

A Matter of Faith

Hebrews 11:1-6

I. Intro

A. *How many of you came to church this morning?*

1. If you did, you came by faith.

B. *You didn't even think about it, did you?*

1. You had faith that your alarm clock would work this morning.
2. You had faith that your clothes would fit this morning.
3. You had faith that your car would crank this morning.
4. You had faith that all the cars you met would stay on their side of the road.
5. You had faith that the road would not fall apart.
6. You had faith that the bridges would hold up your car.

C. *We all exercise some type of faith every day of our lives.*

1. But is our faith placed in the right places and people?
2. Where should our faith be placed?

II. What is faith?

A. *Definition*

1. Faith makes the things hoped for as real as if we already have them.
2. Faith provides evidence that what is unseen is absolutely real.
3. Faith is the confidence in the worthiness and ability of someone or something.
4. Faith is setting your heart on the object of your hope and your confidence.

B. *The Object of Faith*

1. Inadequate objects of faith

- a. Science, Technology.
- b. False Gods: money, security, wealth, other people.
- c. Ourselves.

2. Adequate object of faith

- a. God.

C. *Proper faith in God.*

1. Believe that He exists.
2. Believe that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

III. Examples of Faith

A. *Abel (Read Genesis 4:2-5)*

1. Both gave an offering to the Lord.
2. God rejected Cain's offering but accepted Abel's offering.
3. Why?
4. Hebrews 11:4 says Abel gave his offering to God by faith.
5. It was a matter of the heart.
6. Cain offered SOME, carelessly, showing his heart.
7. Abel offered the FIRST, in faith, showing his heart.
8. Cain made sure Cain was taken care of, so he kept the first of the crops, and then gave to God.
9. Cain's faith was in Cain.
10. Abel gave off the top.
11. He had hope and confidence in God that He would take care of what came afterward.

B. *What can we learn from Abel?*

1. **Faith is a matter of the heart.**
 - a. Cain knew God existed.
 - b. Cain talked to God.
 - c. But Cain didn't trust God.
 - d. He knew God was there but he didn't have any hope, any confidence, any faith in God.
 - e. He made an attempt at faith but his heart wasn't in it.
 - f. Abel knew that God existed.
 - g. And his actions showed it.
 - h. He was willing to place his faith and future in the hands of God.
2. **Your faith is a matter of your heart.**
 - a. You may believe that God exists.
 - b. But He may not be first in your life.
 - c. Where is your hope, your confidence, your faith at right now?
 - d. Who, or what, are you trusting today, and for the future?
 - e. Is it in yourself?
 - f. Is it in your own abilities?
 - g. Is your life a testimony to faith in God?
 - h. Who has your heart today?

C. *Enoch (Read Genesis 5:21-24)*

1. We find Enoch in just a few verses of Genesis.
2. He is found in the human family tree.
3. He falls between his father Jared and his son Methuselah.
4. **But he is unique for two particular reasons.**
 - a. He is described as a man, unlike any other in this passage, that walked with God.
 - b. And he is only one of two men ever who did not die.
 - c. Hebrews gives us a little more insight into Enoch's life.
 - d. Enoch went straight to heaven because he pleased God.
 - e. This happened by faith.
 - f. Enoch walked with God by faith.
 - g. And he pleased God because of his faith.

D. *What can we learn from Enoch?*

1. **Faith affects our walk.**
 - a. Enoch walked with God.
 - b. He lived everyday of his life with total absolute confidence in God.
 - c. Where we place our faith affects our walk.
 - d. When we have faith in ourselves, it affects the way we live.
 - e. We live for ourselves, selfishly and uncaring for others.
 - f. We are the object of our affection and we'll do anything to protect our affection.
 - g. We are our only hope so we've got to do whatever it takes.
 - h. People who only have faith in themselves are cutthroats and backstabbers, because everything depends on them and what they can do to survive.
 - i. When we have absolute confidence, absolute hope, in God, it will affect the way we live.
 - j. When we trust in the God of promises, we'll live in a way to reach those promises.
 - k. When we trust in the God of discipline and judgement, we will live in a way that keeps us from the that discipline and judgement.
 - l. We are able to live in a fallen world full of cutthroats and backstabbers, because we trust in someone who is bigger and more powerful than them.
 - m. We live as pilgrims, just passing through, because our confidence and hope is not in this world, the things of this world, or the people of this world.
 - n. Our confidence and hope, our faith, is in God.

2. Faith pleases God.

- a. God saw how Enoch lived.
- b. He saw how he walked in a sin-filled world.
- c. He saw that Enoch lived by faith in Him.
- d. God knew Enoch's heart was turned toward Him.
- e. God knew Enoch was trusting in Him every step of the way.
- f. And that pleased God.
- g. Our dependence and confidence in God pleases Him.
- h. He loves to see us living by faith and not by sight.
- i. He loves to see that our hearts are totally committed to Him and His ways.
- j. He loves to see us react to life with confidence and hope in Him.

IV. So Biblical faith . . .

A. *True Biblical Faith is . . .*

1. Confidence in the worthiness and ability of God.
2. Setting your heart on God.
3. Knowing that what has not yet happened is good as done in God.

B. *Questions of faith:*

1. Is your heart set on God?
2. Is your faith affecting how you live?
3. Is your faith pleasing God?

C. *We are saved, through faith.*

1. "For by grace you have been saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8).
2. "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).
3. We trust that God has done is sufficient, in the person of Jesus Christ.
4. Our confidence is in Jesus Christ.

V. Sometimes our faith is tested.

A. *Things happen in life that test our faith.*

1. Our confidence in the worthiness and ability of God is tested.
2. Setting our hearts solely on God is tested.

3. Believing that what has not yet happened is as good as done is tested.
4. What do we need to know to face the testing of our faith?

VI. We need to know that the testing of our faith is going to happen.

A. *We have to expect the testing of our faith.*

1. The Bible says "when" or "whenever", not IF.
2. "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation" (John 16:33).
3. "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).
4. "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you" (1 Peter 4:12).

B. *Testing of our faith is going to happen.*

1. There is no way around it.
2. We're going to get sick.
3. We're going to have accidents.
4. We're going to face tragedies.
5. We're going to have hard times.
6. We're going to face the hard times of life.
7. Satan is going to fight against us.
8. The world is going to fight against us.

C. *Our faith will be tested.*

1. Our confidence in God will be tested.
2. Our hearts will be tested.
3. Our knowledge of God's promises for the future will be tested.

VII. We need to know that our values will determine our reactions to the testing of our faith.

A. *What we're made of comes out in the tests of our faith.*

1. If we value comfort more than character, tests will upset us.
2. If we value material and physical things more than spiritual things, tests will crush us.
3. If we live for the present and not think about the future, tests will make us bitter.

VIII. We need to know that God has a purpose for the testing of our faith.**A. *The tests of faith do not surprise God.***

1. He allows the tests for a reason.
2. He allows them so that we can see just where our faith is at.
3. He allows them so that we can see that our faith is genuine.
4. He allows them so that we know that God is working something out of us.

B. *The story of gold.*

1. They say that back in the gold rush days there was a procedure taken.
2. When someone found what they thought was gold, they took it to a person called an assayer.
3. The assayer will build a very hot fire.
4. Then he will place the suspected gold over the fire.
5. While the assumed gold is over the fire, the assayer puts acid on it.
6. How it reacts to the fire and acid reveals whether it is really gold or just a fake.

C. *God has a purpose for the tests of our faith.*

1. God is trying to purify your heart.
2. He is teaching you to persevere, to be patient.
3. He is teaching you to cling to Him when things get tough.
4. He is helping you become a mature Christian.
5. He is helping you become a complete Christian.

D. *The purpose of the testing of our faith:*

1. To build our confidence in the worthiness and ability of God.
2. To assure our hearts that God is sufficient.
3. To fortify our hope that what God has promised, He will do.

This sermon is by [Rob Westbrook](#).

This sermon comes from the book *Sermon Outlines for Busy Pastors: Volume 2*. You can find out more about this book and all books in the series at <http://busypastorsermons.com>.

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