

## **FAITH THAT CONQUERS**

**Hebrews 11:1, 6**

**As we journey in our Christian life, there is no doubt that we face some crisis as well as moments when everything is progressing smoothly. Thus, at times we find our faith very strong and stable. We feel as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar. That is, we have no trouble believing the truths of God. However, we must acknowledge that sometimes during those upsetting moments in our life our faith can be put to the test. During those periods, it is not unusual to question some of the things of God as one works through these difficult moments.**

**As humans we tend to ask what these events mean and why did it happen me. Although we may not be blaming God or questioning if there is a God, yet we are still searching for answers. If we are facing new territory that we had never traveled before in our Christian journey so we may be asking can I depend upon the promises of God for this particular need? Promises of God are very easy to believe until you have to claim one in the heat of the battle. It is not always easy to wait upon the Lord when life seems to be crushing in upon you and you need an immediate answer.**

However, the Bible speaks to us concerning the importance of keeping our faith in God. If ever we need faith, it is when difficult times are upon us. When Satan is throwing us a curve, we need a “Faith That Conquers.” Our desire is that we want to come out on top of this issue that is haunting us. I believe that is the kind of faith all of us desire. We want to possess a faith that is adequate in every circumstance of life.

The writer to the Hebrews records how vital faith is to our Christian walk. Faith is very central to our walk with God. He says in verse 6, “And 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. 11:6) Thus, we cannot afford to ignore faith. The writer says that no one can even become a Christian without possessing and exercising his faith in God. That is how vital faith is to mankind. Our Christian life begins with an act of faith, which is accepting Jesus as our Saviour.

## I. WHAT IS FAITH

Thus, one question we need to settle in our minds is what is faith? Since it is impossible to please God without faith, thus it is

**essential that we know how to recognize what faith is. There are various ways to express what faith is. The words “confidence” and “trust” are two words commonly used as people explain what it is to have faith. Some people say faith is placing your complete confidence in God. Other people say faith is placing all your trust in God.**

**It seems that as people try to define faith, faith always carries with it that element of being convinced that God is always right. You are sure that you can depend on Him. Billy Graham defines faith in these words. “He likes to think of faith as a blind commitment to what God is, does and says.” You have faith when you come to the place where you are convinced that God is worthy of your complete dedication and able to do what He says He can do. Faith is staking our life on the reality of His trustworthiness.**

**Certainly the most well-known definition of faith in the Scripture is Hebrews 11:1. “Now faith is the substances of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”(KJV) “Now faith is being sure of what we hoped for and certain of what we do not see.”(NIV) We are sure and certain because we know that God will come through.**

**I personally like to think of faith as simply a total confidence and trust in God. You have decided God knows what He is doing. I can count on God when I face these circumstances in life that baffle me.**

## **II. HOW ONE ATTAINS FAITH**

**Since it is impossible to please God without faith, we also need to answer the question, how do I attain faith? How do I arrive at having faith? We certainly know we cannot buy faith in one of the stores at Woodgrove Mall like we do shoes or clothes! We will not wake up one morning and possess faith that can move mountains! We cannot read the latest self-help book and discover faith! You cannot find faith in any of those places.**

**How did the disciples find faith? For the disciples faith came basically by “hearing the words of Jesus.” Paul writes to the Romans, “....faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:17) The disciples heard and believed the words of Jesus. They discovered by personal experience that Jesus’ words could be trusted completely. The disciples learned to place their trust in Him because His words came true in the lives of people.**

**The disciples had the privilege of being an eye witness to many of the miracles of Jesus. Their faith was developing for three years and they still face times of doubt. They witness first-hand the impact that Jesus was having on society. Thus, their faith in Him grew from day to day because of what they heard and experienced. It was a gradual process that took some time. They did not develop their faith in just one day. It was a process over a number of months and personal encounters.**

**Our faith comes to us today in much the same way it came to the disciples. The big difference is that Jesus is not here in human form to live among us, but we do see and hear what is being done in His name by individuals who know Him personally. Jesus is present in this world today in other forms. For instance, we have the words of Jesus recorded in the Bible. We can read the Bible and discover the laws of God. He shares with us how we should live and treat other people. As we apply these principles in our daily life we discover they really work in our society today. These laws become more than just written statements. We notice that they come true in real life through other people.**

**We have fellowship with other Christians who live according to God's Word. Jesus is present today in believers. The experiences of other Christians help us to believe in God. We see God working in their lives in a real way.**

**We hear the word of God preached and God's Holy Spirit opens our blind hearts and eyes to the things of God. We begin to see the world through God's eyes.**

**I learned to have faith in God one small step at a time. It started with my parents who believed in God and took me to church every Sunday morning and night. There I was exposed to the Christian faith. It came from my Sunday School teachers who explained the Bible stories to me every Sunday. It came from the hymns and songs we sang during our worship service. It came from the pastor as he preached the Word every Sunday and the testimonies of God's people. It was though a combination of all of these avenues God's Holy Spirit gradually opened my eyes. I don't remember when I first discovered that I had faith in God. But I learned at an early age that God could be trusted. His Word was true. He was real to the people in the Church of the Nazarene where I**

attended. He became real to me when I gave my heart to Him at Boy's Camp.

The Holy Spirit helps our faith to grow from various aspects of life. No doubt your faith came in a similar way.

### III. FAITH CAN GROW BUT IT CAN ALSO WAVER IN THE BATTLES OF LIFE

Our faith is so certain and yet events can rock us so that we waver in some aspects of our walk with God.

During Jesus' earthly ministry, the disciples had been instructed in Christian living. They should have been ready to take on the world of sin. However, one event caused so much anxiety that the disciples begin to wonder if Jesus was truly the Son of God. Their confidence in Jesus was shattered to pieces by the crucifixion. Their faith practically died with Jesus on the cross.

When Jesus appeared in their midst on the first day of the week, He found a group of utterly defeated and discouraged disciples. They were defeated in the sense that they had lost all confidence in the words of Jesus. They had placed their total confidence in Jesus. They had put their life on the line for Him. It now appears to them

that they were wrong. They did not expect their Messiah to die. The question they were probably debating that evening when Jesus arrives on the scene was, “where do we go from here?” Who and what do we believe in now?

I do not want to jump in and overly criticize these disciples. I am not sure if I would have reacted any differently. The events of the last three days gave them every reason to be concerned. Their world had been turned upside down and destroyed in a matter of three days.

I notice that faith seems to waver sometimes when our confidence or trust is punctured. We have taken a hard hit from Satan. The good news is that the disciple’s faith survived although it was badly shaken. Why did it survive, Jesus came to the rescue? Our faith will survive, although we may be shaken severely for the same reason. Jesus knew what they were experiencing. He realized their humanity. He knew they were only babies in the faith and needed encouraging. As He shared with them His words again about His death their trust and confidence returned as strong as ever. They realized they had made some bad deduction and miss the point that Jesus was teaching. Yes, Jesus informed us about His death

and resurrection us but we did not comprehend the message at the time. Their faith conquered the hardship that hit them hard. When we return to our confidence and trust in Jesus our faith can be adequate for the battle. As long as we remain on this earth we may be subject to severe battles that test our faith.

A person's faith is tested when that trust and confidence level is broken.

#### **IV. WHAT IS FAITH THAT CONQUERS**

We need a faith that conquers. That is our desire and goal as Christians. We want a faith that conquers every battle.

The writer to the Hebrews gives us many examples of believers, who had one thing in common, a faith that conquers. Noah, Abel, Abraham and many others are listed as examples of those who possessed a faith that conquers. As you read through this long list it is good to ask, what is the common thread? What was the key about their faith that enable them to stand so tall and be so strong in the Lord.

Although the Apostle James lived many hundreds of years later than these men, these heroes had discovered the same principle that

**James mentioned in his writings. That principle is this: Faith without works is dead! James says it this way, “....faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” (James 2:17)**

**This list of faith heroes not only believed in God, they acted upon their belief. They followed through. Noah just did not believe a flood was imminent; he set out and immediately began to construct the ark. Abraham not only believed that God had given him a new land, but set out on a journey without a map. He just followed the direction God gave him to claim the land.**

**Faith that conquers is a faith where the appropriate action is always present. When you believe that this is what God wants you to do. You need to take action to begin to do it.**

**When Cathy and I believed God wanted us to start a new church in Kamloops. Thus, we put our faith into action by moving there and doing what we can to do to see it happen. The final chapter is always God’s chapter. We cannot make things happen by ourselves. We can only be present and allow God to work in our lives.**

**Appropriate action is often the missing ingredient in faith. More would be accomplished for Christ, if our vision was always followed**

**by the appropriated action. Faith without the appropriate action will always fail.**

## **Conclusion**

**How is your faith in God this morning? It needs to be strong because Satan is strong! We need a faith that conquers. As we go to serve God this week let us go not only believing in Him but let us act to get involved in the solution. Faith that conquers is faith accompanied by the appropriate action. Action is often the missing link in our spiritual endeavors.**