



Faith! Believe! Trust!

Hebrews 11:1-40 Matthew 7:12-14

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Today we are reminded of one of the reasons why it's so important to be *Biblically Literate*.

Hebrews chapter 11, the great **Faith** chapter of the Bible, reminds us of many faithful Old Testament believers who trusted in God and His Word. They are held up before us as examples for us to follow; they surround us and encourage us as we learn of their faith story; and they are part of our spiritual heritage --> they are our Godly ancestors who share *Faith* in Christ, *Believe* His Word, and *Trust* His promises¹!

In Hebrews, **God's promises** are the object of our faith. **God's promises** are what you hold onto and never let go! You put your *Faith* in **God's promises**, you *Believe* they are true, and you *Trust* they apply to you! **God's promises** will never let you down.

Now *faith* is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Heb 11:1

Faith is an *assurance* and a *conviction* in **God's promises**. Even though you cannot see **God's Promises**, you *Believe* that God is telling you the truth and so you *trust* Him. That's *Faith*!

This kind of *Faith* comes only from God; it is a gift that He freely gives to you. God creates your *Faith*, and He strengthens your *Faith*, through the *Word and the Sacraments*. *Faith comes from hearing and hearing the Word of God* (Romans 10:17). The Holy Spirit works through the *Word and the*

¹ Faith, saving faith ... is always and without exception a **definite firmness of mind**, a **certain persuasion** concerning the things which God has promised us in His Word for the purpose of having us place our hope upon them; it is an **unalterable conviction** of the heart regarding those things which we cannot see, which it is impossible for our eyes and for our reason and for our understanding to fathom and to know. Hebrews. P.E. Kretzmann

Sacraments to lead you to repentance, and to *trust* in Christ as your Savior. He sanctifies you, setting you apart as belonging to God. Part of that sanctification is that you *Trust* God's word; you *Believe* that God is telling you the truth so that you put your *Faith* in Him. As baptized disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, *we walk by faith and not by sight* (2 Cor 5:7). Hebrews chapter 11 is a listing of some of the great Old Testament believers who walked by *Faith* and not by sight. They had an *assurance* and a *conviction* in God's Word and promises alone. Their stories encourage you to do the same thing.

One of the things that we learn from these Old Testament believers is to view our life as a **pilgrimage: we are on a journey!** Our true home is in Heaven, with Christ, and not here on earth. Like Abraham, we are *looking forward to a city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.* *Faith* in God's Word and promises orientates you to Christ and His Kingdom; we may live on earth, but our eyes are on Heaven. We *believe* what God teaches us about our lives, and we put our *trust* in Him! Our life is a **pilgrimage**; a Pilgrimage of *Faith*, *trust*, and *belief*. Since Holy Baptism, you have been on a **journey** to Heaven!

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were *aliens and strangers on earth*. Hebrews 11:13

Consider your life a **pilgrimage**; you are on a *Faith journey* from Baptism to Heaven. *The path you are on is straight, and that gate is narrow.* And as you **journey** through life, the only truth you can *trust* is Christ and His Word. Christ and His Word is the compass that we use to navigate through this world. Christ and His Word give us the only accurate “world view” and understanding. We do not put our *Trust*, *Faith*, or *Belief* in anything in this world; we put our *Trust*, *Faith*, or *Belief* in Christ and His Word alone. We live like those who have gone before us: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses – God's people live by *Faith* and not by sight. This is not your home; you are on a *Faith journey* from Baptism to Heaven.

The danger of course is if you get caught up in the world and its ways. You get distracted; something in the world has caught your attention; it has preoccupied you; and you start to drift away from Christ and His Word. Maybe it is something that feels good; maybe it is something that brings you acceptance and approval from the people of the world; maybe it's something that entices your sinful nature. You get distracted, and your love for Christ grows cold; you get bored and uninterested in God's Word; and you don't think you need to worship. *You've lost your way!* Trust, Faith, or Belief slowly dies and you don't notice, nor do you care.

DON'T LET THAT HAPPEN TO YOU! If you find that you're distracted, if something in this world has caught your attention; if your affection and loyalty is being drawn away from Christ and His Word, if you are engaged in immorality or rebellion, then repent! Turnaround and remember who you are! You belong to God the Father! Christ has forgiven you your sins! You were sanctified by the Holy Spirit! You are on a Faith journey from Baptism to Heaven! *The Christian life is straight, and that gate is narrow. Don't lose your way!* Don't get tangled up in this world! Walk by faith and not by sight! God has something much better for you than ANYTHING in this world!! Repent, and be renewed in your faith! Let Christ and His Word re-orientate you so you do not get lost! Like the Old Testament believers before you, you are on a Faith journey from Baptism to Heaven ---> and the only truth you have is Christ and His Word.

Hebrews chapter 11 teaches us that we Trust God now as we live our lives; and we even Trust God later after we die.

We Trust God now as we live our lives when we put our Faith in His Word and promises. God promises to be your Father who watches over every detail of your life. Jesus, the Son of God, is your Great High Priest who has forgiven you your sins and brings you near to God. The Holy Spirit dwells within you, strengthening you so that you can remain faithful to the Lord, and walk on the “*straight and narrow*” path on your journey to heaven.

We learn from the Old Testament believers that we can **Trust** God throughout our lives, even in difficult times:

- ⇒ Like Abraham whose life was so uncertain
- ⇒ Like Moses' parents who were worried about their son
- ⇒ Like Moses who lived in fear of Pharaoh's wrath
- ⇒ Like the Israelites, who passed the Red Sea on dry ground
- ⇒ Like Rahab who risked her life to trust God while living in a pagan city

You can **Trust** God and His Word on your **journey** to heaven! Even if your **journey** includes suffering, persecution, exclusion, isolation, or even death; you can **Trust** God's Word and promises. The Old Testament believer's did --- and so can you! God's Word and promises will never let you down!

We also Trust God after we die. That is our **hope**. **Hope** is the **assurance** and **conviction** of the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting. We **believe** God's promises that He will not forget about us after we die. At the moment of death your soul will be with Christ in Heaven; and on the Last Day, God will find your body, raise it from the dead, glorify it, and you will live forever in the Kingdom of Heaven in both body and soul! This is our **Hope**! Being with God in Heaven is the end of our **journey**; we will rest in the Kingdom of Heaven forever! Then we will join with Gideon and Barak and Samson and David and Samuel and all the Prophets rejoicing in God's faithfulness to us! Like them, we have the **assurance** and **conviction** of the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting.

Until then, walk by **Faith** and not by sight. Remember what Jesus said, *Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.* That *narrow gate* and *hard way* is the life of **Faith** in Christ, **Belief** in His Word, and **Trust** His promises.

You are not alone, you are surrounded by great cloud of witnesses, including your loved ones who walked by **Faith** and died in Christ.

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

You are on a **journey** from Baptism to Heaven.

Don't get distracted.

Rather **trust** God and His Word.

Believe that He cares about you and is at work in your life.

Walk by **Faith**, and not by sight. Amen!