

SOM Week 17 Overview

Last weeks Readings

- Philippians 1-4
- *The Crucified Life* by A. W. Tozer (Chapters 1-6, Pg 1-88)

This week's readings

- Jonah 1-4
- *The Crucified Life* by A. W. Tozer (Chapter 7-12, Pg 89-153)

Teaching: Faith

Introduction

Turn in your bibles to Hebrews chapter 11- the hall of faith.

Hebrews 11:1 "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear"

Our topic or subject this morning is Faith.

- What is faith because we hear people today say "Have faith." That does me a lot of good if I don't know what faith is. Now that I have a brain tumor. Or "Keep the faith".
- And in the world of positive confession you are always supposed to be prospering, and if you're not there is a lack of faith in your life, you're always supposed to be healthy, and if you're not there is a lack of faith in your life. Now that's not what this is talking about here, that is faith in faith.
- **sneezes.* I don't have a cold, I don't have a cold, I don't have a runny nose, I'm not sick. I have a friend who tries gaslighting himself when he is sick to get better faster. That's faith in faith which is stupid
- Faith is only as good as the object you invest it in. all of us have friends who if they ask for \$10 and say I'll give it back next week, and cause we're Christians we pull it out, but we say goodbye to that \$10.
 - Now we have other friends who when they ask for \$10, we'd say here's \$20. Because they're completely trustworthy.
 - Your trust / faith is invested in their character.

Faith is only as good as who or what it is invested in- And our faith is in the living person of Jesus. There is no one else you would rather but your faith in. Jesus will never ever fail you.

- So this morning, we are going to try to scratch the surface explaining what faith is, how to obtain or produce more faith, what it's not, and look at examples that demonstrate faith.

Before we define faith, let's demonstrate its importance.

- In the gospels there are two times where we see Jesus marvel or be astonished, the first is with the Centurion in Matthew 8. This centurion has a servant that is sick and comes to Jesus for help, as Jesus agrees to go with the centurion, he responds to Jesus that Jesus only need to speak the word, he need to come all the way to his house, and his servant would be healed. Jesus's response was to marvel at this centurion's faith.
- In mark 6 when Jesus came back to his hometown of Nazareth, He marvels at their unbelief, and He could do no mighty works there
 - When Jesus calmed the waves and the wind in Mark 4, he turns around at his disciples and asks them Mark 4:40 "How is it that you have no faith?"
 - When 4 guys bring their friend who was paralyzed to Jesus, the bible says Jesus saw their faith (mark 2:5)
 - When Jesus told the apostles about forgiveness that they had to forgive their brothers seven times in a day, they said "Lord increase our faith" (Luke 17:5)
 - Paul writing to the Ephesian church said "For by grace you have been saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8)
 - Matthew 17:20 "or assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."
 - Hears the last verse, one of my favorites on faith Hebrews 11:6 "But 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"
- So faith is important. That word faith is mentioned 244 times in the new testament. but what is faith?

What is faith?

- I love when the bible gives exposition on the bible, and here we have the bible defining faith: Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
- Faith(pistis) the conviction or belief is the substance of things hoped for.
 - I love when people try to tell me that they don't have faith or that they are not a person of faith, usually atheists or a-religious, but i love to reason with them that everyone religious or not demonstrates faith every single day all day.
 - When you sit in a chair, you are demonstrating faith that the chair won't break
 - When you drink water, you are demonstrating faith even though you don't know what is in the pipes or who bottled it
 - When you eat dinner that its not poisoned
 - When you start your car, and on and on and on
 - We all demonstrate faith, we all have a belief or a conviction, and even more so with Jesus. The first time Jesus appeared to his apostles after the resurrection, Thomas wasn't there, he said he would not believe unless he saw and on and on.
 - And then Jesus showed up and Jesus said John 20:29 "Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

- None of us here have seen Him, yet we love Him. we didn't see him get crucified and resurrected, yet we believe it. The evidence helps but we still believe it by faith. That's what is the conviction
 - When someone asks you how do you know? I know that I know-but how? I know that I know that I know.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for.

- That word substance is hypostasis(hoopostasis) in the greek, (Hoopo- under, stasis, to stand) to stand under, it means that which is put under, the foundation. sub(under) stance(standing)
 - Our conviction, our faith is what stands under us. Think about some of the promises that you hold so dear, they are treasures to you, and they are verses that you constantly go back to.
 - For me one of them was Philippians 1:6 "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus." I held onto that verse. God you started this, you need to complete it. It bolstered my faith that He was working in me, that what He started He would complete.
 - There was a season where I struggled with my salvation, "I didn't feel saved" I knew I had prayed and ask Jesus to come into my heart, to be my Lord and savior, to forgive me of my sins, and yet for some reason there was this fear(now im thinking it was fiery darts because Paul tells us to put on the helmet of salvation) that I was going to get before God and He would say "depart from me I never knew you."
 - And I was at a young adults retreat and Colossians 3:3 popped into my head "for you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God" and Ephesians 1:6 "Accepted in the beloved" o what a comfort and a relief these verses brought.
 - One of my favorite verses in the bible is in daniel, when shadrach, mesach, and abednego are about to be thrown into the fire they say Daniel 3:17-18 "If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."
 - In the hospital yesterday, Bobby kept on singing the bridge of good good father- "you are perfect in all of your ways"- knowing and believing that God is good, and that He will work all things for good, no matter how dire the circumstance
 - That is faith. It is that which stands under of things hoped for. And there is no other faith like ours. That we believe there is God who loves us, who died on a cross for you and me, who rose again, who freely gives us eternal life if we would simply confess and believe in Him. no more pain, no more sorrow, no more death. That is our faith and hope.

- And our hope isn't like the world- oh I hope this will happen, it is firm it is true, the hebrew author said its like an anchor, there is a conviction behind our hope. We don't hope that there is a heaven, we know that there is a heaven, we don't hope that Jesus is risen from the dead, we know and there is a surety and a conviction of those truths.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, its the evidence of things not seen.

- Something I loved learning about in my anatomy and physiology class was the eyes. Our eyes are so intricately detailed and designed. But our eyes, our light receptors. They receive light through rods and cones, and this is the part I don't understand. Our brain takes the light we receive with our eyes and plays that in our minds so that we "see".
 - I bring that up, because think about how much we don't see. There is air that we are breathing that we can't see. Laws of gravity that we all submit to and effect us but we can't see, there are even certain colors we can't see.
 - But i love the example of gravity, we can't see it, but we can see and feel its effects.
- I bring that up, because the bible says that prayer accomplishes things "The fervent effectual prayers of a righteous man availeth much" - even though we can't always see the results with out eyes, there are things happening in the spiritual and the unseen realms that we can affect through our faith and our prayers.

Okay so Joel has made his point about faith, that we all demonstrate a level of faith in something or someone, that we can't see it but we can see or feel its effects, that it is something that stands under, its a foundation. So what?

"You have been saved by grace through faith"

- Your salvation, that jewel that is so precious, the means of its arrival and you grasping it, is through faith. Through believing in someone that you can't physically see.

Jesus said in Mark 11:22 "So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

- Thats an incredible promise that Jesus gives. He commands His disciples to have faith in God, and they could do great exploits. My opinion which I believe the bible substantiates, is that faith like this to ask for things without doubting is a gift given by God.
 - 1 Corinthians 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit- God is the one who gives faith. The example in my head is when Peter and John walked into the temple and there was a beggar begging, and Peter said "silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you, in the name of Jesus get up"
 - I believe that is faith given by God for the purposes of God.

- This is not blab it and grab it, this is not name it and claim it. He is not saying pray for a ferrari and get it. He has already qualified prayer "Father thy will be done, not my will be done, but yours"
- All that being said, pray big prayers, ask big things, we have a big God who can do the impossible

If faith is a spiritual gift from God, how do i get more faith

- Aw man God only gave me a bit of faith, He gave that person a lot of faith, Im stuck with this amount of faith for the rest of my life. I don't think so, not necessarily. Before Caleb, the worship leader was Laurie Dechamplagne, and I remember talking to her about spiritual gifts, and she mentioned how "God has always given me what I need, sometimes its knowledge that I could never have known, sometimes its speaking a word in season, sometimes its the gift of helps.. Our job is to be available and in tune with the Master"
- I do not consider myself a man of giant faith, I want more faith. And there have been times where God has given me that. How i made the decision to leave college and step into ministry was God given faith.
- But my faith in God has grown over the years, and here is how Romans 10:17 "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - As you spend time in God's word, reading it, hearing it, listening to it, the bible says that is how we develop and produce faith, by the hearing of the word of God.
 - And part of it is no doubt spiritual, something that happen to us as we read the word-faith arises. But part of it is explainable. As you see the characters in the bible and they're messed up lives but that they looked to God and trusted Him, and He never let them down, it encourages us to do the same.

Jude 1:20-21 "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

- The brother of Jesus in his short epistle as he closes exhorts believers to build themselves up on our most holy faith- its on you and I to build ourselves up. Spend time in prayer, spend time in the word, spend time in fellowship and in church. But at the end of the day your relationship with God is no one else's responsibility than you're own.
 - And God is so good and faithful to woo and to draw us, I love the verse work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works it out in you, both to will and do his good pleasure.

2 Timothy 4:7 "I fought the fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"

- Some of the apostle Paul's last words, was that he had kept the faith, he had endured, he had held on to jesus. That is our calling and responsibility too. Hold onto the faith, no matter what happens or how you feel. Hold onto Jesus.

Conclusion

- I had other things to bring up like the man with the demon possessed son when he said “Lord I believe but help my unbelief” or how one of the armaments the Lord give us in the armor of God is the shield of faith.
 - But all i can think of is what peter said in 1 Peter 1:7 “that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,”
 - Our faith is more precious than gold, and when things happen, and life happens, what do you fall back on- what is your faith in. I love mike, and i believe that God is able to do a miracle and i am praying for one, but i also know that if God takes him home, this isn’t goodbye, its see you later- absent from the body is present with the Lord.
 - That is our faith.
- “As an eagle... fluttered over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings- so the Lord alone did lead him”
- “Fluttereeth over- the early stages of faith are reaching upward, like eaglets for their food when the mother bird is overhead. It is an older faith than learns to swing out into nothingness and drop down full weight on God- the broken up nest of former experiences left behind- nothing between us and the abyss but God Himself. Trained faith is a triumphant gladness in having nothing but God- not rest, no foothold- nothing but Himself. A triumphant gladness in swinging out into that abyss, rejoicing in every fresh emergency that is going to prove Him true. The Lord alone- that is trained faith.”

So as we close, maybe take inventory, as paul said examine yourself to see if you are in the faith. Because this is what sustains us as we make our pilgrimage through life. Our faith and hope in the Lord.

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