

Sermon Series: “Lasting Faith” ---- Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—4/21/2002(Confirmation Sunday)

Title: “What IS Faith?”

Text: Hebrews 11: 1-2

Introduction: *Ills.: Germs and Jesus*

Theme: Faith is not something to be captured by a moment, an event, or a feeling. Rather, it is the unexplainable, supernatural confidence and trust in Jesus, our Savior which leads us courageously, without explanation, to live out the transformed lives which he has given back to us.

Faith IS . . . a confidence based upon hope

?? What is your life foundation?

1. Word “**assurance**” used means “ foundation” (the under-girding support, unseen but crucial for long term stability)
2. **Ills.: The foundations of a skyscraper**
3. Many lay down foundations for their life and faith which won’t and can’t stand the test of time
 1. Physical—health, wealth, career, education, athletics, academics
 2. Emotional—family safely around, marriage securely in place, safety/security issues
 3. Spiritual—church program, “the crowd,” the ministry staff, the style of worship
4. “*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.*” 1 Cor 3:11-13
5. True faith — saving faith — Christian faith is based upon Jesus, living in freedom and grace, and dying to yourself to live powerfully transformed through Jesus in your baptism (**Confirmation Sunday is a reaffirming of baptism**)

?? Are you wishing or hoping you’ll get to heaven?

6. Certain about our eternal, heavenly destination because we are confident in Jesus
 1. “Are you certain, if you died today, that you would go to heaven?”
 2. “Want-to-be” followers of Jesus are those who know about Jesus with their heads but have not set heart on him
3. **Ills.: The rich young man and Jesus**
4. “*Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*” Heb 9: 27-28
7. Ordering life’s plans and goals around our Christ-centered hope of going to heaven
 1. “*For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*” Romans 8: 24-25
 2. **Ills.: Life’s important priorities**
 3. If hope is heaven, how are you living that reflects that in your actions, words, and priorities?
 4. If your hope is heaven, what are you doing in your life plans to assist your reaching that destination?

Faith IS . . . a conviction based upon supernatural sight

?? Faith is not something “you get” through logical consideration of the facts (head-knowledge/Sunday School faith)

1. “*Now, we didn't receive the spirit that belongs to the world. Instead, we received the Spirit who comes from God so that we could know the things which God has freely given us. . .A person who isn't spiritual doesn't accept the teachings of God's Spirit. He thinks they're nonsense. He can't understand them because a person must be spiritual to evaluate them.*” 1 Cor. 2:12-14
2. There are many facts of the faith (death, resurrection, miracles, Pentecost, personal miracles) but faith is much more:
 1. Faith is **KNOWLEDGE** but it is also **TRUST** combined with **PERSONAL ASSENT**

?? Faith is not “**BLIND FAITH**” but rather is **SUPERNATURAL SIGHT**

1. Looking at the same circumstances of life another sees and seeing Jesus’ inverted world-view of them
2. **Ills.: Eyes to see**
3. Viewing the humanly impossible and discerning the **God possible**
4. Gazing at people, things, and tasks the world discounts and beholding the treasures and opportunities before you

Germes and Jesus

It seems the pastors small son was told by his mother that he should wash his hands because there were germs living in all that dirt. He refused and complained: "Germes and Jesus! Germes and Jesus! That’s all I ever hear around this house and I’ve never seen either one!"

Life’s important priorities

At a nursing home in Florida, a resident group was discussing ailments: "My arms are so weak I can hardly lift this cup of coffee," said one. "Yes, I know, my cataracts are so bad I can’t even see my coffee," replied another. "I can’t turn my head because of the arthritis in my neck," said a third, at which several others nodded weakly. "My blood pressure pills make me very dizzy," another went on. "I guess that’s the price we pay for getting old," winced an old man. There was general agreement and a short moment of silence ensued. "Well, it’s not that bad," said one woman cheerfully. "Thank God we can all still drive!"

Eyes to See

Charles Swindoll in his book “Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back” tells the story of a farmer who wanted to impress his hunting buddies. To impress them, he bought the smartest, most expensive hunting dog he could find. He trained this dog to do things no other dog on earth could do---impossible feats that would surely amaze anyone. Then he invited the neighbors to go duck hunting with him. After a long patient wait in the boat a group of ducks flew over and the hunters were able to make a few hits. Several ducks fell in the water. "Go get ‘em!" shouted the proud owner to his magnificent dog. The dog leaped out of the boat, walked on the water, and picked up a bird and returned to the boat. As soon as he dropped the duck in the boat he trotted off across the water again and grabbed another duck and brought it back to the boat. The owner beamed with pride as his wonderful dog walked across the water and retrieved each of the birds one by one. Unable to resist the opportunity to brag a bit he asked his fellow hunters, "Do you notice anything unusual about my dog?" One of them rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Yes," he finally said. "Come to think of it, I do! That silly dog doesn’t know how to swim does he??"

Hebrews 11:1-2

¹Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. ²This is what the ancients were commended for. [NIV]