

## Living by Faith

- Intro. 1) Ps. 81:10 – “I am the Lord thy God who brought thee up out of Egypt:  
Open wide thy mouth and I will fill it!” (Living by Faith)
- 2) A way of living different from anything else you are taught.  
Empiricism – facts, figures, senses, scientific observation
- 3) Bird metaphor – they hear & open (trust)
- I. Definition of a worldly person
- A. Faith – “A blind leap in the dark?”  
“That which is required to believe a lie?”  
“Positive thinking?”  
“A logical argument for what you can not prove?”  
Cross all these off.
- B. Heb. 11:1 – “Faith is being certain of what we hope for, and sure of what we do not see.”  
Example: Where is your car? How many know you have cars outside? See how easy it is for that which you are sure of to be shaken. If you could see it, there would be little question.
- C. When we are little – believe everything (faith-oriented)  
As we grow older – don’t believe until you see (skeptically-oriented)
- D. Living by faith is the acceptance that God will not prove some things until Judgment Day  
Ex: If Lord appeared before us, “I’m real.”
1. Would there be atheists? Sure – Israelites in wilderness. God wants to see who will believe what they don’t see.
2. Can’t please God without faith.
- a. Prerequisite to pleasing God
- b. Prerequisite to prayer
- c. Prerequisite to Christianity
- II. How do you build faith?
- A. Do you struggle with your faith?

1. Bedside prayer (quit, cry, no one listening)
  2. In church – isn't this silly, no one here
  3. See someone you think is spiritual looking at watch
  4. See the preacher in weakness. Doesn't anybody have faith?
- B. Two points of consolation
1. It's natural to struggle with your faith. If you don't struggle with your faith, you've died and gone to heaven.
  2. God has given us a way to build a faith that will see us through this life.
- C. The importance of faith
1. Rom. 4:14-17
    - a. Because of faith, God's promises will become reality
    - b. Through faith my salvation is secured and my sins are forgiven.
    - c. Only through faith in Christ will I receive his grace.
    - d. Faith is the only sacrifice I have to offer up to God.  
Not works – Good works are not in payment, they are the natural reaction of faith.
  2. Heb. 11:6 – “without faith . . . impossible . . .” (no grace without faith, no faith without works)
- D. Steps in developing faith. Rom. 4:18-19
1. Overcome intellectual obstacles. (You don't limit God to the laws of the physical nature because God is spirit – not restricted to time and space.)
    - a. Rubs against skeptical bones
    - b. Want God to fit into some scientific box
    - c. Abraham “faced the facts” (NIV) “I'm a goner.”

Rom. 4:18-21

Heb. 11:11

Even though:

She is ungodly . . . going to love her

He may punch me . . . going to talk about Christ

Economy is shaky . . . not going to worry

Situation is hopeless . . . I will believe

Life is in chaos . . . God can give me sanity

We must never say “never.”

- d. Paul – “Fool for sake of gospel”
  - e. The University of Satan will beat the faith out of you.  
Even while you are studying God’s infinite wisdom.
2. Become fully-persuaded that God has the power to keep his promises. Rom. 4:20-21
- a. Many of us worship a cartoon of God – one you have drawn with the abilities and attributes we assign to Him.
  - b. How do we build a proper concept of God?  
We must kick out the “cartoon God.”
    - 1. Cartoon God doesn’t speak our language
      - a. “Abode, bestowed upon us, various and sundry blessings.”
      - b. Speak whatever language you want, but don’t continue the concept that God doesn’t understand you.
  - c. Prayer must be reverent, yes; but also intelligent.
    - 1. Why do we often change voices and terms? We believe that God doesn’t understand reality.
    - 2. He understands: financial worry, sexual temptations, personal relationships, job pressure, school pressure, broken cars and water pipes.
2. Our cartoon God lives in the church building.
- a. Doesn’t see us when we are at home:

Programs we watch  
Language at work  
Books we read  
Things we talk about on the phone.

3. Our cartoon God wouldn't hurt anybody.
  - a. Won't punish any one eternally.  
Nice old fellow "ya'll come on in. Let's not worry about it – call it all even."
  - b. How do I know that? Jokes we tell about God.  
Ex: God and Jesus going golfing. A Hebrew would have been stoned!  
  
They respected God.  
"You shall fear me."
4. Our cartoon God wouldn't help anybody.
  - a. Scared to pray for help – might be charismatic.
  - b. These are not miracles - providence.
  - c. Do we really pray for the sick? We pray for the doctors (not the sick). Why are we scared to pray for the sick? Not enough faith.
  - d. He will help with:  
  
Health, budget, marriage, children, job, church  
  
Jas 4:2 – "Ye have not because you ask not!"
  - e. We give him a little box – "you have to work in here."  
  
God says, "I don't fit in anybody's box."

## Review

- I. How do we build faith?
  1. Overcome intellectual obstacles
  2. Develop a concept of God according to His definition and not ours

II. How do we deal with doubts?

A. First - recognize the various kinds of doubts.

1. Lonely doubt – “If God were here he wouldn’t let me suffer the way I do.” Solution – realize – light at end of tunnel.
2. Tired doubts – Solution: take a nap
3. Intellectual doubts – Facts begin to scare you. Solution – remember Abraham.

B. Second – Five things to check when your faith is weak.

1. Check your peer group – 2 months in the right group and you could be convinced . . . world is flat  
. . . homosexuality is alright  
. . . this church is sorry  
. . . there is no God
2. Check your prayer life  
Tell Him your faith is crumbling and he will bolster you.
3. Check your study life – “faith comes by hearing.” Rom. 10:17
4. Check your adventurism,  
“Jump and I’ll catch you.” We marvel at the Biblical examples – They jumped, he caught ‘em. “Boy what faith.”
5. Check your memory – How God has been with you in the past. The seas he’s parted, the walls he’s knocked down.

Concl.

- 1) Remember Jonathan at Michmash. I Sam. 13 & 14 – fighting Philistines.
  - a) Odds: Sands of the seas vs. 3,000 Israelites dwindled – 600 left; 2 dull swords.
  - b) Armor bearer – “Look at the facts – what are we doing?”
  - c) Jonathan – “I’ve got a plan! If they invite us up, we win” Jonathan ignored the facts; enormous concept of God.
  - d) Philistines – running, screaming, earthquake

- 2) Before they entered the valley, Jonathan made a statement to end our lesson. He said:  
“Come go with us unto the garrison of this uncircumcised. It may be that God will work for us, for there is no restraint to God, to save by many or by few.”
- 3) God wants a few faithful people – with them he can batter the forces of Satan.
- 4) I wish you would be one of them today.
  - a) Non-Christian – step out in faith, he’ll catch you in his grace.
  - b) Weary Christian – You want to do great things – what does it take? FAITH.
- 5) If we can help you – come.