

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

SEPTEMBER 26 - 30, 2022

Hebrews 11-13

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Sermon Series

Oct 2 - Nov 20

MONDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:1-6; Psalm 46**

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ... By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God ... Without faith it is impossible to please [God], for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:1-6)

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ... ‘Be still, and know that I am God.’ ... The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.” (Psalm 46:1, 10, 11)

In our daily lives we put our faith in many things: objects, people, organizations, and circumstances. We have faith that a ladder will not collapse when we climb it. We have faith that the brake pedal in our cars or on our bicycles will stop what we are navigating. We have faith that our company will pay us when we perform work at our jobs.

In relationships with family and friends, we can have faith too. We have faith that a family member loves us for who we are and genuinely cares for our well-being. We have faith in our friendships—that friends will be there for a call, cup of coffee, day trips, vacations, etc., and will genuinely support us. While much of this relational faith may be fulfilled, some isn't due to broken families and friendships, as we are fallen and sin-filled.

I believe faith is a hope in something that is true, right, dependable and genuine. More specifically, something that is pure and right.

We have a tendency to put our faith in things until they don't work. Once our ladder fails, we are very skeptical to put our faith in using it again. And the same is true about relationships: once our trust in a relationship (personal or organizational) has been broken, it is hard to find faith in that relationship again.

Foundational principles of our Christian faith are described in today's Hebrews' passage. Psalm 46 described our God as a "*Mighty Fortress*." Faith is at the very core of our Christian life; it is personal and must be found individually and celebrated in fellowship and worship within the Church.

QUESTIONS

Consider and reflect on the word "faith" in your own life. What things come to mind that you have faith in? Do you consider God your "*Mighty Fortress*"? In what ways?

PRAYERS

For Shepherds Pantry

Pray for the Shepherds Pantry as they continue to serve more families each week. Pray that God would multiply the donations that are given so that the Pantry can continue to meet those needs.

TUESDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:1-6; Habakkuk 2:2-4; Romans 1:16-17; Galatians 3:10-14**

“See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright—but the righteous person will live by ... faithfulness.” (Habakkuk 2:4)

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. ... Just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’” (Romans 1:16-17)

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us ... [so] that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus ... [and] we might receive the promise of the Spirit.” (Galatians 3:13-14)

According to Merriam-Webster, faith is defined as “belief, trust; allegiance to duty or a person; loyalty; fidelity to one’s promises; sincerity of intentions; belief and loyalty to God; belief in the traditional doctrines of a religion; firm belief in something for which there is no proof; something that is believed, especially with strong conviction; without doubt or question.”

In Habakkuk 2:4, we read that *“the righteous shall live by ... faith.”* This addresses our personal faith in Jesus Christ, the Father and the Holy Spirit as the true, living, triune God. Habakkuk speaks to righteous living in a sinful world full of sinful desires, the righteous

persevering because of their sustaining faith in God. Such faith is not mere belief or head knowledge, but life-changing conviction that translates into what we do, say and think daily.

In Romans and Galatians, Paul references Habakkuk 2:4. Romans 1:16-17 is a favorite, Paul stating therein that he is unashamed of the Gospel; rather, he rests (has peace, while not staying idle) in its truths. Remember that Paul (formerly Saul of Tarsus) previously persecuted Jews who had begun following Christ. Upon his own conversion, Paul's mission changed from violent hostility toward the fledgling church to Gospel evangelism throughout the Mediterranean region. Paul became the New Testament's most prolific writer, penning about half of its 27 books.

Faith in Christ is something deeply personal and practical. Habakkuk wrote that our faith will make us righteous. The Apostle Paul is a shining example, his forgiveness serving as a catalyst for his significant contributions to the Bible, for the church's spread throughout the first century, and for God's kingdom purposes. God has a plan—even people who were formerly faithless can become faithful, fruitful kingdom builders.

QUESTIONS

Which definition of faith from the dictionary most resonates with you? How would you define your faith in God?

PRAYERS

For Shepherds Pantry

Pray for the volunteers that are needed each week. Pray that those who interface with clients will reflect God's love to them.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:1-6; Luke 22:31-34; John 21:15-19**

“[Jesus said,] ‘Simon, Satan has asked to sift ... you as wheat. But I have prayed ... that your faith may not fail.’ ... [Peter] replied, ‘Lord, I am ready to ... [follow You unto] death.’ Jesus answered, ‘... before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know Me.’”
(Luke 22:31-34)

“Jesus [later] said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, ... do you love me more than these?’ ... ‘Yes, Lord ... I love You.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs.’ Again Jesus said, ‘Simon, ... do you love Me?’ ... ‘Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.’ Jesus said, ‘Take care of my sheep.’ The third time He [asked], ‘Simon, ... do you love Me?’ Peter was hurt ... [and] said, ‘Lord, you know all things; You know that I love You.’ ... ‘Feed my sheep.’ ... Then He said to him, ‘Follow Me!’” (John 21:15-19)

Luke 22:31-32 references Jesus’ praying that Peter’s faith would persevere. Wow—Jesus intervenes on our behalf, longing for us to have unwavering faith in Him, to have unfailing faith. Our Creator desires to know us individually in intimate relationship, even interceding for us personally regarding our faith, actions and choices.

Despite Peter's stated, strong convictions about Jesus, and 3+ years walking alongside Him, this apostle denied Christ three times on the eve of Jesus' crucifixion. Following the seemingly complete failure of Peter and his faith, Peter was reinstated by the risen Christ per the account in John 21. Jesus knew Peter's faithful heart. Our Lord understood that Peter couldn't comprehend the events leading up to Jesus' resurrection, that they would prompt a threefold denial of even knowing Him. Our loving, understanding, and forgiving Savior, God the Son, reinstated Peter despite his cowardly denials.

I know I have faith in Christ, but oftentimes my actions, words, and/or thoughts fall short of what Christ calls me to be and do. Peter's underlying faith—despite his prior betrayals—was sufficient for Christ to redeem the apostle and charge him to “*feed My sheep*” and “*follow Me.*” Know that Christ is always there to reinstate us and redeem us when we fall short of His calling. He longs to forgive, reinstate, equip, and renew!

QUESTIONS

Think of a time wherein you denied Christ or dishonored Him in speech, thoughts or actions. Have you asked for God's forgiveness and reinstatement? How do you feel about Peter's actions of denial? About Jesus' actions to reinstate Peter?

PRAYERS

For Shepherds Pantry

Pray that as our volunteer base grows beyond faith-based groups that these new volunteers will be drawn to God's light as they serve as God's hands and feet.

THURSDAY

Read **Hebrews 10:19-25, 11:1-6 ; Lamentations 3:22-33**

“His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion’, says my soul; ‘therefore I will wait for Him.’ The Lord is good to those whose hope is in Him, to the one who seeks Him ... So great is His unfailing love. For He does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone.” (Lamentations 3:22-25, 33)

“Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings ... [and] hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:22-23)

Hebrews 10:23 declares that *“He who promised is faithful.”* Lamentations 3:23 praises God because *“great is [His] faithfulness.”* Both passages proclaim that our God is faithful, reliable and true. These are likewise the faith qualities of our Savior among His indestructible, foundational attributes. The hymn *“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”* was written with these passages in mind. I sang this growing up in the church and it was featured prominently at my wedding—all attending sang this great hymn together. Thinking about our Savior and how faithful He is, we know it is only proper to worship God and celebrate His faithfulness through song.

“Great is Thy faithfulness, Oh God my Father! There is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not: As thou hast been though forever wilt be. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow—Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!” (Thomas Chisholm)

This week we have been looking at what our faith means. We have faith in a faithful God—we believe by faith in a God who is absolutely faithful to us.

In his book, *The Case for Faith*, author Lee Strobel examines multiple reasons people may lack faith. A *Chicago Tribune* legal journalist in the '70s and '80s, Strobel was a committed atheist. Troubled by his wife's conversion to Christianity, he set out to disprove its claims via lengthy, in-depth research. In the course of this, Strobel became a believer and, eventually, a Christian pastor, evangelist, author and apologist. Lee Strobel is a living testimony to God's faithfulness and goodness; no one is beyond His loving reach.

QUESTIONS

Do you consider God to be faithful? How? How does your faith in God help you cope during hard times?

PRAYERS

For Shepherds Pantry

Currently Door Dash is assisting the Pantry with home deliveries. As the number of deliveries continues to grow, pray that Door Dash will be able to continue to serve the clients at no cost.

FRIDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:1-6; Acts 16:1-5; Hebrews 10:23-25**

“The churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.” (Acts 16:5)

“Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful ... not giving up meeting together ... but encouraging one another.” (Hebrews 10:23-25)

We have faith in the Bible, the true, inspired word of the living (though “unseen”) God. By faith we believe, through Scripture, that Jesus is God’s Son born of a virgin (Mary of Bethlehem), that the Christ died a terrible death on the cross to pay the sin debt for all who believe in Him. We believe that God the Son is coequal with the Father and Holy Spirit, our triune God.

By faith we believe in heaven and eternal life through Jesus Christ—that by making Jesus our personal Lord and Savior we will ascend to heaven upon dying physically (or upon Jesus’ return, if it happens prior) and live with God forever thereafter. We believe God’s associated promise that pain, death and sin will then be vanquished and our bodies resurrected—like the Savior’s—into glory. This life is just a time we are passing through—in preparation for eternity—and our faith is in our eternal home and resting place.

Through our faith we believe in a faithful God, One fair and just, loving and true. Our God never changes, waiting continually for us to cast our cares and trials upon Him. Our faithful God is the Creator of the universe and everything in it. God is our Fortress.

Our faith assures us that God can handle our every legitimate need, our concerns, our life. Are we like Paul? Are we unashamed of our faith, even though we may not always choose the right actions and words? Are we like Peter, knowing that we serve a God of mercy and grace who will reinstate us when we fail, because He knows that we love Him?

In today's reading from Acts, we read how the "*churches strengthened in the faith.*" Our individual faith is strengthened not just through personal experiences, Bible study and prayer, but also via worship and fellowship among other believers. Let us celebrate together, worshipping the faithful God we serve, our Lord and Savior!

QUESTIONS

Is there one thing that has stuck with you this week as you have reflected on your own faith? How might you encourage a fellow believer in their faith this week?

PRAYERS

For Shepherds Pantry

Pray for the success of the many programs that the Pantry offers. Besides food and clothing, the Pantry offers a Faith and Finance class, haircuts, tutoring, and Case Management services.

Sources

- Lee Strobel, *The Case for Faith* (Zondervan, Updated, Expanded Edition, 2021).
- *Nelson's Quick Reference Bible Concordance* (Nelson Reference & Electronic Pub, June 1, 1993).
- *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Merriam-Webster, Inc, Revised Edition, 1983).
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" lyrics are by Thomas Chisholm, with related music added by William Runyan (Published in 1923 by Hope Publishing Company).

