

Continentials theme 1997 FAITH

Biblical faith is not a matter of 'we'll see what happens'. Faith, according to the Old Testament, is 'something steadfast, something reliable'. The root of the Hebrew word is also the root of the word 'Amen', which means 'That is how it is; so be it'.

Abraham in the Old Testament is an excellent example of a person of faith. Genesis 15:6 says, "*Abram believed in God, and He credited it to him as righteousness*". Abraham stood firm and consistent, without wavering. He kept on believing in God, even in the face of adversity when God's promises did not look likely to come true. He kept relying on God. Abraham was a person with a steadfast faith and a good example to every believer. Did that make him a hero? No, just a believer like you and me.

The New Testament gives us some more aspects on faith:

Eph 2:8: *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift from God.*" How wonderful. Faith is not some desperate attempt. God gives us grace. He says, 'I love you as you are'. Our response is faith. How come? We receive that faith as a gift from God. Is it a vague faith? No, it is absolute certainty. Heb 11:1: *"Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."*

Vague

Nearly everyone believes in 'something' these days. So there must be a difference. We do **not** believe in an impersonal, incomprehensible force or an unreachable angry God. Our faith is not some vague religiosity. Our faith is aimed at a personal God, the Creator of heaven and earth, Whom we can know completely through Jesus Christ. Our faith in Him saves us and makes all God's promises a reality.

Little

Sometimes people think that examples of faith are some kind of giants: Abraham, Enoch, Noah, Moses, Daniel, Samuel, David, Peter, etc. Nothing could be further from the truth! It is a story of ordinary people, who believed and acted accordingly. This is an encouragement to us: Matt 17:20: *I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain 'Move from here to there' and it will*

move. Nothing will be impossible to you."

Rom 3:28: "We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law."

Rom 9:33: "It is written: 'See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame'."

Rom 15:13: "May the God of hope fill you will all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

1 Cor 2:4-5: "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power."

2 Cor 5:7: "We live by faith, not by sight." This verse calls us not to live according to what we can see, but to act out of faith. Not to live according to our eyes' perception, but to live and act from who we are and what we've got in God.

Gal 3:5-6,11-14: "Does God give you His Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? Consider Abraham: he believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness..... Clearly no-one is justified before God by the law, because 'The righteous will live by faith'. The law is not based on faith; on the contrary: 'The man who does these things will live by them'. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'. He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."

Gal 3:26: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

Eph 6:16: "In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."

Phil 1:27: "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear

about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel."

Col 1:4: *"Because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints."*

Col 1:23: *"If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant."*

1 Tim 4:12: *"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity."*

1 Tim 6: 10-12: *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses."*

Heb 11:6 *"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."*

Heb 12:2: *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God."*

James 1:2-6: *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, Who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."*

1 John 5:3-4: *"This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His*

commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world: even our faith."

Discipleship is faith in action!!

John 3: 15, 18: "That everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life..... Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

Questions & remarks: