

THE POWER OF FAITH — HEBREWS 11

"WITHOUT faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Faith is a priceless jewel that will take you safely from earth to Glory. God loves you with the most tender and infinite love. Jesus has purchased your redemption, and removed every obstacle out of the way of your acceptance with God. There is nothing but faith that will bring your soul into touch with God and cause you to inherit "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Faith will make you an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ. "All things are yours" in Christ. Faith is the connecting link. Faith is that which brings you into fellowship with God. Eternal life and all the precious treasures that eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard are for the one who believes. It is all conditioned on faith.

What is faith? The Word says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). It is a substance that comes into the heart through believing the Word of God. Faith is a reality. Faith is not feeling; faith is not sight; but it is an actual, living reality — absolute, positive, sure, and certain. Faith is not seen; but when it comes into the heart, it brings reality — something that can actually be felt and known in your heart and life. True faith in God is a marvelous power, though unseen — a real substance that God plants in the soul.

When you come to God for salvation, after you have surrendered your will to God, then furnish the faith that will bring the Blood of Jesus over your heart. Faith is planted in the heart through conviction. The Spirit of God goes out and gently lays His hand upon your conscience and your heart. The goodness of God brings you to repentance, and repentance puts faith in your soul. But you must put that faith into action, and believe on the Son of God, though you cannot see, hear, nor feel Him. And the moment you do (whether it be five seconds or five minutes), when you throw your life on Jesus as your Savior and say, "Lord, I believe, I receive it, I trust You to save my soul," it will be done that instant. Faith is the foundation of our salvation.

God gave His Son that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. The transgression in the Garden of Eden was of man's own free will, and for that reason men must come to God of their own free will. God compels no one to come to Him and receive redemption. You must not only be willing to come and receive it, but you must have the faith in the Son of God that will bring the Blood over your sin. No one can furnish that faith for you. You must lay hold of the gift of God for yourself, through faith, and it will bring eternal life into your heart.

Many times sinners will come to God, and yet they do not know how to receive salvation at His hand. They will furnish the tears (and well they should); they will weep and pray and surrender so far as they know; yet they do not receive. The reason, many times, is a lack of faith in God. They forget that they must exercise faith to receive it. They expect God to pour down the gift on them; but they must receive what they receive, through faith in God.

"Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." It is impossible to come to God without faith. Between the sinner and God is just a little gap or span that must be crossed by faith. You say, "I am hungry for God." The Spirit is striving with your heart. God stands there ready to give you the experience. He says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." But you must span that little gap through faith. You draw nigh to Him and He will draw nigh to you. You say, "I believe You do come in," and Jesus comes into your heart. He says, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in." He is absolutely faithful to anyone who will come to Him and furnish Him an honest heart. He will put the seed of faith in the soul.

The same faith is required at sanctification. After you are born again and become a child of God, your soul reaches out for the fullness of God. You make the consecration — and there is a great depth to the consecration that God requires for a soul to be wholly sanctified. Those who have received it know what it means to consecrate to the depths to receive this glorious experience. But it comes through faith. After all is on the altar, you will have to furnish God with sufficient faith to cause the Blood to flow over your heart.

We find it is the same with the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. To receive it, you will consecrate to depths that you never did consecrate to at sanctification; but you have to put faith into operation before it will come. Every experience you get from God is founded on faith. If you could come to God without furnishing faith, you would be a very weak Christian. You must have that which makes you strong when the test is on, when you cannot see or feel. You need faith in God.

What Faith Is

Faith does not come by feeling, nor exist by feeling. Faith is that which connects us with eternal realities. The trouble with us is that we want to see and feel instead of taking God at His Word. What we see and feel is real to us, but that is not faith. People of the world today put their trust in the things their eyes see and their hands feel. But the children of God have greater defence, One in whom we can trust; and we can stand in the face of every foe and know that God is true. Faith is that which endures, and faith always brings results. Our faith may be tested; the clouds may be as brass. But the child of God will stand firm and go through with faith in God, knowing that He cannot fail.

God spoke worlds into existence. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." God framed this world out of things that were not. Things that are now seen were invisible, and God spoke them into existence. In the beginning God spoke and said, "Let there be light." And there was light. When He spoke, things came to pass. He is the same mighty, wonder-working God today.

It is faith that pleases God. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." It was through that offering that God proved the faith and grace in the heart of Abel. His offering pleased God because it was a sacrifice of faith. It was the shedding of blood, and it cost him something; but withal, it was the faith that pleased God.

If we make a sacrifice that pleases God, it must be mixed with faith. Some have much to give, some less. When the Child Jesus was brought to the Temple by His parents, they had nothing to offer but two turtledoves, or two young pigeons; but their whole life was in that sacrifice, and it was pleasing and acceptable to God. If you offer unto God a sacrifice it must be mixed with faith from an honest and sincere heart in order to be pleasing to God.

God wants a wholehearted offering. We have heard hundreds pray to God — sinners seeking for mercy and pardon, others seeking the deeper things of God, consecrating their lives. Some will open their mouth and say, almost at one breath, "O God, I give You everything — I give You my life." It comes from the very depths of their heart; and the Spirit comes right down and writes the pardon on their heart. We see the change in their countenance, and they begin to praise God.

On the other hand, some will offer' to the Lord sparingly, taking Things one by one and giving them to God. If God does not bless them, they surrender a little more, and see if He will bless them — instead of making a wholehearted surrender, giving the whole heart and life to God. Two people kneeling at the altar, side by side, one will bring a more excellent sacrifice, and back will come the answer and the witness from God; while the other gives light, trifling things, and is withholding, down in the heart, the vital things that God demands. God knows the heart, and He demands one to offer unto Him freely and fully.

Why not make an unreserved surrender to God? He will pour out His Spirit upon our life. We are merely stewards over what God -has put in our keeping. What have we but what we received from God? Yet He has made us free moral agents. Whether we give back our lives to God or not, that lies with us. And accordingly as we give, God gives us the grace in our hearts.

Translation Faith

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." He pleased God because he was a man of faith. And while many people put a premium on something they can feel, God puts a premium upon faith that is in the heart, the faith that you have gathered in your soul that will stand the test, that will weather the storm, that will bear the reproach, that will bear anything that God permits to come. Faith is the thing that bears it.

It was by faith that Enoch was translated. Enoch was a type of the Bride of Christ. We must have translation faith in order to make the Rapture. Some will fail because they did not gather the faith in their soul. There were five foolish virgins, when the Bridegroom came, who did not have the oil in their vessels; and for that reason they did not go in to the Marriage Supper (Matthew 25:1-13). It takes a preparation to meet the Lord. We must be living up to our privileges in the Gospel — saved, sanctified, and baptized with the Holy Ghost, and living the life of a full overcomer.

Faith is the scarcest thing in the world. We all have to admit that. Some have more faith than others. Some let the Word of God sink down into their hearts more than others. Faith is a wonderful thing. How are we to receive this perfect faith? It does not come by merely asking God for it. The Word says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." We grow in faith by reading the Word, believing it, and meditating upon it. If our faith grows weak and faint, we pray and open the Word, and let it enter our heart, and our faith will begin to brighten and grow strong. So, after all, it is the Word that puts faith into our hearts. While it is impossible to retain faith without prayer, yet faith comes by the Word. As we get more of that real substance in our heart, it is easy to mount over all difficulties.

The Word of God is an impregnable fort. It is impossible for Satan to get through the Word of God and into our heart. We hide the Word in our heart lest we sin against God. And so long as the seed, which is the Word of God, remains in the heart, we do not commit sin. God tells us to take heed lest we let the Word slip out of our heart through disobedience. When the Word slips out, then the enemy comes in. He can find an entrance and lodgment in the heart where the Word of God is not abiding. It is not just having it in the memory — being able to quote it — but it is having the Word imbedded in the heart. It makes us sound, true, loyal, faithful soldiers of the Lord — and we become pillars in the Temple of God.

Noah's Faith

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." He was moved with fear, the fear of disobeying God; and he obeyed the voice of God and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. God told Noah that He would destroy man from off the face of the earth; and Noah had faith in God's Word. It was not by sight. He was about 120 years in building the ark, and there was no sign of the flood. Any of us might have faith if we saw what was coming. Noah might have said, "Well, perhaps the hearts of the people are not so wicked, and things have changed." But God's Word never changes. God had spoken, and Noah believed; and God kept His Word with Noah because he believed.

Through the faith of Noah, we have a most definite type of the coming of the Lord. When Jesus comes, who is the true Ark of Safety, and the saints are caught up and hidden away in the clouds with Christ, then will burst the Tribulation upon the earth. It will pay to be one of the real body of overcomers through faith.

Noah was a man of like passions as we, but he was in touch with Heaven and heard from God and believed the Word that God spoke. Today God has given us the Word, written to meet every condition and circumstance of our lives. There is no circumstance in life but we will find in the Word a guide.

Men of faith in the Bible were, like us, just common men. And God will do the same for us: He will answer the fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous. But what God wants is the foundation of faith in the heart, that will not fail Him in the crucial moment, but will stand true to Him when the battle is on, and will let God fight the battle.

Abraham's Faith

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. . . . for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

How far had he to look? He had to die and go to the grave, and yet he did not see the fulfillment of the promise. But he believed it, nevertheless. He had confidence toward God. He knew that what God spoke He would bring to pass. God gave Abraham a son, Isaac, and promised him that through this son his seed should be as the sand that is by the seashore, innumerable. And the crucial time came when God told him to take his only son Isaac and go up to Mount Moriah and offer him unto the Lord for a burnt offering.

You can imagine the suffering of that faithful father, Abraham, as he was talking and communing with God on the way. God was going to make him the father of faith for us all, and put the faith in the earth, that we today have come into in such a wonderful way. Abraham was obedient to God's Word, and for that reason, when the time came, God tried his faith to the uttermost. And when they saw the spot afar off, he said to the men that were with him, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." He believed that God would raise his son from the dead, "from whence also he received him in a figure." He believed, truly, that he was going to put the boy to death, and offer him up, and that God was going to raise him from the dead, and that he and the boy would come back to where the men were waiting for him.

Abraham counted the things that were not as though they were. He staggered not at the promise of God. He was willing to step out and obey God, though he knew not whither he went. God wants us to have that faith in our hearts. Faith will hold us steady when the test is on, when things seem to be shaking all around us. Faith and integrity in our hearts will hold us true to God.

God will try your faith. The trial of your faith is "more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire" (I Peter 1:7). If you do not draw back from God, if you believe and trust Him implicitly, He will be with you all the time. It is easy for you to believe God when He is doing great things for you; but when you pray and wrestle and cannot seem to pray through, when the clouds hang low, it takes faith to stand and go through. God is testing your faith. If you know you have not committed sin, if you know you have not departed from God, you need have no fear. The enemy may tempt you, but you can stand in the faith of the Son of God.

The Faith of Moses

"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents." They were not afraid of the king's commandment. Faith works above all the commandments of kings and princes and potentates. It makes no difference what conditions are in the earth today; faith surmounts them all. Today we are on the very crest of a great volcano that is going to burst forth in this old world; but the faith that God plants in our hearts surmounts the whole thing. The world is looking with fear at the things that are coming in the future. What an awful thing for fear to enter into the hearts of God's people, to let the enemy come in and rob them of their faith in God! God wants all to have such faith in their hearts that they will trust God, and have no fear.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." The Word of God says that faith was the thing that caused him to suffer affliction with the children of God. It was not because he was at that time having success as a minister and leader of the people. He had to flee from Egypt and spend forty years in the wilderness, talking with his God. And God came down and communed with him, and let him see the burning bush, and anointed him from on High to carry the message to Pharaoh and to lead His people out. The Word says, "By faith."

It was faith in his heart that gave him the power to obey the God of Israel. When you are born again, God puts the faith in your soul, that undaunted faith in God, that will cause you to suffer affliction, persecution, adversity, or anything, with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

"He endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Have we that faith in God that we would not recant or lower the standard of God's Word under the terrible tide of apostasy of this closing age? Many of the martyrs of old, as their hearts were lifted to Heaven and as their bodies were chained to the stake, the flames leaping around them, sang praises to God. Their persecutors stood, saying, "Recant, renounce your faith, and we will let you go." But they could not cause those valiant hearts to flinch. They entered into Heaven, triumphant over death, hell, and the grave. God has that same spirit to put into every heart.