

## Faith Moves

Faith is not mere intellectual assent, but a committing of one's life  
Hebrews 11

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • June 8, In the year of our Lord, 2014

### Prelude:

#### **I. Flavil Nichols, who preached in Alabama,**

A. talked with two men, one of whom claimed he could do biblical miracles.

B. The other man believed that the first man could indeed do them.

1. The matter of restoring lost limbs came up,

2. that if your finger was cut off the man could restore it.

a) Brother Nichols did not believe the man could do it.

(1) Finally, brother Nichols pulled out a pocket knife, and

(2) asked the second man if he believed that if brother Nichols cut off his finger, could the first man restore it.

(a) The second man confidently affirmed that it was so.

(b) Brother Nichols then handed the knife to the second man and

i) asked him to cut off his finger, but

ii) he declined.

C. He declined because

1. although he believed the first man could do it,

2. he did not trust him to do it.

D. That is the difference between belief and faith as we use those words.

1. In the original language of the Bible,

2. the Greek words can be translated either way.

#### **II. We use belief to mean that we have accepted something as true, but**

A. that does not necessarily mean I will base my life on it.

B. However, we tend to use faith to mean

1. that not only do I know such and such to be true, but
  - a) I will stake my life on it,
  - b) I will live my life by it.
2. For example, I know
  - a) that God exists and all His promises, and
  - b) I will trust Him with my life.

### **III. Watch Hebrews 11 shows us**

- A. that faith is an intellectual decision, but
- B. it also causes us to trust in God.

### **Persuasion:**

#### **I. Hebrews 11.1-3 – Faith Is**

**1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

- A. The rest of the chapter shows faith in action.
  1. Faith has the substance of those things in which it hopes.
  2. Faith knows that certain things exist,
    - a) although not having seen those things, yet,
    - b) faith has evidence that they exist.
      - (1) However, what good is faith,
      - (2) if it does not move the faithful
        - (a) in the direction of those things that it cannot see?

B. After stating what faith is,

1. the writer first demonstrates the intellectual nature of faith,

**2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3 By faith we understand [not feel, DR] 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.**

- a) Faith allows the faithful to obtain a good testimony
  - b) that certain things are true.
2. For example, faith understands
    - a) that the word of God framed the worlds,
    - b) making those things that we see out of things that we cannot see.

## **II. Hebrews 11.4 – Faith and Death**

**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.**

- A. Even as faith and its action permeates Hebrews 11,
- B. so death permeates the eleventh chapter of the Book of Hebrews.
  1. Faith rules our lives *until* death.
  2. Faith rules our lives *through* death.
  3. Faith rules our lives, sometimes *bringing on* death.
    - a) That should not surprise us, because
    - b) death is the gate to the world we cannot see, but
      - (1) faith tells us what exists on the other side, and
      - (2) faith also knows what God requires
        - (a) that we might have a reward of life after death.

## **III. Hebrews 11.5–6 – Faith Pleases God**

**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 (Heb 11.5).**

- A. By faith Enoch managed to escape death.

B. By faith Enoch pleased God, and

1. by faith we please God, because
2. we show

- a) that we know He knows what He is talking about, and
- b) that He will do with us as He has promised, as the writer said next,

**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.**

#### IV. Hebrews 11.7–31 – Watch Faith Move

##### A. Hebrews 11.7 – Faith Moves

**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.**

1. He could not see the Flood coming, but
2. the Creator told him of it, and
  - a) Noah trusted the Creator.
  - b) Therefore, Noah went into action.

##### B. Hebrews 11.8–17 – Faith Obeys

**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.**

1. He could not see the Land of Canaan, but
  - a) He trusted God to lead him to the right place, and

b) it worked.

## 2. Faith lives and waits.

- a) The Lord promised Abraham a new land, and
- b) he went, although he did know where he was going, but
  - (1) since he trusted the Lord,
  - (2) the Lord brought Abraham to the land of promise.

## 3. Faith judges,

**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.**

- a) This demonstrates a component of faith that I have not covered, but
- b) which fits Hebrews 11.1 and all the examples the writer provides.
  - (1) I speak of how we get faith, as revealed in Romans 10,

**17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom 10.17).**

- (2) Sarah heard God.
- (3) Abraham heard God.
  - (a) Can we trust the Creator of the universe
  - (b) to make promises that He can keep,
    - i) although we do not see how He can do it?

## 4. Faith receives,

**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.**

- a) Abraham and Sarah were 100 and 90 years of age, respectively.

- b) Yet, they knew that if the God of heaven made a promise
  - (1) to give them innumerable descendants,
  - (2) then they would have innumerable descendants.

#### **5. Faith embraces and confesses,**

**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.**

#### **6. Faith concludes and then offers,**

**17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.**

- a) Regardless of how impossible it seems to the eyes of man,
- b) Abraham knew that God keeps His promises,
  - (1) such as giving innumerable descendants through a son
  - (2) that God first asks Abraham to offer as a burnt offering.
    - (a) Abraham's faith led him to conclude
    - (b) that God would have to raise Isaac from the dead
      - i) to provide children through the yet fatherless Isaac,
      - ii) although God had said nothing of a resurrection.

#### **7. Hebrews 11.20–21 – Faith Blesses and Worships**

**20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph,**

and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

**8. Hebrews 11.22 – Faith Speaks and Instructs**

**22** By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

**9. Hebrews 11.23–29 – Faith Denies Worldliness**

**23** By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. **24** By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, **25** choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, **26** esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. **27** By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. **28** By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. **29** By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.

- a) Faith chooses Christ over the world.
- b) Faith forsakes the world.
- c) Faith obeys the laws of the Lord.
- d) Faith walks where it has not gone before.

**10. Hebrews 11.30 – Faith Obeys**

**30** By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

- a) Could Israel see what marching around the city would do?
- b) No, but they trusted the One who runs the universe.

**11. Hebrews 11.31 – Faith Receives God's People with Peace**

**31** By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not be-

lieve, when she had received the spies with peace.

## V. Hebrews 11.32–38 – Faith Stares Down Death

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

### A. Faith triumphs *over* death,

33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again.

### B. Faith triumphs *in* death,

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

## VI. Hebrews 11.39–40 – Faith Lives for the Brethren

39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

### Exhortation:

#### I. I will not tell you

A. that if you live by faith,

1. nothing bad will happen to you, or
2. that all your problems will be solved, or

B. that if you live by faith,

1. you will overcome any obstacle in life with no problem, or
2. you will slay dragons and bring down empires.

## **II. Faith will accept that even as**

A. one rock became this beautiful planet we call Earth, but

B. another rock became the cold red planet we call Mars, so

1. you may subdue a kingdom, or
2. you may be subdued by a kingdom, or
  - a) more likely something between those extremes, but
  - b) my point is this:
    - (1) The Lord controls all, including you.
    - (2) Therefore, trust Him.

## **III. Do you have faith that He knows what to do with you?**

A. Do you have the substance of things hoped for, and

1. the evidence of things not seen,
2. that regardless of how He uses you,
  - a) you know He will bring you into the eternal homeland,
  - b) you know He will invite you into the heavenly country?

B. Most people do not trust the Lord.

1. They do not believe He will do the right thing with their lives.
2. They also believe that they know better than He does.
  - a) Therefore, they do not turn their lives over to Him,
  - b) although He already has in His hand
    - (1) the life of everything living thing, and
    - (2) the breath of all mankind (Job 12.7–10).

**IV. Look at Hebrews 11.16 again,**

**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.**

A. As good as the Earth is,

B. do you want to live here forever?

1. Most people I know do not,

2. unless they are very young.

a) I am telling you there is a better place than here.

b) It is a heavenly country.

(1) The God of the Heavens and the Earth

(2) has prepared a city for you.

(a) He has done so, because

(b) He is not ashamed of you.

i) If you are not ashamed of Him,

ii) become a Christian right now.

**V. If you think you cannot trust Jesus, consider this, you trust Him to**

A. send the Earth around the sun at 19 miles per second,

B. while spinning 1000 MPH on its axis,

1. while you use water on this planet

2. that He furnishes for seven billion people daily,

a) while bacteria attacks you as you sit there listening, yet,

b) He created you with an amazing immune system to keep you healthy.

(1) Yet, for some reason you cannot trust Him

(2) that you might obey Him and receive His promises.

**VI. Begin your life of faith now.**