

# Why Faith?

Hebrews 11:1-3

*“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

*3 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.”*

## INTRODUCTION:

- **The book of Hebrews is written to both Jews who were genuine believers in Christ (saved) and Jews who were intellectual believers (who had never really been saved; who were still holding onto the OT sacrificial system)**
  - **And mainly their reason for not moving forward by faith in Christ—is because of the cost**
  - **The cost to believe was something they were not ready to pay**
  - **What they had already paid:**

**Hebrews 10:32-33**—*“But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye **endured a great fight of afflictions**; 33 partly, whilst ye were made a **gazingstock** both by **reproaches** and **afflictions**; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.”*

- **It was all because of their close association with genuine believers**
- **But being closely associated with Christ and his people would not be enough to save them**

*“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? (These people had been closely associated with Christ) 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

**Luke 13:24-29**—*“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: 26 then shall ye begin to say, **We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.** 27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. 29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.*

- **And Paul was concerned that the cost would soon get too high for these closely associated Jews**

- **And they would fall away from Christ—and never return**
- **That’s why there has been so many severe warnings that he has given to them throughout the book**
  - **Warnings that tell them to not *NEGLECT* the salvation that has clearly been given**
  - **Warnings that tell them not to *HARDEN THEIR HEART* in sinful unbelief**
  - **Warnings that tell them that God has been known to *SWEAR IN HIS WRATH NOT TO LET PEOPLE ENTER INTO HIS REST* because of unbelief**
  - **Warnings that tell them that they are becoming *DULL OF HEARING***
  - **Warnings that tell them that if they fall away that it would become *IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO REPENT***
  - **Warnings that tell them that to reject the full knowledge of Christ would bring God’s severest wrath—that it is a **FEARFUL THING TO FALL IN THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD****

- **The difficulty to believe**

- **The reason why many of them were still sitting on the edge of unbelief was because the cost to fully embrace Christ was incredibly high**
  - **It wasn’t that they weren’t convinced that Jesus was the Messiah**
    - **That wasn’t the problem**
    - **They—as Paul pointed out—had been incredibly exposed to the Gospel**
    - **By hearing directly the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ**
    - **By getting confirmation of the Holy Ghost—by means of signs and wonders and diverse miracles of the Holy Ghost**

**They has been – “were once *enlightened*, and have *tasted of the heavenly gift*, and were made *partakers of the Holy Ghost*, 5 and have *tasted the good word of God*, and the *powers of the world to come*”**

- **There was no debate on the reality of who Jesus really was**
- **It was clear—He is indeed the long-promised Messiah**

- **Revelation wasn’t the problem**

- **The problem was the COST**
  - **They were not willing to pay the cost to yield to Christ completely**
  - **They had already got a foretaste of what it meant to suffer**
    - **They had been made a “gazingstock”**
    - **They had gone through “reproaches and afflictions”**
    - **Some of them had their property taken from them**
    - **They saw Paul who had been put in jail for his faith**
  - **That was just a foretaste—but it would only get worse**

**Paul told the believers of Lystra, Antioch, and Iconium that they** *“must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”*

**Paul told Timothy—who was a pastor at the church of Ephesus—to not** *“Be...ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God”*

**Peter also told the scattered saints to be prepared to suffer just like their Lord—***“Forasmuch then as Christ*

*hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind”*

**Jesus told His disciples to expect that they would be treated as He was treated—***“It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?”*

- **The cost is HIGH to be a true believer in Christ**
  - **Anyone can be saved**
    - **Anyone who simply believes upon the Lord Jesus Christ**
    - **Who repents of their sin—and comes to Him by faith can be saved**
    - **It is free to be saved**
    - **Jesus paid all the debt that we owe on the cross**
  - **But to be a believer comes with an incredibly high cost**
    - **It will cost everything**

**Luke 14:25-33—***“ And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, 26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not*

*down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*

*31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”*

- **Jesus told a parable that illustrates that high demand that comes to anyone who wants to enter into the kingdom of God**

**Matthew 13:45-46**—*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: 46 who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”*

- **He understood the value of this treasure—that it cost him everything**

**NOTE:** Someone turned this parable into a dialogue that went something like this:

*“I want this pearl. How much is it?”*

*“Well,” the seller says, “it’s very expensive.”*

*“But, how much?” the potential buyer asks.*

*“Well, a very large amount.”*

*“Do you think I could buy it?” asked the buyer.*

*“Oh, of course, everyone can buy it,” replied the seller.*

*“But, didn’t you say it was very expensive?”*

*“Yes.”*

*“Well, how much is it?”*

*“Everything you have,” says the seller.*

The buyer makes up his mind. *“All right, I’ll buy it,”* he says.

*“Well, what do you have?”* the seller wants to know. *“Let’s right it down.”*

*“Well, I have ten thousand dollars in the bank.”*

*“Good—ten thousand dollars. What else?”*

*“That’s all. That’s all I have.”*

*“Nothing more?”*

*“Well, I have a few dollars here in my pocket.”*

*“How much?”*

The buyer starts digging. *“Well, let’s see—thirty, forty, sixty, eighty, a hundred twenty dollars.”*

*“That’s fine. What else do you have?”*

*“Well, nothing. That’s all.”*

*“Where do you live?”* He is still probing.

*“In my house. Yes, I have a house.”*

*“The house, too, then.”* He writes that down.

*“You mean I have to live in my camper?”*

*“You have a camper? That, too. What else?”*

*“I’ll have to sleep in my car!”*

*“You have a car?”*

*“Two of them.”*

*“Both become mine, both cars. What else?”*

*“Well, you already have my money, my house, my camper, my cars. What more do you want?”*

*“Are you alone in this world?”*

*“No, I have a wife and two children...”*

*“Oh, yes, your wife and children, too. What else?”*

*“I have nothing left! I am left alone now.”*

Suddenly the seller exclaims, *“Oh, I almost forgot! You yourself, too! Everything becomes mine—wife, children, house, money, cars—and you too.”*

Then he goes on. *“Now listen—I will allow you to use all these things for the time being. But don’t forget that they are mine, just as you are. And whenever I need any of them you must give them up, because now I am the owner.”*

**NOTE:** The reason why many people who are exposed to the claims of Christ—never truly come to Him for salvation—is because the cost is too high.

They just want the feeling of being religious—not a salvation that demands their full allegiance to Christ.

**QUOTE:**

*“I would like to by \$3worth of God, please, not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine. I don’t want enough of Him to make me love a black man or pick beets with a migrant. I want ecstasy, not transformation; I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please.”*

- That is where these Hebrews are at

- They have been brought in close association with Christ and His people—but yet they were not ready to pay the high price of being a believer
- And Paul just told them—to spurn the knowledge that they had been given of Christ (to be brought so close and yet not embrace Christ completely)—would not only cut them off from ever being truly saved—but it would invoke God’s severest wrath
- And then Paul quoted an OT passage that they would have been familiar with—**Habakkuk 2:4**

*“Now the just shall live by faith”*

- The topic of “faith” comes into play
  - Paul’s quotation emphasizes a couple things:
    - That a person is made “just” by his faith
    - And secondly a person who is truly justified lives by “faith”
  - The mark of true Christianity is that they walk by faith and not by sight
    - That they don’t live a life based on the ups and downs of the world
    - They don’t follow Christ only when it is easy—they follow Christ even when it’s hard

- **Their life is a life of “faith”**
- **And so Paul is calling these on-the-wall Hebrew to enter in to this life of faith**
  - **He is calling them to get their eyes off the circumstances and look by faith to Christ—who is greater than all the costs**

**Hebrews 10:35**—“*Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.*”

**Vs. 37**—“*For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*”

### **CIT: Why is Faith Important?**

**NOTE:** Before we can answer that question—we need to look at something about the culture of Judaism at that time.

Judaism was prescribed in the law of Moses. It was really a covenant of works. When God gave the covenant to the people He told them,

*“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: ... and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”*

And the other side of that covenant said that if they neglected to obey the covenant—that judgment would come

upon them. And so the Hebrews had—in some sense—been freed from one master (Pharaoh) and had been enslaved to another master (Yahweh).

And so—throughout the OT—Israel had become very accustomed to a covenant that we based on works—apart from genuine faith.

And it only worse for the Hebrews. As time passed, different leaders of Israel began to add to the Law—their different rules and commands—enslaving them even further.

Jesus said of them: “*For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.*”

The commands that these leaders began to place upon the people—added an incredible weight to the Hebrews’ system of works.

**NOTE:** Even though Judaism was system of works—that does not mean that people in the OT were saved by works. No. This system of works was meant to point them to their inadequacy (their inability to keep the Law) and realize that there was only ONE Who could. The Lord Jesus Christ.

**NOTE:** So now these Jews have come face-to-face with New Covenant. Not a covenant based upon their own performance. But a covenant based upon Christ’s performance.

And the way that they enter that covenant is by “faith.” And the way that they live in that covenant is by “faith.”

So Paul lists out 3 reason why Faith is Important in this New Covenant.

**I. We Endure by Faith** (vs. 1)—“*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*”

**NOTE:** At this point—Paul is NOT defining faith—but he is pointing to what it does—its character.

### A. The Meaning of “*Substance*”

#### 1. *Hupostasis*

- a. The word means a “*setting under*” or “*a support*”
- b. The idea of the word is that it is like a solid platform that a person can stand upon
- c. Or maybe you can say that it is like a solid foundation that a house is built upon

**NOTE:** Jesus said that those who hear His words and obey—set up for themselves a house that is built upon a solid rock—that the storms cannot shake.

#### 2. Faith is the believer’s Substance

- a. It is that solid foundation that the believer stands upon
- b. It is the foundation that the believer can stand secure on—to be able to whether out the storms that will come—because they are believers in Christ
- c. But it’s not just any foundation

### QUOTES:

***“You can't convince a believer of anything; for their belief is not based on evidence, it's based on a deep seated need to believe”***

***“... [faith] is an illogical belief in the occurrence of the impossible.”***

**NOTE:** The faith that Paul is pointing these Hebrews to is not some mystical way of living that defies logic. It is not faith in fantasy or imagination. He says, “*Faith is the substance of THINGS HOPED FOR.*”

Someone said that faith is only as good as the object we place it in.

### 2. The Substance of “*Things Hoped For*”

- a. Those “*Things hoped for*” are the promises of God—that were made about Christ and His ministry
- b. For thousands of years—people have been waiting for Christ to come

i. Ever since Adam and Eve fell into sin—men and women have been looking to the hope of the Savior that God promised would come

**Genesis 3:15**—“*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*”

ii. And as time went on—God continually kept reinforcing that hope

- He redeemed Israel to Himself from 400 years of bondage
- He gave them all sorts of types and shadows of the coming Messiah
- He gave them prophets who spoke specifically about the coming Christ
- He even gave them a time line of when to expect His arrival; where he would be born; what He would do

iii. It was a hope that God kept reigniting in the hearts of people

c. And in the fullness of time—God brought forth His Son into the world

i. The things that had been hoped for were now a reality—He had finally come

ii. And throughout His ministry—He manifested Himself to indeed be the long-awaited Messiah

iii. At the end of His ministry—He died and rose again the third day—openly declaring Himself to be the Son of God with power

d. Faith is the Substance (the strong, secure foundation that we stand on) as we look to those things that were hoped for

e. It is faith that gives us the strong confidence in Christ—that these Hebrews needed

**NOTE:** And in some ways—these Hebrews have it easier than their forefathers did. They looked ahead by faith to Christ—and never did see the promises of God fulfilled. But these Hebrews lived in a time in which the promises of God had begun to come to pass. And they had sign after sign given to them to verify that Jesus was indeed the Christ.

### 3. Paul’s point

a. God grants to the believer **special enduring strength (Secure foundation—substance)** when the believer puts faith in His promises

b. He gives them a confidence in Him that is supernatural—that the believer is able to endure all trials with

## B. Evidence—“*the evidence of things not seen.*”

### 1. Paul’s point takes faith a step further

a. Not only does it bring strong confidence in the heart of the believer—but it begins to manifest itself in the life of the believer

b. The believer is convinced that Jesus is the Christ—that He will judge the world in righteousness—that He will restore the world—and that He will rule for ever and ever—and that He will reign with Him in His throne

c. But it’s not just a confidence that rests only in his heart—but evidence takes it a step further

d. The believer is made so confident in Christ—that he begins to **step out and act upon it** by faith

e. That he lives by faith

f. Those things that are “hoped for”—those things that are “not seen” are being acted upon in the life of the believer—by faith

## C. God Rewards Such Faith

1. When someone decides to place their faith in Christ—God steps in and rewards that faith with strong confidence—**so that the believer is able to live by faith**

## I. We Endure by Faith

II. We Please God by Faith (vs. 2)—“*For by it the elders obtained a good report.*”

**NOTE:** At this point there might be some objection to what Paul has just been saying. The Hebrews had been so connected to a system of works—that they might have brought up the question—“*What about our forefathers? They didn’t live by faith.*”

### A. The Elders Lived By Faith

**NOTE:** Someone might say—“*I thought the OT system was a system of works. How is it that they lived by faith?*” Well, you’re right. It was a system of works. But the system of Old Testament Judaism was meant to point people to faith in coming Messiah.

And it is that faith that Paul is speaking about.

1. The elders (forefathers) of the OT lived by such faith

a. They didn’t have as much revelation as these NT Hebrews had—but what revelation they did have—they acted upon by Faith

**b. The elders**

- i.** Abel had such faith
- ii.** Noah was motivated by this kind of faith to build a boat that would house his family and 2 of every kind of animal
- iii.** Abraham demonstrated future faith in Christ—by going to a land he did not know
- iv.** Sara also believed that God would fulfill His promise of Christ—in the child Isaac
- v.** Jacob demonstrated that He was looking for the coming Christ
- vi.** Moses and his parents looked ahead by faith to the coming Christ—even willing suffer hardship for it
- vii.** And the list goes on and on
- viii.** All of these people believed what God said—and acted upon it

**vs. 39**—“*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise*”

- ix.** These people stepped out by faith—trusting in a God that they could not see—and a Messiah who had not come
- x.** And yet they never saw the fulfillment of God’s ultimate promise—the Lord Jesus Christ

**2.** The elder’s faith—evidences something for us to see

- a.** They were righteous
- b.** As Paul previously said, quoting from Habakkuk 2:4—“*the just live by faith*”
- c.** The greatest evidence to reality of somebody’s salvation—is that that person lives by faith

**NOTE:** And that is what Paul is saying in this verse.

**B. A Good Report**—“*For by it the elders obtained a good report.*”

- 1.** They pleased God by their faith
- 2.** They won God’s approval by such faith

**Hebrews 11:6**—“*But without faith it is impossible to please him*”

**3.** No one will ever get to the place where God will accept them and be pleased with Him—if faith in Christ is absent

- a.** There is no amount of works that someone can do—that God would say that He is pleased
- b.** It is faith in Christ—**that produces works of faith**—that God is pleased with

Habakkuk 2:4—“*the just live by faith*”

## I. We Endure by Faith

## II. We Please God by Faith

**III. We Know God by Faith** (vs. 3)—“*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.*”

**NOTE:** Again, another objection Paul seems to be anticipating at this point. Someone may say that they don't know how to have this kind of faith. That's something beyond their ability.

Well, they're right—and they are not right. This faith is obviously something that is supernatural—that cannot be obtained by human ability. But at the same time—they already are exercising this kind of faith.

And that's Paul's point in this verse.

### A. Their Present Faith in God's Word

1. Paul points out that these Hebrews are already exercising this kind of faith—when it comes to the creation
  - a. They have taken God's Word and believed it—though they have no way to prove it
  - b. They can't go back and see God create—that's not possible

- c. They have to accept that fact by faith
- d. And Paul points out that they even believe the specifics of the creation

- i. They don't just have a general idea that God created everything
- ii. They believe that God created just as His Word says

- The worlds were framed by the Word of God

**NOTE:** That is a reference to the six day creation account in Genesis 1—where God spoke and things that previously were not there leapt into existence.

- The things that are seen—were not made by the things that do appear

**NOTE:** That's another way of saying that the materials that make up our universe have not always existed. All the material universe was made by the invisible God.

- e. And there's an indication that God has rewarded such faith in His word with strong confidence

- i. You couldn't persuade them of anything else
- ii. They believed God's Word—and God gave them strong confidence in it

**NOTE:** Digression—If someone comes to you and says that they can prove that the creation happened some other way than what God says—mark it down that they are a “LIAR.”

You can’t prove how the worlds came into existence—through science or any other means. It’s not a repeatable experiment.

At best it has to be accepted by faith.

Either faith in man’s word or faith in God’s Word.

## **B. Paul’s Main Point**

- 1. They have already be acting on God’s Word with this kind of faith**
  - a. Believing God’s Word**
  - b. And being granted strong confidence that what God says is true**
- 2. And so—he is calling them to exercise such faith in Christ**
  - a. Step out by faith**
  - b. Believe what God has said in His Word about Christ**
  - c. And begin to live by faith**

## **CONCLUSION:**

### **I. We Endure by Faith**

### **II. We Please God by Faith**

### **III. We Know God by Faith**

- **Take a look at your life today**
- **Is it a life of faith?**
- **Are you living by faith?**
- **The Just (those who are saved) live by such faith**
- **If you can’t pinpoint that as a characteristic in your life—then you really need to do some evaluation of what your spiritual condition with God is**
  
- **Maybe you’re here today—and you know you’re not saved**
- **And the big thing that’s holding you back from becoming a Christian—is the cost**
- **Paul’s point today is that when we step out by faith—God so rewards that faith—that we are given strong confidence—that we may be able to endure through the trials that come**
- **Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith**
- **Will you take God at His Word today?**