

“QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS”

Session 4 – How Can I Have Faith?

(a review of our “Five Solas” study – “By Faith Alone”)

Dictionary.com:

1. confidence or trust in a person or thing: *faith in another's ability.*
2. belief that is not based on proof: *He had faith that the hypothesis would be substantiated by fact.*
3. belief in God or in the doctrines or teachings of religion: *the firm faith of the Pilgrims.*
4. a system of religious belief: *the Christian faith; the Jewish faith.*

Oxford Dictionary

1. complete trust or confidence in someone or something: *this restores one's faith in politicians*
2. strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof:
bereaved people who have shown supreme faith
3. a particular religion: *the Christian faith*

The Bible's Definition (from Hebrews 11:1)

(KJV) - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

“Substance” – Greek: Hypostasis – literally “standing under” – a foundation, basis, support

Read the following translations of Hebrews 1:11; they are all slightly different, but together help us understand faith.

(CJB) - Trusting is being confident of what we hope for, convinced about things we do not see.

(CEV) - Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see.

(ERV) - Faith is what makes real the things we hope for. It is proof of what we cannot see.

(GW) - Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see.

(GNT) - To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.

(PHILLIPS) - Now faith means putting our full confidence in the things we hope for, it means being certain of things we cannot see.

(NOG) - Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see.

(NCV) - Faith means being sure of the things we hope for and knowing that something is real even if we do not see it.

(NIV) - Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

(NLT) - Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.

(NRSV) - Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

(VOICE) - Faith is the assurance of things you have hoped for, the absolute conviction that there are realities you've never seen.

THE FOUR FACES OF FAITH:

1. Faith as belief
2. Faith as trust
3. Faith as action
4. Faith as an understanding of and relationship with God

FAITH AS BELIEF

- *“Faith” and “Believe” are the same word in ancient Greek; “Faith” is a noun, “believe” a verb*

John 1:6-8 - There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him **all might believe**.

John 3:17-19 - For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **Whoever believes in him is not condemned**, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

John 4:41-42 - And because of his words **many more became believers**. They said to the woman, **“We no longer believe just because of what you said**; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man **really is** the Savior of the world.”

John 6:68-70 - Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come **to believe and to know** that you are the Holy One of God.”

John 7:5 - For even his own brothers **did not believe in him**.

John 11:25-27 - Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one **who believes in me** will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she replied, **“I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”**

Romans 10: 9-10 - If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and **believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead**, you will be saved. For it is **with your heart that you believe** and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

John 20:31 - But these words are written that **you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name**.

Is belief enough?

James 2:19 - You believe that there is one God. Good! **Even the demons believe that**—and shudder.

FAITH AS TRUST

- *“Trust,” like “Believe,” is the same root word as “Faith”*

See how these different translations treat “believe,” “trust,” and “faith,” as synonyms.

John 14:1 (KJV) “Let not your heart be troubled. Ye **believe** in God; **believe** also in Me.”

John 14:1 (CEB) “Don’t be troubled. **Trust** in God. **Trust** also in me.”

John 14:1 (CEV) “Don’t be worried! Have **faith** in God and have **faith** in me.”

Matthew 6:30 - If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—**you of little faith?**

Acts 27:25 - So keep up your courage, **for I have faith in God that it will happen** just as he told me.

Romans 4:18-20 - Against all hope, **Abraham in hope believed** and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet **he did not waver through unbelief** regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God

Galatians 3:9 - So **those who rely on faith are blessed** along with Abraham, the man of faith.

FAITH AS ACTION

- *Faith is not simply intellectual assent; it is belief that results in action*

1 Thessalonians 1:3 - We remember before our God and Father your **work produced by faith**, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:5 - Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the **obedience that comes from faith** for his name’s sake...

2 Thessalonians 1:11 - With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and **your every deed prompted by faith.**

Hebrews 6:12 - **We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith** and patience inherit what has been promised.

James 2:14, 17 - **What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds?** Can such faith save them? ...In the same way, **faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**

James 2:21-23 - Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 **You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.**

Revelation 2:19 - **I know your deeds, your love and faith**, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

FAITH AS AN UNDERSTANDING OF AND RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- *the New Testament uses the phrase “the Faith” as a summary of Christian belief and practice*

1 Corinthians 16:13 - Be on your guard; **stand firm in the faith**; be courageous; be strong.

Acts 6:7 - So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became **obedient to the faith.**

Acts 16:5 - So the churches were **strengthened in the faith** and grew daily in numbers.

2 Corinthians 13:5 - Examine yourselves to see **whether you are in the faith**; test yourselves.

1 Timothy 3:9 - They must keep hold of **the deep truths of the faith** with a clear conscience.

1 Timothy 4:6 - If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the **truths of the faith** and of the good teaching that you have followed.

1 Timothy 6:10 - 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.

1 Timothy 6:12 - 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.

2 Timothy 4:7 - I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, **I have kept the faith**.

“HOW CAN I HAVE FAITH?”

John 14:11 - Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

Faith is a decision. But it is not a decision based upon nothing at all – what many refer to as “blind faith.” It is a decision based upon evidence, upon the experience and testimony of others, and upon an inner conviction that this evidence and experience of others is relevant to our situation. That decision of faith then impacts our actions. We’ll illustrate with three examples: Faith leading an airline journey; a marriage; a decision to be a Christian:

1) Evidence

- We see airplanes flying overhead quite regularly
- We meet someone who seems interesting
- We encounter evidence of the person and teaching of Jesus

2) Experience and Testimony of Others

- Many of our friends have flown, and tell us it is perfectly safe.
- People tell us our potential spouse is a fine person, and a good match!
- Friends who are Christians tell us of how following Jesus has changed their life for the better

3) Inner Conviction

- We decide that our desire to travel outweighs our reluctance to fly – we will get there!
- We fall in love, and become persuaded that this person will be a great life partner
- The Holy Spirit draws us to the point of belief; we experience an “inner conviction” of the truth of Christianity, and our need for forgiveness and new life

4) Application

- We get on the airplane!
- We get married!
- We enter into relationship with God through Jesus Christ, through acknowledging Jesus as Lord, asking forgiveness for our past wrongs, and determining to live as followers of Jesus.

SUMMARY: BELIEVE, TRUST, ENGAGE, FOLLOW

Faith is:

- a) Belief that something is true.
- b) Confidence that the person or object of belief is trustworthy
- c) Engage in a relationship of trust with that object or person
- d) The day-to-day determination to live according to that belief

Christian Faith is:

- a) Belief that Jesus is Son of God, Saviour and Lord
- b) Confidence that the Gospel accounts of Jesus are true, and are relevant to you
- c) Placing your trust in God, that God loves you, forgives you, and strengthens you for service
- d) Maturing as a Christian, growing in Christian faith through participation in worship and service together with a community (or “congregation”) of fellow believers