

Sermon Series: The Surprise of Faith—Lord of Life Lutheran Church—10/29/2000

Title: “Can Faith Be Reasonable?”

Text: Hebrews 11: 1 (2-16)

Introduction: *Illus.: Faith in the Unseen*

Theme: God does not call us to an irrational, unreasonable faith. However, he does call us to a conviction based upon the facts of what he has done through Jesus Christ and calls upon us to trust in him for the future without first giving us all the details.

Understanding the three components that make up faith

- **PRINT AND READ HEBREWS 11: 1**

- It is a matter of the head

1. a certainty conceived through knowledge--I agree that the facts are true
2. *“Faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes from the preaching of Christ.” Romans 10: 17*
3. Whether you are a seeker or a long time believer, you can’t believe unless you first know what you are to believe

- It is a matter of the heart

1. *“No one can say that Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12: 3*
2. a conviction that compels the will--I chose to live in the new life and be done with the old
3. **ILLUS.: THE DOORBELL (Don Bierle, p. 68)**
4. *“Those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!” (NLT) 2 Corinthians 5: 17*

- It is a matter of the feet

1. a trust that fosters obedience—I intentionally commit to follow Jesus even though I can’t see outcome
2. **ILLUS.: FAITH AND HEALING**
3. *“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” Mark 8: 34*

Learning to walk by faith not by sight---three fundamentals to walk by

- *Live with the hopeful optimism of faith*

1. The Story of Creation— **PRINT AND READ HEBREWS 11: 3**
2. Start with the assumption that there is a God and see his creative purpose in you and everything else around you
 - a. *“Whoever goes to God must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Vs. 6)*
 - b. **ILLUS.: REASONS TO BELIEVE IN GOD**
 - c. This type of faith gives *assurance* and *hope*—if God could create everything first time he can recreate it in Jesus
 - d. *“You have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection.” 1 Pet 1: 3*

- *Live with the peace of faith*

1. The stories of Abel, Enoch, and Noah---**PRINT AND READ HEBREWS 11: 2, 4-7**
2. Make it your aim to please God at all times because you already are pleasing to him in Christ Jesus
 - a. What made Abel, Enoch, and Noah pleasing to God was not their actions but their faith (2, 4)
 - b. God “declared” (witnessed—3x’s used in text) to the fact that they were righteous/justified in his sight
3. Stand under the “approval of God” and quit living for the approval of others
 - a. *“For we make it our goal to please him.” 2Cor:5: 9*
 - b. Be willing to step out alone *in faith* and *because of faith* when the rest of the world around you thinks your crazy
 - c. By stepping out in faith we become a light and beacon to others who are being led to Christ and seeking him.

- *Live with the persistent consistency of faith*

1. Because of the promise—The story of Abraham--**PRINT AND READ HEBREWS 11: 8-10**
 - a. God makes good on his word and promise to those who are his “hiers”
2. Because of the resurrection— **PRINT AND READ HEBREWS 11: 11-13c** –end with word “rejoiced”
 - a. **ILLUS.: INVISIBLE CARS**
 - b. Having seen what God did in the past (Christ resurrection), we look forward and rejoice in the future (ours resurr)
3. Because of the final destination— **PRINT AND READ HEBREWS 11: 13d-16**
 - a. Live like aliens on the way home **ILLUS.: OUR TRIP HOME FROM WYOMING THROUGH WIS**
 - b. Let go of the here-and-now so that you can hang onto the life of heaven

Faith in the Unseen

My aunt and uncle had a missionary family visiting. When the missionary children were called in for dinner, their mother said, "Be sure to wash your hands." The little boy scowled and said, "Germs and Jesus. Germs and Jesus. That's all I hear, and I've never seen either one of them."

Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe. Citation: Augustine.

Faith and Healing

My daughter, suffering from anorexia and bulimia, was undergoing treatment at Baptist Medical Center in Kansas City. On one particularly difficult day she was told to drink a glass of milk, but just couldn't. Her doctor was called in. He sat down beside her on the bed and said, "You are a Christian woman, correct?"

She answered yes, so he said, "Do you remember the man Jesus healed near the pool of Siloam? Jesus put mud on his eyes to bring about his healing. But what really healed him?"

She thought for a moment and then answered, "His faith."

"Good!" he said. "Now drink your mud."

Reasons to Believe in God

Several years ago a scientist wrote an article entitled, "Seven Reasons Why I Believe in God." He said, "Consider the rotation of the earth. Our globe spins on its axis at the rate of one thousand miles an hour. If it were just a hundred miles an hour, our days and nights would be ten times as long. The vegetation would freeze in the long night or it would burn in the long day; and there could be no life." He said, "Consider the heat of the sun. Twelve thousand degrees at surface temperature, and we're just far enough away to be blessed by that terrific heat. If the sun gave off half its radiation, we would freeze to death. If it gave off one half more, we would all be crispy critters." He said, "Consider the slant of the earth." I think he said twenty-three degrees. "If it were different than that, the vapors from the oceans would ice over the continents. There could be no life." He said, "Consider the moon. If the moon were fifty thousand miles away rather than its present distance, twice each day giant tides would inundate every bit of land mass on this earth." He said, "Think of the crust of the earth. Just a little bit thicker and there could be no life because there would be no oxygen. Or the thinness of the atmosphere. If our atmosphere was just a little thinner, the millions of meteors now burning themselves out in space would plummet this earth into oblivion. These are reasons," he said, "why I believe in God." Citation: Frank Pollard, "Our Greatest Victory,"

Invisible Cars

When we were driving through Pennsylvania Dutch country, my seven-year-old grandson, Michael, couldn't get over all the Amish buggies. "Grandpa, why do they use horses instead of cars?" "Because they don't believe in automobiles," his mother explained. It was quiet for a minute, then Michael said, "But can't they see them?"

Hebrews 11:1-16

Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see. ²God accepted our ancestors because of their faith. ³Faith convinces us that God created the world through his word. This means what can be seen was made by something that could not be seen. ⁴Faith led Abel to offer God a better sacrifice than Cain's sacrifice. Through his faith Abel received God's approval, since God accepted his sacrifices. Through his faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. ⁵Faith enabled Enoch to be taken instead of dying. No one could find him, because God had taken him. Scripture states that before Enoch was taken, God was pleased with him. ⁶No one can please God without faith. Whoever goes to God must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who seek him. ⁷Faith led Noah to listen when God warned him about the things in the future that he could not see. He obeyed God and built a ship to save his family. Through faith Noah condemned the world and received God's approval that comes through faith. ⁸Faith led Abraham to obey when God called him to go to a place that he would receive as an inheritance. Abraham left his own country without knowing where he was going. ⁹Faith led Abraham to live as a foreigner in the country that God had promised him. He lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who received the same promise from God. ¹⁰Abraham was waiting for the city that God had designed and built, the city with permanent foundations. ¹¹Faith enabled Abraham to become a father, even though he was old and Sarah had never been able to have children. Abraham trusted that God would keep his promise. ¹²Abraham was as good as dead. Yet, from this man came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the grains of sand on the seashore. ¹³All these people died having faith. They didn't receive the things that God had promised them, but they saw these things coming in the distant future and rejoiced. They acknowledged that they were living as strangers with no permanent home on earth. ¹⁴Those who say such things make it clear that they are looking for their own country. ¹⁵If they had been thinking about the country that they had left, they could have found a way to go back. ¹⁶Instead, these men were longing for a better country—a heavenly country. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God. He has prepared a city for them.(GW)