

“It’s Impossible!”

Hebrews 11:1-6

Intro. – I was coming down the southwest stairway at the New Reid Hospital from the fourth floor. As I was coming down there is a window looking out over the new facilities... On the ledge right up against the window area is a sign that reads – “Do Not Step.” Must confess I was/continue to be tempted to *step*. Why is that? When we are told to NOT do something or that something is *impossible* we become all the more resolved to do...!

I’m now going to give a few items that are classified as *impossible*. Listen carefully and see if they make any sense AND if they make you interested in doing and/or proving them wrong:

1. It’s impossible to eat celery and gain weight – Takes more calories to chew/eat celery than has to give..
2. It’s impossible to use more energy smiling than frowning – Takes 17 muscles smile... 43 to frown...
3. It’s impossible to break a chicken egg when held in the human hand in a certain position – Takes more g-forces than human hand can generate when held in back part of the hand...
4. It’s impossible to count to 1.5 billion by ones in a lifetime – Takes 30/40 years of 24/7 counting to almost reach a billion let alone a billion and a half...
5. It’s impossible to fold in half any size paper eight or more times – Takes more force than possible to generate the eighth fold...

Now, I am sure there are those who would like to prove any and perhaps all of these possible... Let me use this to illustrate how difficult it is to accept the *impossible* even with the facts before us!

All of this brings us to the point of this message. Our text uses the term *impossible*. It says “...it is *impossible to please God...*” I left a little something out, didn’t I? “*Without faith it is impossible to please God...*” How often do men, women and young people try to disprove this fact?

Purpose: to better understand the deep importance of faith in our lives

What would our lives be like should you and I be without faith in God? Would there be any difference if faith in God were void in our lives? How can we be so sure one way or the other?

Through this text, together we will look at three vital aspects of faith in God. By doing so, you and I will better understand the deep significance of faith in God being in the center of our lives:

I DEFINING Faith

- in referring to *faith* there are two aspects the Bible uses to define it:

A. Faith is Assent

1. *Assent* = intellectual acceptance or judgment... i.e. taking the facts and coming to a conclusion...
2. All of us are called upon to exercise our faith in this sense:
 - a. George Washington was our first President... he crossed the Delaware river... was shot...
 - b. when you fill your car with gasoline is it really gas and are you sure you’re getting the amount for which you paid?
3. Why do we accept these and more? – because of the sufficiency of evidence
 - a. reasonable people believe something is true based on the evidence
 - b. you believe George Washington was our first President why? Evidence demands conclusion...
4. Evidence for faith in Christ, His Word and His Church is based on the evidence:
 - a. Mark 2:1-12 – 4 friends bring a friend lame all his life to Jesus. Jesus says, “*Son, your sins are forgiven you.*”...
 - b. John 20:30-31 “*Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*”
 - c. His own resurrection declared the clarity of all which Jesus claimed...!

Thus, faith pleasing to God, is believing in Him and the claims He has made based on the evidence. But, is this all? NO, even the demons have this much “faith” (James 2:19). Thus, faith pleasing to God is more than simply believing.

B. Faith is Trust

1. This is the decision of the will to commit one's whole being to Christ as Lord:
 - a. this is a decision of surrender to Christ – His will rather than your will...
 - b. this is an attitude of confidence, reliance and dependence upon Christ for Who He claims to be and what He claims to have accomplished on our behalf...
2. The difference between assent (believing) and trust:
 - Illus. – French tight-rope artist Charles Blondin (real name Jean Francois Gravelot) made numerous trips over the gorge of the Niagara Falls. On one of these trips he yelled to the crowd, "Do you believe I, the Great Blondin, can successfully cross high above this river on a tightrope?" The crowd yelled back, "We believe! We believe!" Blondin proceeded to cross and the crowd clapped/cheered their approval wanting more. Then Blondin asked, "Do you believe I, the Great Blondin, can cross over the Niagara River on this tightrope, but, this time while pushing a wheelbarrow?" The crowd yelled back, "We believe! We believe!" Seeing their enthusiasm, Blondin yelled back, "Who among you is willing to ride in the wheelbarrow?" The crowd went stone silent. Not one person volunteered.
3. Thus, the faith pleasing to God not only involves assent to the facts of the Gospel, but, it also involves trust, a commitment of total allegiance to Christ, His Word and His Church!

II OBTAINING Faith

- it would do us little good to know what faith is but not know how to obtain or get faith:
- A. Not a Gift from God
 1. Ephesians 2:8 *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God."*
 - a. often used as a proof text that *faith* is a gift from God
 - b. "gift" n this verse is *GRACE* – nearest antecedent rule...
 2. Faith comes by putting ourselves in a position to receive faith from the source provided by God!
 - B. By Hearing the Word
 1. Romans 10:17 *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."*
 2. Luke 8:12 *"Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved."*
 3. 2 Timothy 3:15 *"and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*
 4. The source of trusting faith is nothing more or less than God's Word the Bible; thus, the need for growing by God's Word should be evident to all!

III USING Faith

- having covered what it is, and how to obtain it, let's now consider what faith does for you and me:
- A. It Brings Us to Christ
 1. Galatians 3:26-29 *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized (immersed) into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."*
 2. Romans 5:1 *"Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* James 2:24 *"You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone."*
 - do not contradict; instead, they compliment... one speaks of justification... the other addresses the sanctification process...
 - B. It Sustains Us in Christ
 1. The same faith that brings us to Christ is the same faith that sustains us in Him

2. 2 Corinthians 5:7 *“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”* – i.e. Christians are dependent upon Christ after becoming a Christian in order to remain a Christian... Faith just as necessary after as before..
3. Romans 8:37 *“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.”*
4. 1 John 5:4-5 *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

Thus, faith not only brings us to Christ... but is essential to remain in Him as well!

Conclusion: Did you know that James Garfield (20th President of US) could write Latin with one hand and Greek with the other hand at the same time? You say, “Impossible!” No, it’s the truth.

Did you know a mole can dig a 300’ tunnel in one night? You say, “Impossible!” No, this too is true.

Did you know snakes smell with their tongues? You say, “No way!” Way!

Did you know you can please God without faith? No, this is false! Without faith you cannot please God our Creator and Sustainer. We know based on the Bible that without faith you and I cannot please God!

It’s Impossible!