

Faith of our Fathers

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about the preacher saying that Jesus fed 500 instead of 5,000, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #622.
 - 1. Sadly, this is the state of many in this world—they simply do not believe what the Scriptures teach.
 - 2. People ridicule belief in God.
 - a. Scientists tell us that men evolved from some pre-organic “soup” rather than being created by God.
 - b. Historians tell us that the events recorded in Scripture never occurred.
 - c. Biblical scholars tell us that Jesus was never raised from the dead, but that the apostles simply thought he had been.
- B. Although faith is ridiculed, faith is necessary for our salvation.
 - 1. Mk 16:16.
 - 2. Jn 3:36.
 - 3. Jn 20:31.
 - 4. Acts 16:31.
 - 5. 1 Jn 5:1.
- C. This morning, we want to examine what the Scriptures say about faith.

WHAT IS FAITH?

- A. Heb 11:1.
 - 1. Faith is the substance of things hoped for.
 - a. “Substance” literally means “foundation.”
 - b. The idea is that the things in which we hope are firm; they are real.
 - c. Because of this foundation, we have confidence in the things for which we hope.
 - 2. Faith is the evidence of things not seen.
 - a. Evidence here means “conviction in connection to a crime—this is its use in Jn 8:46.
 - b. Faith allows us to be convinced that things we have never seen actually exist.
- B. Faith then is confidence as to things hope for, conviction as to things not seen. The author of Hebrews shows us how these two elements of faith work:
 - 1. In Heb 11:3, only the second element is present—Because of our faith, we are absolutely convinced that God created the world.
 - 2. In the mention of Abel, both elements are present.
 - a. Heb 11:4.
 - b. Abel had confidence in God that God would accept his sacrifice.
 - c. Abel also had a conviction of things not seen—he believed that God existed, although he had not seen him.
- C. Biblical faith also involves taking God at his word.
 - 1. The people of God have always taken God at his word.
 - a. Abraham took God at his word—He offered Isaac upon the altar, although Isaac was his seen through whom the promise was to come. Abraham concluded that God was able to raise him from the dead (Heb 11:19).
 - b. Paul took God at his Word—Acts 27:25.
 - 2. Illustration about the girl’s dad going to give her 5 cents when he came home, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #3352.
- D. Do you have a biblical faith?

FROM WHERE DOES OUR FAITH COME?

- A. Let's examine how the patriarchs received their faith.
 - 1. Abel received his faith from God's promises—Heb 11:4.
 - 2. Noah's faith came from the Word of God—Heb 11:7.
 - 3. Sarah received her faith through God's promises—Heb 11:1.
- B. Let's examine how individuals gain faith in Christ.
 - 1. Individuals have gained faith in Christ through John's testimony—Jn 1:7.
 - 2. Individuals have gained faith in Christ through Jesus' miraculous power—Jn 4:39-42; 11:45.
 - 3. Individuals have gained faith in Christ through the word of the apostles—1 Cor 3:5.
 - 4. Individuals have come to believe in Christ because of the conduct of Christians—Jn 17:21.
 - 5. Individuals have come to faith in Christ because of the Scriptures—Jn 20:31.
 - 6. Individuals have come to faith in Christ because they heard the preaching of God's Word—Rm 10:17.
 - 7. Individuals have come to faith in Christ because of the miracles of the apostles—Acts 13:12.
- C. Some conclusions:
 - 1. The immediate source of faith is the Word of God—this word comes through the Spirit in inspired men through either spoken or written word.
 - 2. The miracles served to prove the Word to be the Word of God—Mk 16:20.

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE NOT BELIEVE?

- A. There are several hindrances to faith.
 - 1. Satan comes & takes the word out of the heart of some—Lk 8:12.
 - 2. The love of human glory keeps some from believing—Jn 12:43.
 - 3. The effects of falsehood & false teaching keep some from believing—Jn 8:43-47.
 - 4. People also refuse to believe because of closed eyes, hard hearts, & a darkened understanding (Jn 12:39-40).
- B. What is keeping you from believing?

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH & WORKS?

- A. On the surface, there seems to be a contradiction between Paul & James.
 - 1. Paul says that we are justified by faith apart from works of the law, whereas James says we are justified by works and not by faith only.
 - a. Rm 3:28.
 - b. Js 2:24.
 - 2. Paul says that Abraham was justified by faith & not by works, whereas James says that Abraham was justified by works.
 - a. Rm 4:2.
 - b. Js 4:21.
- B. The difference is in the definition of "works."
 - 1. Paul uses the word "works" to refer to perfect obedience to moral law, whether it is written or unwritten—Rm 3:20.
 - 2. James uses the word "works" to refer to obedience to a positive law.
 - 3. Paul is saying that we cannot earn salvation through the works of the law. James is saying that we gain salvation through our obedience (albeit imperfect) to God.
- C. Faith & works must go together—biblical faith is an obedient, active faith.
 - 1. One only knows that we have proper faith through our works—Js 2:18.
 - 2. Heb 11:8.
 - 3. Heb 11 contains a list of individuals who acted because they had faith—they aren't

remembered because they believed in God; they are remembered because they acted on their faith.

4. Illustration about the Scotsman who operated a rowboat for passengers, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #3376.

D. Do you have an obedient, active faith?

CONCLUSION

A. Faith is absolutely indispensable for salvation.

B. Yet, we need to do more than merely believe that God exists—we need to act on that faith. Have you acted on your faith?