

How Does Faith Work?

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Hebrews 11:1-7

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Synopsis:

“By faith, by faith, by faith” sounds the great roll call of faith in Hebrews chapter 11. Tom Skinner, former chaplain to the Washington Redskins, once wrote a book entitled *If Jesus is the Answer, What are the Questions?* If faith is the answer to the Hebrews’ situation what are the questions they were asking? And what are the questions we are asking if faith is to be the answer for our situation?

I.

The Problem with the Hebrews

Hebrews 10:35 “Do not abandon that confidence of yours”

READ 10:32-35 and 12:1-2

They were formerly enduring and now flagging

Who are the Hebrews?

- only called Hebrew because OT stuff
- original letter/sermon never names author
- best Greek in NT
- seem to be in Rome (“those from Italy greet you” 13:24)
- gone through mild persecution and now flagging in faith
- probably converted Jews
- key theme is faith (32x)

Things changing, not like it used to be

- Rome (Claudius expulsion of 49 AD)
- Geneva (Change this past year)
- My life (Change this past year)
- Your life (Change with you?)

*Problem for them and for us is flagging faith due to change

If faith is the answer, let’s watch how the preacher addresses their problem.

II.

Definition of Faith

Hebrews 11:1 “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for”

What are you hoping for,

-my life?

Finish well

Influenced people for Jesus and the Kingdom

-your life?

-here at Geneva? Maintenance to Mission

Jesus in heart, Bible in hands, feet out the door

4 major initiatives to turn us around

How does the preacher define faith? LOOK at 11:1-2

“The sediment of hoping, the proof of actions happening which are not being seen”

-words to define: faith is

confidence

reward

promise

acting (not thinking)

What if you had,

Confidence?

Reward?

Promise?

Action?

What would our lives look like, Geneva’s life look like?

III.

Basis for Faith

Hebrews 10:23 “Let us hold fast . . . he is faithful

READ 10:19-23

-Jesus is the high priest who opens a way to God

-trust in a trustworthy God

-Greek *pistis*, Hebrew *amen* = step in trust

e.g. zip line in Kauai *no leap of faith without foundation

IV.

Actor in Faith

Hebrews 12:2 “Looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter”

-Jesus is

founder and finisher

beginner and ender

pioneer and perfecter

-Romans 1:16-17

Faith is action based upon faithfulness

*It is God acting for us that brings faith

If God is primary in faith, haven't you been living *small*?

Personal

Geneva

What would you and we do if we lived *large*?

V.

Actions of Faith

Hebrews 11:4 “By faith Abel offered”

READ portions of 11:1-40 = examples of people living large

-risk in an unknown (to you) future based upon a known

past/future

What is faith? Taking steps in trust

*we learn God's faithfulness by taking steps

Where is God asking,

Jeff to take steps?

You to take steps?

Geneva to take steps?

VI.

Dangers of Faith

Hebrews 10:31 “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God

READ 10:26 and 31, 35; 12:3, 25

We usually think *faith* is dangerous

Lack of faith is what is dangerous

1. Ignoring the faithfulness of God and going back (10:26)
2. Losing our reward (10:35)
3. Feels like discipline (12:3)
4. Avoiding trust is life-threatening (12:25)

There is a threat that God will abandon us to our choices

Individually we can live small

Geneva can live small

SING: Great is Thy Faithfulness (Lam 3 setting)