples of it, the writer of Hebrews then drew an important conclusion about true, saving faith. Simply put, faith pleases God; therefore, not having faith makes pleasing God impossible! Logically, if people are to draw near to God, they must believe that He actually exists. Biblical faith believes certain and specific truths about God, truths He revealed and preserved in the Scriptures. God is not just a vague notion of "the man upstairs." He is the Everlasting Creator and Redeemer who has revealed Himself to us in His perfect Word.