

Faith in Action

Week 2: The Object of Our Faith

Hebrews 11:3

Several years ago, I took a team of short-term missionaries to serve at a clinic in northern Haiti. And, flying to Haiti, we were on your typical 737 commercial airplane, but on the flight from Port-au-Prince in the south to Port-de-Paix in the north, we had to hop on this tiny little puddle jumper airplane. It was my first time flying on one of these.

And, as we were boarding, it was clear that this plane's better days were behind it...and not even by a little. It was in rough shape. But, our team crammed in and we took off, and I'm telling you, I was as nervous as I've ever been flying. It was like riding a jet-ski in the sky! We were up and down. You could feel the plane fishtail with the wind. The pilot had a little window next to him that was open. Things were rattling that I really don't think were supposed to be rattling.

And then we approached the runway, which was just a dirt airstrip in the middle of a field. We touched down and I thought it was going to be like a cartoon where the entire plane falls apart piece by piece until it comes to a stop and it's just the pilot holding the wheel and nothing else around him.

Now, why is it that I had so much more confidence in the 737 than I did the Puddle Jumper 3,000. Well, the puddle jumper was tiny and in rough shape. It swayed with the wind. It rattled and was loud. Plus, it was my first time flying in one of them.

The 737, on the other hand, was big, strong and steady. You get some turbulence from time to time, but I had enough experience in the 737 to know it was going to get us through. In other words, I had more faith in it. And, I think it's true for all of us that **The object of your faith will determine the strength of the faith you have.**

I put my faith in both planes to get me where I needed to go. But, my faith was much stronger in the 737 because the **object** of my faith gave me greater confidence and assurance in it. And, we know this. In fact, I think we do this intuitively all the time. Imagine you walk into a room and you sit down in a chair that feels wobbly and like it's not going to hold you. You get up and you find another chair, right? The object of your faith will determine the strength of the faith you have. In this case, you didn't have strong faith that the weak chair would hold you.

Or, say you have a friend who's always making big promises, but never delivering on them. And, they promise that they're going to come through for you this time, but you're like, "I'll believe it when I see it!" The object of your faith will determine the strength of the faith you have. Because it's much different when that trusted friend says the same thing. The friend that's shown up for you. You have faith that they'll do it again because the object of your faith will determine the strength of the faith you have.

If you have a Bible or Bible app you like to use, turn with me to Hebrews 11. We're in week 2 of our series Faith in Action and all summer long, we're going to be exploring the faith of men and women listed in Hebrews 11. What's known as the Hall of Faith. David and Beth kicked us off last week with an incredible sermon on verse 1 and what it means to walk in faith. If you weren't here, check it out. It was so good and personally, it really spoke to me in a way I needed last week.

And, I want to circle back to where they landed last week. Look again at **Hebrews 11:1-2...(READ)**

So, all of these people the author is about to rattle off were commended by God for being confident in what they hoped for and having assurance about what they could not see. They were confident that they would have a land to call their own or a son that would start a nation, even in their old age. They were confident that God would come through like he promised, even if all the evidence seemed stacked against them. Come what may, they walked with this quiet, confident conviction that what they believed was true and what they hoped for would come to pass.

But, why did they have that kind of faith? What gave them that confidence and assurance? I mean, some of the things these people went through required a lot more than just wishful thinking. You don't give your life for something based on good vibes and positive energy! So, what caused these faithful men and women to exhibit this kind of confidence and assurance? It was the object of their faith. Because, the object of your faith will determine the strength of the faith you have.

You see, it was their belief **about** God, not just their faith **in** God, that gave them the courage and conviction to put their faith into action. They believed that God was trustworthy and would be true to his promises, so they walked in confidence and assurance with the Lord. And then, look at **verse 3...(READ vs. 3a)**

Pause right there because this is fascinating to me. It would make perfect sense for the author to go from verse 2, and talking about what the ancients believed, to verse 4 and looking at the faith of Abel. But, sandwiched in between these 2 verses the author highlights the faith that WE have! He will use that phrase, "By faith" 22 times in this chapter, but this is the only time he talks about our faith. I think that's significant. **Before the author focuses on the faith of others, he reminds us that we have faith in this same God!**

The God who is the object of faith for all these men and women who did incredible things...that same God is the object of your faith, too! The God that they put their confidence in is the same God you put your confidence in. The God they put their assurance in, even when they couldn't see the final outcome, is the same God you and I put our assurance of an unknown future into.

So, before the author jumps to the faith of others, he quickly reminds us that we have faith in this same God. But, who is the object of our faith? Can we trust that he is trustworthy and that he cares about us? Look at **verse 3 again...(READ)**

I love this. The author points to Creation to testify to the goodness and trustworthiness of the God we put our faith in. He says, “the universe was formed at God’s command.” The ESV says, that it was “created by the word of God.” God spoke and creation came into being. By the words of God, everything came from no-thing in an instant.

That’s the object of our faith. If we believe that God spoke and the universe was formed...sun planets, galaxies, and stars all burst into existence at his Word...if the God we believe in and put our faith in can do THAT, then there’s nothing He can’t do. One commentary said it like this,

“Faith is what looks at that created order and has a firm and resolute confidence in the God to whom it bears witness, who, though unseen, has provided a foundation for such a confidence through his mighty acts.” (George Guthrie, NIV Application Commentary)

In other words, we can be confident in what we hope for and assured of what we do not see because the object of our faith made everything out of no-thing with just His words. Creation testifies to the goodness of our God and his trustworthiness. Paul writes in **Romans 1:20...(READ)**

God’s power and character...who He is, what He’s like, what He can do...His eternal power and divine character are revealed in creation. We see this all around us. **Creation reveals the power of God.** Scientists are discovering new and exciting things all the time about our universe. Books, filled with things we thought we knew, are being re-written as we put bigger and better telescopes into orbit. And every time I see something else come out, it just makes me go, “Wow! God! You’re more powerful than I thought!”

We’re living in such a cool time when we get to see and learn more about how God did what He did in creation and it all reveals his power. It all goes back to Him. **Genesis 1:1...”In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth.”** He spoke and in an instant, the universe exploded into existence. And still today, it reveals the power of God.

But, **Creation also reveals the care of God.** Our Heavenly Father tuned this world to be exactly how we needed it to be. He dialed in our universe so precisely that it seems unlikely it would have happened by chance. At least to me, it does. The odds of our universe coming together the way it did by chance would be like if we sat down with some friends to play Euchre and I was dealt 20 straight hands of Left, Right, Ace, King, Queen. You’d probably think something was up, right? Someone’s making this happen.

Creation reveals the care of our God to get our universe just right for us. It reveals his power to create and bring forth life where there was nothing. Creation reveals God’s eternal power and divine nature. The Theological words are His **Transcendence and Imminence.**

God is transcendent, in that he is big and powerful and creates new life with just a word. But He is also imminent. He is close and he cares about you. That is the object of our faith. And, it matters because the object of your faith will determine the strength of the faith you have.

And, over the next few weeks, we are going to study the faith that various men and women had in this transcendent and imminent God. This God who is big and powerful, but who is also incredible close and cares.

And, I'm looking forward to diving into the rest of Hebrews 11, but don't miss the beauty of verse 3. **We can have confidence and assurance because the object of our faith is both powerful and near.** He's close enough to care about you and He's powerful enough to be your refuge and strength when the storms of life seem too much to bare.

So, where do you need God's power today? Where do you need to place your faith in a strong God to find confidence in what you hope for? Confidence that He is big enough to deliver, even if you don't see the end result?

Or, where do you need God to draw near? Where do you need assurance about what you do not see? Where do you need the touch of a loving Father to give you courage and conviction to keep pressing on?

We can have confidence today because the object of our faith is powerful and near. And, Jesus is the greatest proof of that. When Jesus walked this earth, he drew near to people who were hurting and broken. He showed the love of the Father in the way that he cared for others. But, he also showed His power in the way he restored what sin had taken away.

And all of us need Jesus to do the same for us. No one loves us and cares for us like He does. And no one has the power to forgive our sin and bring us back into a relationship with God but him.

And so, today, if you need God's power or care, turn to Jesus and find what your heart desires.