

07/14/24

Pastor Dan Esh

Calvary Chapel Central Phoenix

Outlines: <http://www.calvarycentral.org/media>

RSS: <http://www.calvarycentral.org/feed>

HEBREWS

Confident in Christ

Hebrews 11:1-16

Heb 11:1-16 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (2) For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. (3) By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. (4) By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. (5) By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "AND WAS NOT FOUND, BECAUSE GOD HAD TAKEN HIM"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. (6) But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (7) By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. (8) By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (9) By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; (10) for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (11) By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. (12) Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. (13) These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (14) For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. (15) And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. (16) But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

I. Faith

- a. Chapter 11 – the author of Hebrews moves from teaching to preaching
 - i. After dealing with the significance of Christ's character, the supremacy of Christ's authority, and the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice – the only thing that remains is a question that carries the weight of eternity - "Do you believe this?"
 - ii. *Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*
 - iii. Faith is a word that is thrown around so it is important to define our terms – understand what the author of Hebrews is talking about – Biblical Faith
- b. Lazarus – friend of Jesus, brother of Mary and Martha had passed away, the sisters had sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick but Jesus delayed in coming to them and didn't arrive in Bethany until three days after Lazarus had passed – when Martha heard that Jesus had arrived she ran to Him
 - i. *Joh 11:21-27 Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. (22) But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." (23) Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." (24) Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." (25) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though*

he may die, he shall live. (26) And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (27) She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.

1. Martha was shaken, she was in a state of distress – we wouldn't say she completely lacked faith – she believed her brother would rise again in the resurrection at the last day, she believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the son of God – what she wasn't quite convinced of was the complete and utter sovereignty of the Man who stands before her (***By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God***)
- ii. That is what true Biblical faith is – the Greek word used means conviction – being so convinced of the power and love of God that it changes the way we live (permeates every area of our lives)
 1. Quite different than our Americanized version of faith where we can say we believe something but there is no evidence of that belief
 - a. Jesus says do not fear, how many of us struggle to share our faith; not because of fear of death but fear of public perception? In Matthew 6:25 Jesus says 'Do not worry,' yet many of us toss and turn at night because we are still carrying the worries of the week
 - b. We believe – Jesus is the Messiah sent by God into the world to save us, we believe one day we will spend eternity with Him but we are not yet convinced He is in control in this moment
 - c. That is what true faith is – the Greek word used means conviction – being convinced of the power and love of Christ
 2. Biblical faith is being so confident in Christ that it changes the way we live – quite different than our Americanized version of faith where we can say we believe something but there is no evidence of that belief
 3. ***Jas 2:19-24 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! (20) But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? (22) Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? (23) And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." And he was called the friend of God. (24) You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.***
- iii. ***Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***
 1. This isn't master's degree Christianity, (someday when I'm old and wise I'll be convinced), this is elementary Christianity!
 2. ***Heb 6:1 Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,***
- c. The author of Hebrews has given us a history lesson of Biblical figures who trusted God – their faith was the substance, the evidence, the proof of things not seen
 - i. Abel was so convinced that God was worthy of honor and worship that he offered a more excellent sacrifice, Noah was so convinced that God's Word was infallible that he took Him at His Word and built a massive sea vessel on dry land, likewise Abraham was so convinced that God could be trusted that he left everything he knew to set out into the unknown simply because God told him to, later Abraham was so convinced that God was good that he offered up the one thing he treasured most to God, although he didn't understand, He was convinced that God's ways were higher than his own

- ii. That's why Jesus was so displeased that the disciples were keeping little children from coming to Him - "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."
 - 1. How does a child receive it? When I was little I was running around the house with a large wooden spoon in my mouth, tripped fell, jammed it into the roof of my mouth, after the doctor said there wasn't much they could do we went home and my sister said we should just ask God to fix it, she prayed and the next morning the hole had closed up
 - 2. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
 - 3. So how do we get to this place or get back to this place of being so convinced of the goodness and sovereignty of Jesus that everything we face is filtered through that unchanging reality?
 - 4. The convinced individual is a walking billboard – we take classes on how to effectively evangelize, there's no greater evangelist then the individual who is convinced of God's nature and His promises (*since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses*) – where is that cloud today?

II. Hope

- a. Let me put it a simpler way "Why are we not yet convinced?"
 - i. What does it take to be convinced of something? Unfortunately today it doesn't take much. "I read it online and I want it to be true, so it must be true." (belief bias)
 - ii. We live in a strange time when someone can read a new article or watch a youtube video or receive an email that is being passed around and now they believe they are experts on the subject. And they will argue that point as if they were an expert.
 - iii. As followers of Jesus Christ, we should be deeply concerned with what is true. It is okay to not have an opinion on something that we are not well informed on.
 - 1. Here's a good question to ask yourself before you get into an argument with someone online or in person "Am I as informed or educated about the topic as I am opinionated?"
- b. The Substance of Things Hoped For
 - i. There's a lot of history in these verses
 - ii. The common thread - these men and women were looking forward to a promise that had yet to be realized because they trusted in the God who made that promise
 - 1. As God's Promised People they were looking forward to the Promised Land
- c. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
 - i. Confidence in Christ is the substance (see, feel, taste, touch) of things **hoped** for, the "proof" of things not seen
 - ii. Faith is the confidence that something you expect to happen will
 - 1. That means biblical faith is born out of discontentment and dissatisfaction
 - iii. Wait, what? Example – some of you are hoping this message will end so you can go eat lunch, you are discontent in your current state, you want something different
 - 1. We are a unique people – we are not happy with the way things are, yet we despise change
 - 2. But discontent has to come before faith – as one pastor puts it "The foundational element of faith is a discontented heart. Without discontentment, there is no hope for something more."
 - 3. If we can already see and touch what we are hoping for it has already happened and it takes zero faith to believe it - ***1Co 4:8 You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!***
- d. Here's the thing – just because I'm discontent, just because I'm hoping for something different in my life, just because I'm expecting something to happen DOESN'T MEAN IT IS GOING TO HAPPEN!

III. The World's Hangover

- a. Fantastic article titled "Hungry and Hungover – How Our Emptiness Tells the Truth"

- i. Celebrities provide interesting insight to the human condition for two reasons – many of them have the means to “have it all” and their lives are in the public eye
 - 1. It is no secret that many of these celebrities who have reached the pinnacle of worldly success have been horrified to realize there was nothing at the top, no sense of fulfillment, no answer to life’s biggest questions – that desire for something more still remains
- b. That desire is something in Christian apologetics that we call the “argument from desire”
 - i. Defined - Every desire corresponds to something that fulfills it.
 - 1. Peter Kreeft, a professor of philosophy at Boston College explains “Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for these desires exists. A baby feels hunger; well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim; well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire; well, there is such a thing as sex.”
 - 2. This is not wishful thinking, these are natural desires
 - 3. We all desire for ultimate fulfillment, ultimate joy, which nothing in this world can possibly satisfy. Therefore there must exist objectively a supernatural condition that grounds perfect fulfillment and happiness
 - ii. This is what C.S. Lewis was talking about in his famous quote - *“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”*
 - 1. There is a deeper hunger within our souls that begs to be satisfied – what do we do with that discontentment, that desire for more, that desire for something deeper and more meaningful?
 - a. We eat and drink and work and earn and buy and play and then fall asleep and wake up to what? A hangover
 - b. A hangover isn’t isolated to drugs and alcohol – as one professor puts it “life is full of those moments when we wake up to the bitter emptiness that we have not received what we bargained for”
 - iii. The author of that article closes with this point – “The argument from desire, to be sure, is not a formal presentation of the gospel — it may barely get you down the street of theism. But it absolutely points you there. And even better, it shows you that everything in you, and around you, has already been pointing you there.”

IV. A Hope That Does Not Disappoint

- a. Our discontent with the way things are points us down the road of the gospel but we still have to walk down the road
 - i. It’s not simply about our faith, it is about the object of our faith, what or more specifically who we place our hopes in - idolatry is putting our confidence in worthless things, putting our faith and hope in something that cannot carry the weight of our expectations
 - 1. There’s a difference between discontentment and **disappointment**, a difference between dissatisfaction and **discouragement**
 - ii. What we choose to place our hope in will determine whether we find satisfaction or discouragement
 - iii. Faith and hope in any idol, in our finances, in our job, in our country, in our spouse is a faith that will ultimately disappoint
 - iv. ***Rom 5:1-5 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (2) through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (3) And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; (4) and perseverance, character; and character, hope. (5) Now hope does not disappoint (put us to shame), because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.***
 - 1. If you are discontent with your life, discontent with the meaningless pursuit of pleasure, that constant cycle of work, sleep, work, sleep, party, sleep, work, sleep, and you know that there has got to be more than this – that is the beginning spark of faith
 - 2. Jesus said blessed are the poor in Spirit, the needy, the wanting, the discontent, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven
- b. If the beginning of faith is discontentment, what is the enemy of our faith?

- i. Let's go back to that first beatitude – blessed (happy) is the poor in Spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven
 1. Hopeless (not simply sad) is the one who does not realize their own spiritual poverty
- ii. *Luk 18:9-14 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: (10) "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. (11) The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. (12) I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' (13) And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' (14) I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*
- iii. *Luk 18:18-25 Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (19) So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. (20) You know the commandments: 'DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,' 'DO NOT MURDER,' 'DO NOT STEAL,' 'DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS,' 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.' " (21) And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." (22) So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (23) But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. (24) And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! (25) For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."*
 1. Many of us don't understand physical poverty so it is hard to grasp spiritual poverty
 2. The greatest threat to our souls is our confidence in our prosperity and possessions, it has led to many being content without Jesus
 3. Just like the church in Laodicea, we have said we are rich and have need of nothing and we don't know that we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked
 4. The Lord says "buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see"
- iv. This is for the believer just as much as the unbeliever – faith begins with a dissatisfaction in our present spiritual poverty, that will lead to the pursuit of Christ because we have a hope that He can and He will do something about it – He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him
 1. That is a hope that does not disappointment – that is a confidence that brings substance to our beliefs – that makes Jesus and His Kingdom evident to an unbelieving world