

Faith Relates Us to the Invisible



Faith (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. Our theme this week is faith. Faith is the one thing that is essential in relating to God. The one thing without which it is impossible to lead a life that is pleasing to God.

Yesterday, I explained that faith is not primarily a matter of the intellect; a question of doctrine or theology. Primarily, it's a direct, ongoing personal relationship with God Himself.

I also explained that faith includes faithfulness. It requires our personal commitment to God—it's not just the abstract entertaining of truth, but it's a commitment of loyalty to God. This personal faith relationship to God is summed up by David in Psalm 23:1 (the famous Shepherd Psalm). The New American Standard version says:

> "The LORD is my shepherd. I shall not want."

But I also quoted the Living Bible, which says:

> "Because the Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need."

I explained that out of this faith relationship, there is total security. The guarantee that every need that may ever arise in our lives will be met out of God's faithfulness and out of God's omnipotence. That's what the people of this world are looking for today—security. God offers security—total security—out of that faith relationship to Himself.

Today, I'm going to go further and explain how faith relates us to the invisible, eternal world.

The first Scripture I'll look at today is from that same 11th chapter of Hebrews—the great faith chapter. It's the first verse:

> "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (NAS)

Where it says "assurance of things hoped for," I prefer to say "substance," or "underlying reality of things hoped for." We're going to go into that a little later on this week, when I speak about the difference between faith and hope. But for the present, I want to emphasize the second part of that 1st verse of Hebrews 11, that is that faith is a conviction of things not seen. The particular aspect of that truth that I want to emphasize right now is that, faith relates us to things not seen: to the invisible, the eternal; the world that we do not apprehend by our senses.

Paul brings this truth out in 2 Corinthians 5:7; a very simple but important statement. He says:

> "For we walk by faith, not by sight." (KJV)

Notice that the two are in opposition the one to the other—by faith, not by sight. The world has got it wrong. The world says: "seeing is believing," but the Bible does not say that. In fact, where you see, you don't need to believe. Where you need to believe is where you don't see! And Paul says: "We don't rely on what we see for our relationship with God and our walk with God, but we rely on what we apprehend by faith. We walk by faith, not by sight." Where Paul says "sight," I believe it would be legitimate to interpret it: "Not by our senses"; it's not just the sense of sight, but all five senses that are excluded. Sense perception does not do the work of faith. Our senses relate us to the visible, material, time-space world. We're all familiar with that world through our senses. But faith relates us to a different world: to the invisible and eternal world. Hebrews 11:3, just two verses further on, the writer says:

> "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible." (NAS)

Notice again, the emphasis on "not visible." Faith is always related to that which is not visible. In this particular verse, the writer tells us that the invisible reality behind the entire universe is God's Word. Now, we don't apprehend that by our senses; we apprehend it by faith.

Man has always had a restless desire to know what the ultimate reality behind the universe is: the first cause, and so on. As a professional philosopher, I was occupied with those questions for many years before I came to know the Lord Jesus in a personal way, and discovered that the most important truths are not to be found in philosophy, but in Scripture. But I was often occupied with this question "What's the first cause... What's behind everything... How did everything begin..." As a believer, through the revelation of Scripture, I've come to understand that the first cause behind everything—that which brought everything into being—was the Word of God. When God spoke His Word, then creation took place. The whole material universe is the product of God's Word.

This is stated by the Psalmist, in Psalm 33:6:

> "By the word of the Lord, the heavens were made." (NAS)

In other words, the creative, effective power that brought the universe into being, and sustains it in being, is the Word of God. And faith relates us to God and to His Word—to the invisible.

It's very interesting to compare these statements of Scripture with some of the conclusions of modern physics. I'm not a physicist, but I understand that if I were to ask a physicist to explain in his language the nature of the Bible that I hold when I preach, we would answer me in terms of things like atoms, protons, neutrons, electrons; things which no one has ever seen with their natural eye, and no one ever expects to see. And if I were to press him further, he'd probably give his explanation in terms of some kind of mathematical equation. How close that conclusion of physics is to the statement of Scripture that the worlds, the universe, was framed, fitted together and maintained in being by the Word of God.

The essence of what I'm saying to you today is this: that faith relates us to the invisible; to things which cannot be apprehended by our senses. So, we always have in the life of faith this potential conflict between the world that our senses relate us to, and the world that our faith relates us to. The world that the senses relate us to is physical, material—it's changeable, it's impermanent. But the world that faith relates us to is eternal, invisible and permanent. It does not change. Primarily it relates us to God; secondly, to the Word of God.

There's a beautiful example of this further on in this same 11th chapter of Hebrews, in verse 27. As one of the great heroes of faith, the writer picks Moses, and he says various things about Moses' life, and how it was built on faith; and in verse 27, it says of Moses,

> "By faith he left Egypt,not fearing the wrath of the king; [that's the wrath of Pharaoh, king of Egypt], for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen." (NAS)

There is a deliberate paradox there. Moses saw the One who is unseen. That's of course God Himself. Faith relates us to the unseen; to the invisible; and that was why Moses was

able to endure persecution, disappointment, frustration, loneliness, apparent failure. How was he able to hold out? Because he watched, he looked at, he kept his eye on the invisible, not he natural eye, but the eye of faith. His relationship to the invisible enabled him to hold out when there was no source of encouragement in his natural surroundings.

This is in line with what Paul says too, in 2 Corinthians 4, verses 16–18:

> "Therefore we do not loose heart. [That's like Moses who endured; he didn't loose heart. Why do we not loose heart? Paul goes on to say] Though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."

You see, there're two persons in our lives. There is the outer man that contacts the physical world with his physical senses. There's the inner man that contacts the invisible, eternal world through faith. So, we have always these two persons: the inner man, the outer man. Then Paul goes on to say:

> "For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,"

And Paul could only say "momentary, light affliction," because, like Moses, he had his eyes on the unseen. If he'd only been looking at things around him, I think he would have considered his affliction a lot more than light, when you consider all that he had to go through; but he says, "Our affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory…"

> "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (NAS)

Notice again this paradox. Seeing the unseen. Looking at that which cannot be seen. How do we do that? Not with our senses, but with faith. Not with our outer man, but with our inner man. Our inner man, the real true, eternal person inside us as believers, that inner man apprehends God and the things of God and the truths of God, by faith. It's related to a world that's permanent, real, unchanging, but invisible. And this enables us to endure, to hold on when there's nothing in our circumstances or situations in this world that would encourage us. The writer of Hebrews says "Moses endured"; Paul says: "We do not loose heart." Why? Because we have that contact with the unseen, eternal world, through our faith.

As I close today, I'd just like to ask you. How about you? Do you have that contact with God? Remember, you can. It comes from commitment. Just complete commitment to God will bring you into that relationship with Him.

Well, our time is up for today, but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time.

I'll continue with this theme of faith. I'll be explaining a very important distinction which many people do not clearly understand. The distinction between faith and hope.

Radio Program

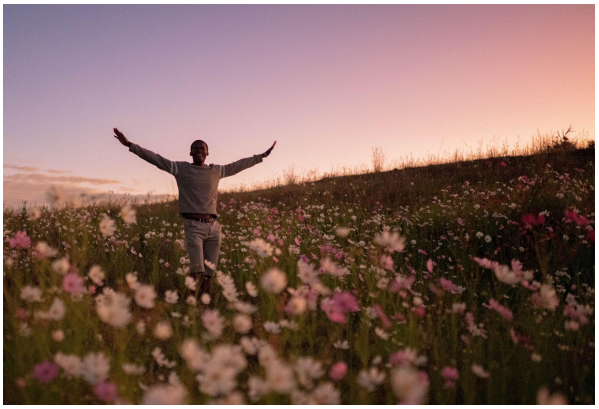
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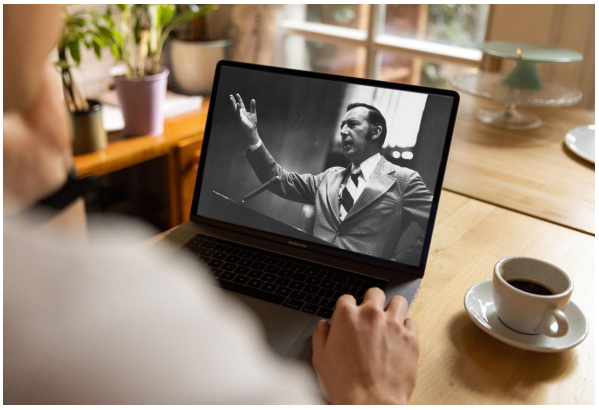
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