

What Faith Is

Hebrews 10:38-11:3

Code: 82-10

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews, you can turn to it if you want, is known by many names. It is called the hall of fame. It is called the heroes of faith. It is called the honor roll of the saints. It is called the faith chapter. And it has even been called the Westminster Abbey of Scripture because it has so many of the testimonies of those who have been basically immortalized in stained glass.

Now my job is just to get the series started, so I would just encourage you that this is the part where you dig the ditch and put in the footings. The real glory and wonder and beauty of this edifice is to come in the individual stories that are told throughout this incredible chapter. So I'm just going to do some of the groundwork and prepare the site a little bit for what is to come. And in order to do that, I want you to look at Hebrews 11, but back up to the tenth chapter and verse 38, and I want to read just five verses, verses 38, 39, and then 1, 2 and 3.

Hebrews 10:38, "But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."

We have at the end of chapter 10 a very familiar statement: "The just shall live by faith, the righteous one shall live by faith." That first is laid out in Scripture back in the prophet Habakkuk chapter 2, verse 4. It is repeated again by Paul in Romans and in Galatians. And here it appears again in the book of Hebrews. And we understand that: "The just shall live by faith." Salvation is by faith and faith alone. That is at the very heart of all of our understanding of the gospel.

Now let me help you to kind of flow into this section a little bit, it fits perfectly into this epistle. In the first ten chapters, the writer has been laboring to prove one point, ten chapters to make one point, and that is that the new covenant in the blood of Christ, the new covenant in Jesus' blood is completely and in every way superior to the old covenant, which was marked by the blood of animals. Let me say it again. The new covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ is completely and in every way superior to the old covenant which was marked by animal blood.

The writer of Hebrews, whom we can't be certain as to his identity – but the writer has basically demonstrated to us that Jesus is better than everything connected to the old covenant. He is better than angels. He is better than prophets. He is better than Moses. He is better than Aaron. He is better than Joshua. He is a better priest than any previous priest, and He is a better sacrifice than any previous sacrifice, and He is the one who seals a better covenant. The message of the first ten chapters is, "Put your faith in Jesus Christ. Move on from the symbolism of the old covenant to the new covenant in Christ."

At periodic times through this epistle, at least four times already by the time you get to chapter 10, there is a warning, and that warning is given to the readers of this epistle. And the warning is this: come all the way to Christ. Come all the way to Christ. Don't turn back. Don't neglect to come to Christ. Don't neglect the salvation, chapter 2. Enter into the rest that is available to you. Having heard all there is to hear about Christ, don't walk away, don't turn away, chapter 6, or it's impossible for you to be renewed again to repentance. And here we find it again in chapter 10, verse 38, "Don't come close to Christ and then shrink back. We are not of those who shrink back to destruction."

What's going on here is the apostle who wrote this, or the writer who is associated with the apostle, some of the apostles, is basically saying to Jewish people – that's why it's called Hebrews – "You have heard about Christ. You have somehow connected yourself to the church of Jesus Christ. You're around, you're interested, you're close; come all the way to Christ. Don't go back. Don't fall away. Don't neglect the salvation that has been offered to you." And these warnings are all through this epistle and they are dire warnings, to put it mildly.

If you go back to chapter 10, verse 29, "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

This epistle is written to a group of believers. But within that group of believers there were Jews who had come to participate in some external way in the fellowship, but had not come all the way to Christ. They are warned that they better come, or the end is serious and eternal disaster. "Put your faith in Jesus Christ" is the message of the book of Hebrews, because only in Christ can you have eternal life. It's not enough to be connected on the outside. So as we look at the end of chapter 10, we have a warning added to all the other

warnings: "Come to Christ. Come to Christ." And here we find again in verse 38 what we already know to be true if we know anything about the Bible, and that is that you come to Christ by faith, by faith.

Now here is the real problem at this point. You have many of these Jewish people who had come to Christ by faith and were the true church, the true believers, or identified all through this epistle in that way. But you also had Jews who had come close, but not all the way to Christ, and they were in danger of falling back. And the difficulty for them was to move from – and you will understand this – a system where they earned their salvation to the gospel where they received it not by works, but by faith.

The first century Jews had a religion of works. The first century Judaism was not even Old Testament Judaism, it was essentially an apostate form of Old Testament religion, because the Old Testament said, "The just shall live by faith." "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness." Salvation was always by faith. This is the only way anyone was ever saved from the beginning of redemption to the end.

But a simple study of the Gospels will reveal the fact that the Judaism of the New Testament era was not a true Judaism. It wasn't even a legitimate Old Testament Judaism. It had a corrupt leadership. The priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, all of them were corrupt, all of them represented the kingdom of darkness. Jesus said, "You're all of your father the Devil." Even though they thought they represented God, they did not. Any system of salvation by works, by effort, by doing something, by earning it is a satanic counterfeit of the truth.

So what you had in first century Judaism was not the true Old Testament religion of faith, it was a heretical, satanic system of works, righteousness that had turned grace and faith on its head and replaced it with works. Judaism in that day – and let me say it clearly – Judaism in that day was nothing but a religious cult built on ethics and ceremony, nothing but a religious cult built on ethics and ceremony like any other false religion. And that is why in our Lord's final words the end of His ministry, He said, "The temple will be torn down, and not one stone will be left upon another." A few years later the Romans came and did just that, and brought apostate Judaism to its crashing end. Judaism was not the religion that God had given the people of Israel through the prophets and priests of the Old Testament. It had come to be nothing more than another form of satanic works salvation.

And there worse to God than that. There is nothing worse than a works system. You might think it'd be worse to be an atheist. You might think it would be worse to be an agnostic. You might think it would be worse to be a Hindu or a Buddhist or some other non-Christian religion, Islam. The worst of all offenses to God is to turn salvation by grace as revealed in the Old Testament and the New Testament into a works system. That's the worst of all things because it twists divine revelation.

Those other religions aren't based upon the Scripture, they're based upon some satanic sources. False forms of Judaism and false forms of Christianity are based on satanically-twisted Scripture. The Bible is clear,

Ephesians 2:8 and 9, “For by grace are you saved through faith,” – right? – “not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Romans chapter 3, again and again. We’re not saved by works, we’re saved by grace through faith, Romans chapter 4. Again in Romans chapter 10, Romans chapter 11, 1 Corinthians 1, and all through Scripture, salvation is by faith. Jews were counting on their works. So after ten chapters of showing the superiority of Christ, at the end of chapter 10 the writer says, “The righteous one shall live by faith,” a direct quote out of Habakkuk chapter 2, verse 4. Come all the way to Christ by faith; don’t turn around and walk back.

Again they were warned in chapter 2, they were warned in chapter 4, they were warned in chapter 6, and here for the fourth time in chapter 10, the severe warning back in verse 29, and another warning at the end of the chapter. Faith is the only way to God. Come to Christ by faith. Through Him is the only way to God.

Now what do we mean by faith? And that is the reason for chapter 11, because we have immediately in chapter 11, verse 1, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” You will notice that it’s nothing to do with works or effort or ceremony or sacrament. What you have here is a definition of faith, just a simple basic definition of faith. And then after that definition in the opening couple of verses you have literally one illustration after another, after another, after another, after another of people who lived and received salvation by faith; and all of them are Old Testament people. And this is to say to these Jewish believers, “Come all the way to faith. Come all the way to faith as Abel did, as Enoch did, as Noah did, as Abraham did, as Sarah did. Come all the way to faith as Isaac did, as Jacob did, as Joseph did, as Moses did. Come all the way to faith as Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the prophets,” on and on. They’re all models of salvation by faith. And so you have in the opening couple of verses a simple declaration of what faith is, then these powerful, dramatic illustrations of that faith in all these characters that are listed here. Now how important is it that these are all Old Testament personalities? Because that is the point to the Jews. God has always saved and only saved by faith, and you see it in the record of the Old Testament.

Now I want to show you three things in these opening three verses, and again, just kind of digging some holes here to set some footing for what is going to come. I want to talk about the nature of faith, the testimony of faith, and the illustration of faith. This is not going to be new to you, but I think it will be a helpful foundation.

Let’s look at the nature of faith, verse 1: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Now this is not a comprehensive, fully orbed theological definition of faith, but it is essentially a declaration. Rather than a definition, it’s a declaration, and it defines faith in two ways. Faith, the Greek word *pistis* which is all over the New Testament, means belief, trust, faith.

Faith can be defined in these two ways. It is the assurance of things hoped for, and it is the conviction of things not seen. Now those are very, very close to being synonymous statements. But let’s see if we can’t pull them apart a little bit. First of all, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for,” the Authorized says. NAS says,

“The assurance of things hoped for.” I like the word “substance,” and that gives us some kind of handle to get a grip on this word. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for.” Faith takes something hoped for but not realized and gives it substance.

We have faith, but our faith has substance, it has body, it has weight. We have faith in things hoped for, things we don't possess, things we haven't seen, things yet to come. But faith gives them present substance, present reality. And as this chapter will show, and in Old Testament times, there were many men, and, as we will see, many women who had nothing but promises, nothing but promises. In fact, all of them had nothing but promises.

Look at the end of chapter 11, verse 39: “All these, having gained approval” – by God – “through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.” We know what was promised was realized in the coming of Christ. They believed in a promise that had not been realized.

All the Old Testament promises related to the future. All of them, men and women, had nothing but promises to rest their hope on. They had no visible evidence that the promises would be fulfilled. In fact, if you look at the history of Israel, it looked consistently very, very bleak; yet the promises were real to them. Those people lived in promises they never ever saw. That is the characteristic of all the people in this chapter.

Look, for example, at chapter 11, verse 26. It's a remarkable statement about Moses. It says Moses, “considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.” He was willing to give up the in hand treasures of Egypt as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, he was willing to give up what he had in his hand of Egyptian wealth for Christ, Christ who was merely a messianic hope. But the hope was so powerful, the promise was so secure and sure that it had substance, that it had weight; and he was glad to let go of what he had in his hand for what would come in the future only by way of promise.

In other words, like Moses, all the rest of these people in chapter 11 were people of faith and faith that was trust in God's promise for the future as yet unrealized, but having so much weight and so much substance that you bank your life on it. They took God at His word. And herein lies the foundation of all true and genuine saving faith: you must believe the revelation of God.

When we talk about faith we're not talking about some abstraction. We're not talking about, “Well, you know, I just kind of have faith it'll all work out.” We're not talking about that. We're talking about the kind of bankable, life-transforming confidence in something that has been promised to you that is as yet not realized. And by the way, while we do have the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies in the Messiah and we have the full record in the New Testament, all the promises of our future salvation are as yet unrealized for us as well. They lived in promise of the coming Messiah and the kingdom He would bring. We live in the promise of the coming Messiah and the kingdom He will bring as well. We live by faith even as they did, though the

things that they looked to see and never saw concerning the first coming of Christ we have seen in the record of the New Testament.

Faith is not some kind of wistful longing. You hear people say, “Well, I’m a person of faith.” What in the world does that mean? If you have faith in the wrong thing that’s just plain stupid.

Now this defies how people in the world live, and they look at us and they say, “You people live your whole life with this high level of devotion and dedication and worship and expression and witness and testimony even to the point of sacrifice, sacrificing your life for someone you’ve never seen and promises you haven’t realized.” It defies how people intend to live their life. They want to see something before they believe it. Even Thomas said, “I’m not going to believe unless I can see.”

But Christian hope is belief in God’s word, *contra mundo*, against how the world thinks. If we follow the way the world thinks, they believe in what they can see. They don’t have a lot to believe in. They don’t believe that we have a secure future in the hands of politicians and educators. They don’t believe that life down the road is going to provide any special positive changes for us, as they watch the world disintegrate. They live in high levels or some level of fear and anxiety about the future, and they look at us and they say, “Why are you smiling? Why are you so happy? Where’s all the joy coming from?” and you say, “Well, I live by faith.” And to them, that seems a kind of insanity, a kind of insanity to live believing something that you cannot see.

But the difference is, they don’t have anything to believe in, we have the Word of God to believe in. Our faith is anchored to the Word of God to such a degree that we would be willing, like Moses, to suffer the loss of everything we have in this world to hold on to the promises in Christ. Jesus put it this way: “If any man come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me.”

In the book of Daniel you have the young men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego confronted with a choice; and their choice was to obey Nebuchadnezzar, whom they could see, and to worship the king they could see, or obey God, whom they could not see, and trust God by walking into a fiery furnace. Without any hesitation they chose to believe in God, even though the king was real, and the king was visible, and God was invisible, and God was only apprehended by faith. But God had revealed Himself in His word, and they believed in His word. And so they walked right into the fiery furnace. The Christian has no doubt really that it is better to stake everything on the realities of our invisible God than to trust in everything in this visible world. So faith is *contra mundo*, it’s against the world and how the world operates, and it’s part of what makes us so alien from the world around us.

Now Christian hope or Christian faith is belief in God not only against the world, but against the senses, against the senses. People in general would say, “I want what I can lay my hands on. I want what I can taste and touch and hold.” The senses tell us to grasp the thing that’s there in the moment; very different than Christians.

We read in verse 6 in Hebrews 11, "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 seek Him." You want to come to God, you have to believe that He is even though you've never seen Him. You not only have to believe that He is, but you have to believe that He is a rewarder of those who come to Him. That's the foundation of our faith. We believe God is, who He is, and we believe He rewards those who put their trust in Him. That's in verse 6, sums it all up. We believe that He is, and we believe that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. That's how we live our life. We don't live our life by the touch and the feel and the hearing and the seeing of the senses, but rather by the promises of God in His word.

So Christian hope is against the world and it's against the senses. And, thirdly, I would just say just to kind of spread it out a little bit, Christian hope is belief against the present, belief against the present. Just another way to look at it: the Christian sacrifices the pleasure of the present for the promises of the future.

As a kid, my father had a famous saying that he fired at me regularly as a kid. He would say to me, "Johnny, why do you always sacrifice the future on the altar of the immediate? Why do you always sacrifice the future on the altar of the immediate?" It was very hard for me as a young person to be able to put off gratification into the future and make small investments in what would be a rich future instead of grabbing at everything tangible in the moment, it was stuck in front of me. That's what people in the world do.

It's not even good philosophy, to be honest with you. Some of you will remember from your philosophy class. I took Western philosophy many moons ago, but I do remember Epicurus, and Epicurus said, "The chief end of man is pleasure." But even Epicurus when he talked about pleasure didn't mean what many people think he meant. Epicurus never did say that the ultimate aim of man or the chief end of life is momentary immediate pleasure. Epicurus knew better than that. He insisted that the real pleasure was taking the long view. The very thing which is pleasant at the moment may be immediately disappointing. It may bring pain in the long run. The thing which hurts at the moment may bring you joy in the end.

And I think we know that even in a natural sense. The real joyful accomplishments in life are the accomplishments of those who can push through the momentary pain to achieve those ultimate ends. And that's what Epicurus was talking about. Live for that long-range, ultimate pleasure that is the end of rejecting all the momentary fickle pleasures that distract you from anything lasting.

Well, far beyond Epicurus is the Christian's perception where the Christian says, "I'm not interested in the momentary pleasures of this life, I'm not interested in them. I'm not even interested in the long-term pleasures of this life, the long-term fulfillment in this life. I'm far more interested in the pleasures in the life to come. I'm far more interested in what the Lord has prepared for them that love Him. I'm happy to refuse the pleasures in this life that would cut me off from the true pleasures which are eternal."

People think that the future is uncertain; we know better. We know the whole history of the universe, right? It's all laid out in Scripture. We know exactly what's going to happen because it's revealed in the Word of God. And the Bible has a perfect track record; everything its ever said throughout all of its – Genesis to Revelation, everything it's ever said that can be verified in human history or in human behavior or human experience has proven to be true. And so we believe in the Word of God, and by faith we trust that Word.

Now let me just say maybe a couple of other things about this. Everybody lives by faith, everybody does. You live by faith every time you turn on your faucet and drink what comes out. You don't know who's playing in your pipes, you don't know anything about anything. You live by faith every time you go to a restaurant. You sit there, they hand you a plateful of stuff and you don't ask a question, you eat it. You have no idea what's going on in the back of that place. I know, you found an A or a B on the front window. Anybody can stick one of those in any window. You live by faith.

You live by faith every time you get in your car, and six or eight cylinders begin to explode, and you survive. You live by faith every time you get on an offramp and you go whizzing off the freeway at 55 miles-an-hour not thinking that two semis are coming on the same ramp because you feel that somebody who put the roads together is going to do something that's going to produce safety not disaster. We all live by faith. It's sort of like Pavlov's dogs. We all learn how to salivate because we've been trained by certain behaviors. So everybody lives by faith to some degree. You live by faith when you go to the surgeon, right? They knock you out, and then they do whatever they do, and you have no idea what they've just done. You have no idea what they took out or what they put in.

We all have to live by faith. You can't survive in this world without faith. But we're not talking about human faith. Why are you willing to go to the surgeon? Why are you willing to start your car? Why are you willing to drive on the freeway? Why are you willing to go to a restaurant? Why are you willing to drink the water out of the faucet? Because you have a history that indicates those things have been safe up to this point. So it's not really faith, it's experience. You have learned that there are things to be trusted. Now if you go to India, they will tell you there are places where you're going to go, you don't want to drink the water, you don't want to eat the food, you don't want to touch anything. Why? Because they know by experience that this could be dangerous to you.

So when we're talking about that kind of natural faith, we're really talking about things that basically are conclusions we come to as general notions because of experience. We have no personal experience with God, Christ, the Holy Spirit. We have no personal experience with heaven. We have no personal experience with all that God has promised to them that love Him. But we put our whole lives in the hands of God on the basis of promises we have not received. That is real faith.

That's not to say we haven't experienced the leading of the Lord, the joy of the Lord, the fruit of the Spirit; we have. But in terms of the big end – eternal glory, eternal heaven, resurrection – we have not experienced that.

But still, faith is the substance or assurance, *hupostasis*. That's a strong word, it's weighty. It means "to be set." It means to be set. It's used in chapter 1 of Hebrews where it says that the Son of God is the *hupostasis* of God. He is God delivered. He is the essence of God, the substance of God.

Faith provides firm ground for us to stand on while we wait for the fulfillment of God's promises. Faith furnishes my heart with firm support. Faith believes God, relies on His truthfulness. The more I study the Bible, the more I know it had to have been written by God, right? The divine authorship of Scripture is so evident, it has the very glory of God inherent in it. The Scripture has its own glory, it vindicates itself. I don't have any doubts about anything in the Bible. The longer I study it, the more I believe it.

Look at chapter 11, verse 13: "All these died" – Old Testament people that are being talked about in chapter 11 – "all these died in faith without receiving the promises, but having seen them" – by faith – "and having welcomed them by faith from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." That's what it means to live by faith: promises you've never received, experiences you never had; you see them with the eye of faith, you welcome them from a distance. In the meantime, you're strangers and exiles on the earth. And then the writer goes on to say, "We're seeking a country of our own." Verse 16, "We're seeking a better country, that is, a heavenly country." Our hope takes us all the way to heaven.

So real faith is this substantial trust in the promises of God. Faith takes that future promise and pulls it into present reality and gives it weight in our lives. And the second thing he says in verse 1, "Faith is the conviction of things not seen." This takes it to a greater intensity. It's not just hoping, it's not just hoping for something, it's not just strongly hoping for it; it is the conviction that it is true, *elegchos*. Just means that, "an absolute conviction." Implied there is that this is an unwavering confidence. This just pushes it one step further than the idea that it has weight and substance, that we believe it; it is a firm conviction. It is that firm conviction that allowed martyrs to be burned at the stake and never waver.

Faith is living on the basis of things not seen and being so sure of them that they become your convictions. And now we've moved from what you believe to how you behave, because you live by your convictions. And you can go back to chapter 11, verse 27, back to the verse after the one we read earlier about Moses. Moses was willing to take the reproach of Christ over the riches of Egypt because his faith was in the coming Messiah. But notice how that showed up in practicality, verse 27, "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen."

Moses left Egypt, and he was the adopted son of the princess. He left Egypt to go out into the wilderness. And that is to say his faith not only had weight and substance in his believing it, but it had enough conviction to move him in the direction that he ought to go. That's what we mean by conviction.

Or, you could look at the illustration of Noah – and you'll have the opportunity to do that. Chapter 7 talks about Noah. But let me just remind you of Noah.

There was no such thing as rain. So God says to Noah, "It's going to rain," and Noah says, "It's going to what?" "It's going to rain, like water's going to come out of the sky." "Really?" "You have to trust Me for that. It's not going to rain for a long time, a hundred and twenty years; but it's going to rain."

Now never having seen rain, he could visualize it because there was water. But Noah believed God that it was going to rain. He not only believed God it was going to rain, he believed God was going to bring so much rain it would drown the entire population of the whole earth, and that the only way that he could ever escape, and his wife and his three sons and their wives, was to build a boat in the middle of the desert. It's going to rain; it's never rained. It's going to float a boat in the middle of the desert; this is rain beyond comprehension. It's going to drown the entire planet. So what did he do? He built a boat. For a hundred and twenty years he built that.

Can you imagine what his neighbors said? "I mean, you've been at it eighty years, Noah. Are you kidding? It's never going to happen." He didn't stop. He built a boat in the desert because real faith in the Word of God causes convictions, and convictions control behavior. And you'll see a lot more illustrations in this chapter. To those of us who are believers, the invisible spiritual and future things revealed in God's Word are real, and they have weight, and they control how we behave.

So that's essentially the nature of faith. Let's talk about the testimony of faith in verse 2. "For by it the men of old gained approval." Men of old means the Old Testament saints, the Old Testament fathers, and mothers I guess you could say, that are listed throughout this whole chapter. "For by it the men of old gained approval." The Greek verb means "to be praised," "to be approved." And you have a listing of many of those who were approved – approved by God, approved by God.

Now let me remind you of something. There's only one way to please God, only one way. Go back to verse 6, verse 6, "And without faith it is impossible" – to do what? – to please Him." So there's only one way to please God and that's by faith. So all these people in the Old Testament who believed God and became not only substantial faith, but it became conviction, and it controlled their conduct. They gained approval from God because the only way you can gain approval from God is by faith.

Abel believed God regarding sacrifice, did it by faith, and God approved of Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's. Enoch believed God that he wouldn't die, and he didn't because God was pleased and took him to heaven. Noah believed God that it would rain, and inherited righteous deliverance from God because he believed God. Abraham and Sarah believed God for a child, and out of their loins a nation, and God fulfilled His promise. And Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, Amram, Jochebed, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah, David, Samuel – they all believed God, and they're all approved by God, and they're all heroes in the hall of fame of this chapter. They trusted what they couldn't see, they bet their life on it, and God approved of that faith.

There's only one way, only one way to please God, and that's to believe Him. And what that means is to believe His Word. Does not please God when you do not believe His Word. It pleases Him when you believe His Word. And all of these people believed without seeing it fulfilled. Look at Stephen in Acts chapter 7. He's preaching, and he's preaching so boldly in Jerusalem that they stone him to death. And we have a glimpse, don't we, at the end of chapter 7 of Acts, where he sees the Son of Man standing at the right hand in heaven; and fulfillment, a glimpse of the fulfillment of his faith is given to us.

So the nature of faith is that it brings substance into our lives when it's faith in the Word of God, and it produces convictions that conduct our behavior. And the essence of faith is that it pleases God. And because it pleases God it brings His heavenly blessing.

Now just finally in the last few minutes verse 3, just to kind of get us in. Here's the illustration of faith. "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible." That is just such a comprehensive statement. "By faith we understand the worlds were prepared by the word of God."

Can I say something obvious? Was anybody there when God created the heavens and the earth, Genesis 1 and 2? No. God created everything – *ex nihilo* in Latin – out of nothing, created everything out of nothing. There was nothing but God. And He created everything out of nothing – and that's what it is saying – by His word. Genesis 1, "And God said, and God said, and God said, and God said, and God said," day one, day two, day three, day four, day five, day six. "God said, and it was so. God said, and it was so. God said, and it was so." God spoke creation into being.

By faith we understand that. Nobody was there. I always want to remind the scientists of that when they say, "We don't believe the creation account." You weren't there. "But it doesn't fit the evolutionary model." It's not scientifically explainable. Creation is not a scientific event, creation is God creating an entire universe in six days, essentially 24-hour days – an evening and a morning of each day. There is no scientific explanation for that, any more than you could give a scientific explanation for Jesus walking on water, or raising someone from the dead, or creating new eyes in the head of a blind man, or new limbs for someone who is quadriplegic. There are no scientific explanations for miracles, that's why they're called miracles. They have no scientific explanation. The most massive miracle of all miracles is the miracle of creation. It's ridiculous to try to apply any kind of scientific model to a six-day creation of the entire universe.

"By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible." Creation was everything out of nothing, everything out of nothing, by the word of God. If you say you're a Christian, how can you not believe that? Right there, "By faith men of old gained approval." You want to gain approval with God? Believe in the creation account. There is not scientific explanation for it.

“By faith we understand” – we comprehend – “that the worlds” – *aiōn* literally, all that exists, not limited to material things, but the created universe of time. *Aiōn* is really time, all of time, all of space, all of matter, all of energy, all of everything. We’re *katartizō*, fit, fit by the word of God, by the *rhēma* of God by the specific utterance of God: “Let there be, let there be, let there be, let there be.” He called everything into existence out of absolutely nothing. That’s exactly the way Moses wrote it down in Genesis 1 and 2. There’s no evolution there because no evolution took place.

You don’t have to bow to some scientist who’s trying to explain how we got to where we are, there is no scientific explanation. In fact, any attempt at scientific explanation borders on insanity, literally borders on insanity – and I could tell you a lot of ways that you have to understand that. The latest idea is the big bang theory, and the big bang theory says this: “There was a primeval nucleus 13.8 billion years ago.” “Oh! Where’d that come from? Well, just humor me.”

“There was a primeval nucleus” – 13.8 is the latest date – “13.8 billion years ago. And it exploded. It exploded in one second, or one split second.” “Well, how did it explode? And where’d the heat come from? And what is an explosion?” “There just was; trust me.”

“The nucleus, this nucleus was so dense that when it scattered, it basically expanded to an additional ten to the forty-fourth power, and that was the original solar system. And this big mass of” – they call it ylem, sort of like phlegm – “was a hundred trillion times the density of water.” So first you have some kind of explosion, and then you end up with a hundred trillion times more dense than water, something called ylem. And out of that, things just kept going. There are now – latest – an average of a hundred thousand billion stars in the Milky Way. Did you get that? One hundred thousand billion stars in the Milky Way. That’s our galaxy, and at least a hundred million galaxies. And there are so many stars that it’s, I don’t know how they – ten to the fiftieth power – just keep adding zeroes and zeroes and zeroes and zeroes.

Really, if you believe that, that is a form of insanity. That is a form of insanity. Nobody times nothing equals everything? You should be institutionalized. They need to put you in a straight jacket if you’re teaching that, especially when we do know the second law of thermodynamics says everything is breaking down.

You say, “How do you disprove evolution?” Not my problem. How do they prove it? When there was only one eyewitness to creation, the massive miracle, and He gave us His eyewitness account in Genesis, and then reiterated it all through Scripture.

I say this to people a lot when I talk about The Master’s University and our commitment to Genesis creation. That is the doctrine that has anchored that institution for nearly a hundred years in sound doctrine. Here’s why. Six-day biblical creation is the most assaulted of all Christian doctrines. Genesis 1, 2 and 3 is the most assaulted passage in the Bible. If you can stand against that the most massive assault, you can handle all the rest of it. If you want to find out whether an institution is genuinely Christian, just ask them one question:

“What do you believe about Genesis 1, 2 and 3?” If they throw some evolutionary process at you, the macro evolution that we’ve been talking about, or even on a micro-level evolution of man, ask them how evolution happened when you don’t have death until the third chapter of Genesis. No death. So how could anything mutate? It’s all ridiculous.

We know that the worlds were prepared by the *rhēma* of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. So what we see in the universe is not the product of billions of years of stuff shaping into what we now see. What we now see is exactly what God created in six days. If you believe that, you are a person of faith, and God is well-pleased.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. Thank You for its clarity and its power, its truthfulness. How blessed are we. How profoundly blessed are we to know the truth. It’s not that we’re smarter than anybody else, it is just that You have given us Your Holy Spirit and Your Word; and we believe it. And like the men of old who live by faith, and You were pleased, that’s how we want to live, believing in Your promises so that they have weight and substance, and they produce convictions that shape how we live. May the journey through this eleventh chapter expand this understanding to such a great degree that it brings all of us joy beyond what we may have known in the past. Thank You again, in Christ’s name. Amen.

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