

ASPECTS OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:1, Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith is such a wide word. Depending on the situation, this word may mean different meanings. In today's episode, we would dig deeper into the word, so that we may also assess our faith, if it is in accordance to what the Bible says.

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The essentiality of faith is clear, and may be, for everyone is.

The Bible says, in Hebrews 11:6,

“But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

One cannot please God without faith. We may do whatever we want to do for God, but without the element of faith, we cannot please Him. And according to the verse, the kind of faith that pleases God, is the one that believes He is powerful, as *he must believe that He is God*; and also one must believe that He is not just powerful, but that He is also good, as *He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him*.

So we must have faith in God; in His power and in His character. And that is something that we need to have in order to have a meaningful relationship with Him. It is good that God always does the first step, as He is the One who gives to everyone a measure of faith;

Romans 12:3, For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Hebrews 12:2a, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith;

So everyone may have faith. Everyone may claim that he or she has faith. The child could say he has faith, even the grown-ups. The religious may say he has faith in God, so can the not-so-religious ones. Both the person who obeys the Word of God, and the ones who do not obey, may say that they have faith. And sadly, people who would end up to two different destinations in eternity; in heaven or in hell, could both say that they have faith in God. So, if everyone can say they have faith, where does it differ?

We must understand that faith has different aspects or levels. People who are saying they have faith, can all be true, because they may be talking about different aspects of faith, and in that aspect of faith they are in, that statement may be true. But we will see in the Bible, that we are being called unto perfection or the maturity of our faith. That means we must strive to mature our faith, and step into that level of faith we are being called unto by our Lord.

1. The first aspect of faith, is knowledge. When some people say they have faith in God, they might actually mean that they have certain knowledge about God. This is the first aspect as this is already inherent in every man; God himself hath placed this innate knowledge inside everyone.

Romans 1:19 to 20, Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

The knowledge about God was already manifested through the things that God made. Even His eternal power and Godhead were revealed by God through the creation, so that man would be without excuse into saying that he did not know God exists.

It is very important for us to know what to believe. It is important for us to have the right knowledge about God. Aside from the manifestation of God through the creation, He also spoke and revealed Himself to us,

Hebrews 1:1 to 2, God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

God spoke through the prophets and when the fullness of the time is come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law (Galatians 4:4). God Himself manifested in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16), to reveal Himself and His plan to us.

Then He also gave us His Word, the Bible, so that His will and plan be revealed to us. All of this so that we may have the right knowledge, and that is the first aspect of faith.

If we don't get the first aspect of faith, the next aspects may crumble, being laid upon a faulty foundation. So must have the right doctrine, so that what we believe about God and His Word is the truth.

This is what Jude meant when he mentioned the word faith in his letter,

Jude 1:3, Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Jude here mentioned that we must contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Faith here means the right doctrine, the gospel, because by this time, there were false teachers around, creeping in unawares to the church. So he wrote to warn the church.

We read and study the Word of God. We listen to the Word as it is being preached so that we may know it.

Romans 10:17, So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

And that is the first aspect of faith. We must know what to believe! We must make sure that what we believe about God is the truth. So we read, study and listen, so that we know.

But faith does not stop on the knowledge. Faith does not stop in knowing what to believe. So we go to the next aspect of faith.

2. The next aspect of faith is belief. It is one thing to know about something, but it is another thing to believe on it. That conviction, or agreement that we have, to what we know, is the next level of faith. One may learn about the whole contents of the Bible, know it page by page, cover to cover, but if that person does not agree to what he learned or knew, then, that knowledge would not help him in anyway. Some people only know about the Christian beliefs, and even memorize them as they would the multiplication table, but do not agree to what it says. A scholar may study about God, just for research purposes, and stay there, without believing.

See how the Lord used the word faith here;

Matthew 9:28 to 29 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

So the Lord asked the blind men, do you believe that I am able to do this? And the men said Yes, Lord. Then the Lord said, according to your faith, to your belief, be it unto you. And they were healed. They know that the Lord Jesus heals, and they believed in Him, they agreed and claimed what they knew!

There are many things about God and His word that we know, we read about them, we heard about them, but the question is do we really believe them? Do we claim these promises and agree with the Word of God, or they just became head knowledge? It is time we really believe in His word!

If we do not believe in God's word, no matter how much we know, we will not experience what it says. But if we believe, we will experience God's promises.

But then, faith should not stop in believing. It is good that we know what to believe, and that we agree with it with conviction, but faith is more than just believing. So we go to the next aspect.

3. The next aspect of faith is trust or confidence. See for example:

You may know there is God. And you believe that there is God. The next question is do you trust Him?

Some people's faith stops in believing. But many times in the Bible, the word faith does not just mean believing, but rather trusting or having full confidence in God.

Matthew 6:30, Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

When the Lord Jesus taught this part of the Sermon on the Mount, he was addressing the subject of being anxious of where to get food, or, clothes. Then He said that we must not worry about these things

because the Father in heaven knows all our needs. He feeds the birds, and even clothes the grass of the field. Then He called the people who were anxious, as, *ye of little faith*.

What does the Lord mean here by little faith? Does He refer to their knowledge of God? No, because the Jews know about God well. Does the Lord refer here to their belief? No, as the Israel people truly believe in Jehovah, that He is the only One. Then, what does the Lord refer here as their little faith?

The Lord refers to their trust. They do not trust, or do not have confidence that God will provide for what they need. We see, having the knowledge and the belief, does not necessarily mean we also trust in God.

We need to believe God enough, that we rely on Him and His Words completely. Trusting means letting go, and letting God be God in our lives. We can think of this illustration;

I know that the chair can support my weight when I sit on it. I believe in my mind that the chair is sturdy enough to carry me, and that when I sit on it, its legs would not break. I could even cry out with a loud voice that I believe in the chair. But how can I prove that I trust the chair could carry my weight? Only one way: if I let go of my weight and actually sit on it.

Also, when Peter walked on water, the Lord rebuked Peter not because he lacked the knowledge or belief, but he lacked trust, when he began to doubt because of the wind;

Mat 14:30 to 31, But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

So do you trust God? When we say we have faith in God, do we mean we trust Him? That we are willing to lay down our burdens and doubts, and let God move in our lives because we have confidence in Him?

But still, faith does not stop in just trusting. Because our faith in God should bring us to the next level of faith where we take actual steps in obeying Him.

4. The next aspect of faith is Doing or obeying. James used the term works in his letter, and must not be confused with the works of the law that the apostle Paul mentioned in his letters;

James 2:14, What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

So faith without works that proves the said faith, is dead, and cannot save. We must understand that when Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." , he was referring to mere attempts of man to save himself, outside the gospel, through his own efforts or self righteousness. A man cannot be saved by his own works of righteousness, because only through the cross of the Lord Jesus we have peace, reconciliation, righteousness, salvation. When we have faith to what the Lord did on the cross,

that is what saved us, but this saving faith, should naturally result to deeds that would prove the faith. How could you prove your faith if they are just words? Anyone could say they trust and believe in the Word of God, but how does he really prove that if he will not obey it?

James even used the devil as an example;

James 2:19-20 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

If our faith is just about knowing and believing God, without doing what He wants us to do, then our faith is just the same as of the devils! Even the devils also believe in One God! But they would not obey and do what God wants.

We see, knowing and believing, even saying that we trust God is not enough. We must believe and trust Him enough, that we do and act out what we believe. Or else that kind of faith is like a body without soul; lifeless, and is not profitable. We need to act out what we believe.

One example of acting out what you believe is the woman with the issue of blood for 12 years.

Matthew 9:20 to 21, And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

So the woman knew about Jesus, that He can heal her. She believed in the Lord, and so she said to herself, If I may but touch his garment, I will be healed.

Her faith did not just stop on that mental assent. She trusted in the power of the Lord Jesus, because all other medications and doctors failed her. But she did not stand by while the Lord was passing by. She acted out what she believed! She actually moved her way to go near Jesus and to touch the hem of his garment. And see what the Lord said to her,

Matthew 9:22, But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

When the Lord said, *thy faith hath made thee whole*, He was not referring to her knowledge, nor just belief. No matter how much she know and believe in the Lord, if she did not make her way to actually do it, she would have remained sick all her life, and that her mental assent about the healing of the Lord would have been pointless. Her faith included her acting it out, it was not just something in her mind; the Lord referred to her actual deed in accordance to what she believe, as, the *faith*, that made her whole.

So, our faith should include our actions, and obedience to God, and should not just stop in believing in our mind, or spoken with our words. That is why the Bible warned against those who listen to His words and does not obey them;

Matthew 7:21, Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Mat 7:26-27 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

James 1:22, But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Even the gospel, which is the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus is something that we must not just believe, but rather, we must believe in the gospel and obey it, because when the Lord returns, he will take vengeance to them who did not obey the gospel.

Second Thessalonians 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

So maybe we heard about the gospel, we may even have believed in it, but have you obeyed the gospel? Its application in our lives is repentance, water baptism in Jesus name and Holy Spirit baptism.

When Jesus said, ye must be born again, did you believe it?

Now if you did, did you obey what He said?

We see, faith should naturally result to obedience, to acting out, what we know, believe and have confidence in.

How is your faith? Do you obey the Word of God, that you claim to know and believe?

5. And the last aspect of faith, is faithfulness.

We must endeavor to obey God and His word, to the point that it becomes consistent in our works, and becomes our lifestyle.

Our faith must grow to the point of not just obeying God's word, some here and some there, sometimes and sometimes not, but it needs to be consistent.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

So here the Lord said to Joshua that the book of the law should not depart from his mouth, he must meditate on it always, and that is not just so he would know it, and that is it. No, he must meditate on it always so that he may observe to do it. And the Lord said so that he may be able to do according to all, not to some, that is written therein. We need to grow in faith, that we may walk by it.

Second Corinthians 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

This we cannot do by ourselves, we need the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

This walking in the newness of life is faithfulness. When we were baptized unto Christ and upon receiving the Holy Spirit, God works through our lives so that we would be able to overcome and leave behind our old sinful lifestyles, and live in accordance to God's will. No amount of sheer willpower will be able to accomplish it. We need the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, to lead us in our lives.

So faith should become a lifestyle, it is something that we live by.

Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

See another example,

Ephesians 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

Here the Apostle Paul commends the Ephesian church.

He said that he heard about their faith and love. What is faith as pertained here? What is it that he heard about the Ephesians? Was the Apostle pertaining here to their knowledge? Was the Apostle hearing the news about their belief, or trust? Is faith here just a single work of obedience? No, faith here means their faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ. He heard about the faithfulness of the church, their lifestyle of obedience and love unto the Lord and to the saints.

We see, this is what a matured faith looks like. I agree with one preacher when he said, "The fullness of faith, is faithfulness."

So now that we learned about these aspects of faith, we now can assess the level which our faith is on. We can now ask ourselves;

Is my faith just knowledge? Maybe I know about God just as information?

If I know, do I believe and agree to what I know about God and His Word?

If I believe in His Word, do I believe it enough to say that I trust in it?

If I trust God and His Word, do I trust it enough to actually do and obey what He says?

If I obey His words, am I doing it in such a way that it becomes my lifestyle, and I walk in it?

Only the Lord and ourselves know what is the condition of our faith, and I pray that we have an honest assessment today, so we know what aspect we need to work out. But we must know that God is calling us into a higher level of commitment and relationship with Him. He is calling us that we may grow in faith.

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

So after assessing our faith, we must ask God to help us grow in it, and to bring us to the next level, until we become men and women of faith. Will you join me in prayer?

Heavenly Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we come to You today. We ask humbly, that You help us, you guide us, and bring us to the level of faith that You intend us to be, and that is in continuous walking and living by Your will. This is something we cannot do by ourselves, so we pray that You guide us, so that we can obey Your words. We love you, we thank you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

That's it for today's episode. The Lord bless you.

All quoted Scriptures are from the King James Version.