

# Analysis of Hebrews: Chapter 10 & 11



Part 17/23

## God's Last Word: An Exposition of Hebrews By Derek Prince

We're turning to Hebrews 10:32 and we'll go to the end of the chapter. I think perhaps I will just translate that far and then we'll go back through our note outline. You'll find the note outline will be on your typewritten notes on Page 10/4. We did look at part of this passage last week but it's good to take the passage as a whole.

As indicated in your note outline this is the fifth passage of practical application in the epistle and the practical application is summed up in two words, remember and endure. Essentially, remember means looking back and endure comes as we look forward.

> "But remember the former days, in which, after you were enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, partly through reproaches and afflictions, being made a spectacle, and partly as having been made partakers with those who were thus treated. For you had sympathy for the people in chains [or the prisoners], and you received the seizure of your goods with joy, knowing that you yourselves have a better and an abiding possession. Therefore [and that's important], do not cast away your strong confidence [that's a word we've looked at many times], which has a great reward to follow. For you have need of endurance [or perseverance], that having done the will of God, you may receive the promise. For yet in a just a little while, the coming one will come, and will not delay. And my righteous one will live on the basis of his faith [out of faith]; and if he draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we [and the emphasis is on the 'we'] are not of drawing back to destruction, but of

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> faith [or of believing] to the preservation of the soul."

There's some very solemn words in that passage. Let's just go back and look through them following the note outline. The notes on verses 32–34, I make the comment that "enlightenment leads to testing." And last time we turned to the reference in Acts 14:22 where Paul and Barnabas reminded new believers that they must, through many afflictions, enter the kingdom of God. There is no way that leads into the kingdom of God that bypasses afflictions. So you might as well make up your mind about that. If you want to get into the kingdom of God you are going to experience afflictions at some time or another. The worst thing that can happen is that you can experience the afflictions and think you're out of the will of God because you're experiencing afflictions. I have met many unfortunate people like that. I met a lady a little while back and I have to be careful how I describe the situation, but a leader in her particular congregation. This brother had been killed instantly in an air crash. She came to me with her children and said, "What am I to tell the children? They just can't take it." I really found it difficult to counsel her because I felt she'd been so wrongly prepared for life. She'd been given the impression that if you become a Christian, that's the end of your tests and your sufferings. It certainly is not true. I think history confirms that many of the greatest saints have suffered the most.

I've said to people many times, "There are some verses in the Bible that I can't read with real conviction up till now." And one of them is in Philippians 3 where it says, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection." I get fine through that part but you know what the next one is? "The fellowship of His sufferings." Now, Paul was ambitious to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. Well, I think I'm nearer to being there than I was, but I haven't really arrived. That's a pretty good test of your commitment. Not merely your commitment but your intimacy with the Lord.

One thing that made it very vivid to me, and I've shared this with some people before, was when the Lord called my first wife home here in Fort Lauderdale in 1975 after we had had a good and happy marriage for 30 years. I had a preaching engagement elsewhere the weekend the Lord called her home. But the Holy Spirit checked both me and my brothers that I should not leave. And actually, she went to be with the Lord that Sunday and I and my daughters that were living here, I think five of them at that time, were all able to be with her till the Lord took her home. I've always been so grateful to God that He enabled me to be with her at that critical hour. I would have felt so sorry and frustrated if I hadn't been able to stand by her at that particular moment and, as it were, usher her into the presence of the Great Shepherd.

That taught me a lesson: That if you really love somebody you don't want them to suffer alone. We, I think, sometimes forget that Jesus, in a certain sense, is still suffering. His atonement is complete but He's deeply committed to what's happening to His people on earth. When He arrested Paul on the road to Damascus, He said, "Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" He didn't say, "Why are you persecuting My church." He said, "Why are you persecuting Me?" We have to understand that Jesus suffers with His church.

I've just completed a book on the psalms and, of course, quite a number of the things in the book are fresh in my mind because I've been correcting the proofs and going through it. One of the things that David said was, "LORD, put my tears in Your bottle." And I've got one of the meditations on that. David saw his tears as very precious. He said, "Lord, I don't want to waste a single tear, because one day every tear is going to be the theme of glory. So Lord, please keep every one in Your bottle. Don't let me arrive in heaven and find that some of my tears didn't make it." That's a very different attitude from what I find in contemporary American Christianity. I'm not saying that to be critical, I'm simply saying the attitude of contemporary American Christians tends to be very incomplete. It's not so much wrong as incomplete.

When I look back over my own mistakes and errors in the past, of which there have been sufficient, I came to this conclusion: It wasn't so much that I was wrong in my opinion as that I was incomplete. And that wouldn't have mattered so much but when I got into trouble was when I thought my incomplete opinions were complete. That's when I really began to make mistakes. I don't think any of us have all the truth. The only thing that will create problems for us is if we begin to think and act as if we did have all the truth.

You'll find in the hymns that were popular in the church, many of them the greatest hymns, up to the beginning of this century or even a little further, there's never a verse that doesn't speak about death. There are good reasons for that. A mother would give birth to maybe a dozen children and three would die in infancy. That was pretty normal. All the people of that time were confronted with the fact that death is real. I want to tell you, death is still real. We've done all sorts of things to veil it. We don't talk about "undertakers" now, we talk about "rest parlors." We don't talk about "cemeteries," we've got nice names. But the names don't change the realities. Many, many Christians in

many other parts of the world are still facing those ugly realities of suffering, persecution, early death, inadequate medical facilities. That's the lot of the majority of the human race. Charles Simpson once said that America is a kind of "white ghetto." I don't know if most of you realize how true that is. Brother Ed ?Vardsen?, who spoke two Sundays ago, said America has five percent of the world's population and spends 95 percent of Christian finance. So that gives you some idea. I say that, and I didn't plan to say any of this, because I think most of us are going to have to adjust our attitude to suffering. There's a little book by Paul Bilheimer — (let me say I get no income from the book), but it's called Don't Waste Your Sorrows. I recommend it unless you're dealing with somebody you're trying to give faith to recover from cancer, and then I would keep the book away from them. But for most Charismatics it's a very, very timely book. When I look back on my own experience, I really think I can say what David said, "Lord, be sure my tears are in Your bottle," because they are some of the richest parts of my Christian experience.

When you are enlightened, you're going to run into conflict. The two will follow one another. Every time you get a new revelation or a new understanding, you think, "It's wonderful. Now I've got the answer!" It's like when John was given the little book to eat on the Isle of Patmos by the angel. It was sweet in his mouth but bitter in his belly. When it got down to the process of digestion, it became bitter.

When I came into the ministry of deliverance in 1963 I knew I'd found the answer to all the unsolved problems of Pentecostal people. The only problem was the Pentecostal people didn't see it that way! I was never so shocked in my life as I was by their reaction at that time. Praise God, I got over it and they're still my friends. But I got enlightenment, believe me, I got affliction. So, you want enlightenment? As Charles says, "Fasten your seatbelts." You can have it, but there'll be turbulence ahead.

Let's go on to the outline, the middle of Page 10/4, verses 35–36. It says the application of what has come in the previous verses because it begins with a "therefore." That's verse 35 we're looking at.

> "Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward."

I've told you many times when you find a "therefore," you want to stop and find out what it's there for. So that follows on the previous verses. Do not throw away the shield of confidence. I believe that's a metaphor from the culture of the day. In Greek and Roman civilization one essential part of every soldier's equipment was his shield. And the ultimate disgrace for a soldier was to throw away his shield. The wives and the mothers of the Spartans preferred to see their dead man carried back on his shield than the live man come back without his shield. So the writer is saying, "Don't disgrace your captain. Don't be a bad soldier. Don't come back alive without your shield. Hold on to your shield. Don't let it go. Your shield," he says, "is this word confidence or strong confidence." It's the same word we've looked at many times. It included freedom of speech. It's not simply believing quietly, it's believing and declaring boldly.

Ruth and I have been reading Acts and I thought you'd be interested to see a place in Acts where the word is used because it's very vivid. Turn to Acts 4:13. We just need to look at the first part of the verse.

> "Now as they [that's the Jewish leaders] observed the confidence of Peter and John ..."

That's the same word. And then a little later on in verse 19:

> "Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.'"

That's confidence. That's the freedom of speech. And one of the things that the enemy would be most happy to do is to take away the freedom of your testimony and the confession of your faith. Don't let him silence you. Maintain that confidence; don't cast away the shield.

Then, returning to our outline, receiving God's promise is conditional upon endurance. Verse 36 is an important verse.

> "You have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."

The implication is, you don't immediately receive the promises as soon as you've done the will of God. There is a period of waiting and nobody knows how long that period will be. If the Lord will tell you, "You've got to wait six months for the answer to your prayer," that wouldn't really be too difficult. But the Lord says, "Wait," and He doesn't

say whether it's six weeks, six months or six years. What do you need? Endurance, that's right.

I have a tape message on endurance; I'm not particularly disposed to recommend it, but it has blessed many, many people. Myself included! When I listen to myself on the radio nowadays I'm almost always preaching to myself. It's uncanny. I mean, Ruth and I turn and look at one another in the morning. How did whoever it was know that that's what we'd need that particular morning?

So bear that in mind. It's not simply faith that gets you the promise; it's faith and endurance. See, again, many people are wrongly instructed. "Well, I did what God said and nothing happened!" Lots of people have had that experience before; you're not the first. What do you have to do? Hold on, maintain your confidence; keep saying the right thing.

I think a key word there is the word trust. You might keep your finger in Hebrews 10 and turn to Psalm 37:5 for a moment. A familiar verse, I'm sure, to many.

> "Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it."

Commit is the single act; trust is the ongoing attitude. Endurance comes out of trusting. Once you've committed, you don't have to keep committing. In fact, if you have to keep committing it's questionable whether you ever did commit. Once you've committed, what do you do? You go on trusting. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, all through the week, all through the month, all through the year till God's time.

You can turn back, if you'd like, to the example of Abraham. He waited 25 years for the fulfillment of God's promise. Some of us have had to wait longer than that for some things. Time is one of God's secrets and He very rarely divulges it. The book of Revelation calls time "a mystery," and it is a mystery. Philosophically, it's a mystery. Philosophers have never resolved the problems of time.

This is another of my selections from my book, David said "My times are in Thy hands." God has control of time. He doesn't put it in our hands, it's in His hands. It's good, because most of us are rather impatient. I remember a little boy in Ireland years back, six years old, a cousin of mine. He went out and planted some potatoes. They didn't grow in a week, so he went out and dug them up to see if they were growing. Then he did it a week later—and there never were any potatoes. A lot of Christians go out and dig up their potatoes and see if they're growing. Well, that prevents them growing.

We go on to verses 37–38. This is a quotation from Habakkuk. We probably should turn to the passage quoted which is in Habakkuk 2:3–4. If you don't know where to find Habakkuk, find Nahum, I think it's after that. If you don't know where to find Nahum, I think it's after—I'm not quite sure what it's after! Anyhow, in the New American Standard it's page 1307!

> "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail."

See, there's the lesson of patience. You've had the vision, the time is appointed. But who knows the time? The Lord.

> "Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay."

Now, you'll notice that in the quotation we have in Hebrews, it's not "it" but "he." "Though he tarry, wait for him; for he will certainly come, he will not delay." In Hebrew it could be either. This version interprets it not waiting for it but waiting for him. One of the titles of the Messiah in the time of Jesus was "The Coming One." So it's saying The Coming One will come, He will not tarry, He will not be late. Wait for Him. Which, I think, in some ways makes it more vivid.

Then we get the next verse and this half verse in Habakkuk, of all people, is quoted three times in the New Testament; in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. Which goes to prove that it doesn't have to be one of the major prophets; it doesn't have to be a long verse but anything anywhere in the Bible is important and authoritative. Even if you can't pronounce the name! Verse 4:

> "Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him ..."

The Hebrew is very condensed, it's very hard to render into English.

> "But the righteous will live by his faith."

Notice there's a "but" in the English. What is faith contrasted with? The word but indicates contrast. Pride, that's right. Pride and faith are opposites. You'll not find anywhere in the Bible that a proud person had the kind of faith that God required. There are two people in the ministry of Jesus that He commended particularly for their faith.

Both were Gentiles. One was a centurion, one was a Syro-Phoenician woman. The centurion said, "I'm not fit that you should come under my roof." The Syro- Phoenician woman said, "Lord, I'm just a dog, but all I need is a crumb." Great faith goes with unusual humility. The moment we become arrogant and proud, self-sufficient, knowing all the answers, we don't have biblical faith any longer. You can check all the way through the Bible. Faith and humility go together.

The essence of faith is humility: "Lord, I can't handle this. You're the one that's going to have to do it." But when you walk up to your problem with your spiritual muscles bulging and say, "This is an easy one," look out. It won't be that way.

We could look at the two passages where this is quoted in Romans 1:16–17.

> "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Notice Paul is talking about the gospel. Verse 17:

> "In it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, [and now he's quoting Habakkuk:] 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.'"

What impresses me—there are so many things that impress me—but what particularly impresses me at this moment is when Paul presents the gospel, the word faith appears three times in one short verse. From faith to faith by faith. The gospel is totally inoperant without faith. It just doesn't do anything. And it must be communicated from faith to faith. I have noticed the men whose ministries are the most effective are very often not the greatest preachers. But they're the people who have faith. I sometimes argued with God why He would use certain people, and I'm not going to tell you any of the people I argued with God about. But the answer I always get is, "He believes Me. I can't find many who do." It's my aim to believe God. I want God to hear that. Lord, it's my aim to believe You. It really is. The longer I live, the more I see how important faith is.

We're coming to a chapter which has got a lot to say about faith. We won't get very far into it but we will get there, I really believe.

The next one is Galatians 3, the other place where this passage from Habakkuk is quoted. Galatians 3:11–12.

> "Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, 'The righteous man shall live by faith.'"

And when Paul says by faith, he means your righteousness is not based on the observance of the Law.

And then he says the alternative is keeping the Law. He says:

> "However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, 'He who practices them shall live by them.'"

You can keep the entire law and you don't need faith. But if you can't keep the entire law then the only alternative is faith.

Faith and Law, in a certain sense, are opposites. Those who seek to be justified by the Law are not living out of faith. This is one of the major themes of the New Testament and one that's extremely neglected in contemporary teaching. It's not my purpose to go into it tonight because if I did I'd never get out again. But let me just point that out to you.

We go back to the text, Hebrews 10:37.

> "'For yet in a very little while, he who is coming will come, and will not delay.' Notice what I said. It's not 'it' here but 'He'—He, The Coming One."

There are two passages where Jesus is called or referred to as The Coming One in the gospels; we might look at them both. Matthew 11:3. We have to read verse 2 to get the context.

> "Now when John in prison heard the words of Christ, he sent word by his disciples, and said to Him, 'Are You the Coming One, or shall we look for someone else?'"

That's how it's actually translated in the New American Standard. And in my text it's in capitals. "Are you the Coming One?" That's a title of Messiah.

Just as the phrase “Son of Man” was a recognized title of Messiah. Every time Jesus said “Son of Man” He’s saying, “I’m the Messiah.” No religious Jew of His day would have any doubt. The Aramaic is ?bar anosh?, which is the standard phrase for the Messiah. Though in some cases Jesus didn’t use the title “Messiah,” though He did in some, when He used the title “Son of Man” there was no doubt in the minds of His audience what He was saying.

Likewise, the Coming One. The other place where this is used is John 11:27. Jesus is talking to Martha outside the tomb of Lazarus. He said to her, “Do you believe this?”

> “She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.’”

But it would be better to translate it “the Coming One.” So when it says, “The Coming One will come,” that’s talking about the Messiah.

I think we can finish this chapter if we go really—well, I’m not sure. Going on, verse 38:

> “But My righteous one shall live by faith ...”

But it’s “out of faith” in Greek. Romans 14:21 says whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Whatever does not proceed out of faith is sin. So to live a righteous life you have to live out of faith. Everything you do has to proceed out of faith. There is no other basis of righteousness. And now look carefully at verse 38, it’s very important.

> “But My righteous one shall live by faith [and it’s the Lord that’s speaking]; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.”

Notice it’s the same person. I don’t want to be controversial, but, you see, the King James, which most of us have lived by, says “If any man shrinks back.” But that’s not what it says. It says, “If he shrinks back,” if “My righteous one shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” I mean, this is a theological controversy, but here are the actual words. Whatever theology we have has got to fit in with what the Bible says. Just as it said a little earlier in that chapter, “It is impossible for one who has been sanctified by the blood of Jesus, if he turns away, to renew him again.”

We come to this very, very solemn point that I emphasized last time and it seems that the Holy Spirit wants me to reemphasize. Hold on to your faith. Don’t ever deny the Lord. You may be a little bit weak, you may have your failings, the Lord will take care of that. But never go back on your confession of faith in Him. That’s the step that’s disastrous.

Now let’s look at verse 39. I’m going to give you my translation. The marginal translation that’s given in the New American Standard is more literal.

> “But we are not of shrinking back to destruction, but of faith [I prefer to say believing] to the preserving of the soul.”

And again, you’ll notice there’s only two options. You either go on and save your soul or you shrink back and are lost. That’s what it says.

I’ve just completed a radio series about learning to think God’s way. In part of it I was thinking in God’s categories because you can never really agree with a person if you don’t think in the same categories that they think in. For instance, a colorblind person gets confused because he can’t tell the difference between red and green. You say red to him and he picks up green. See? He doesn’t see the way we see. So I was analyzing God’s categories as revealed in the New Testament. I discovered they’re very simple, the basic ones. The primary division of the human race is between he that believes and he that believes not. He that believes has eternal life. He that believes not shall be condemned. “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes shall be saved. He who does not believe shall be condemned.” There isn’t any third category.

Then I looked in 1 John which has got the most wonderful selection of God’s categories. They’re all simple. Light and darkness, sin and righteousness, love and hate, truth and lie, and so on. See, contemporary morality has confused a lot of people because it’s blurred the issue.

Second Corinthians 5:10 says we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad. No third possibility. Here it says, “We are not of those who draw back to destruction, but are those who continue to believe to salvation.” There’s no third option.

And notice, the people who draw back do it out of fear. They shrink back. Let’s look at one other Scripture and we close. Revelation 21:8. Verse 7:

> "He who overcomes shall inherit these things ..."

That's one kind of person, he who overcomes. Verse 8:

> "But ... the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone ..."

That's the other kind. There's no third category. There's no such thing as "half overcoming." Really. Romans 12:21, "Be not overcome by evil but overcome evil with good." There is no third category. That's an invention of Satan, this third category which leaves us an option that God hasn't given him.

Can you believe it, we're going to begin chapter 11. This is a fantastic chapter. What I will do now is translate the first six verses and then we'll turn to our note outline.

> "Now faith is a substance of things hoped for, a proof [or a conviction] of things that are not seen. For by this the elders were attested [to testify]. By faith we understand that the ages have been fitted together by the spoken word of God ..."

I think yours says "the world" or "the universe" probably. That's correct, but the word originally refers to time, not space. It's the regular word that's used for an age. It's very interesting. The Bible, in many ways, has anticipated the theory of relativity because it uses time and space in a way that there's no conflict with contemporary physics, as far as I know.

> "... the ages [or the universe] have been fitted together by the spoken word of God ..."

The word spoken there is the one that's so popular today, rhema. It's usually means a spoken word. Nothing happened until God spoke. When He spoke, then the action started. The word "fitted together" is used somewhere in Timothy of being equipped for the service of the Lord. It's the same word. "A workman that needeth not to be ashamed." Is that right?

> "... so that with the result that that which is seen came into being [or has come into being] not out of things which appear."

I think I better go back and do verse 3 again.

> "By faith we understand that the ages have been fitted together by a spoken word of God, with the result that that which is seen has come into being not from things which appear. [Verse 4:] By faith Abel offered to God a superior sacrifice to Cain, through which he obtained testimony [he was attested by God] that he was righteous, God bearing testimony of his gifts, and through it, though dead, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was translated ..."

That's the old-fashioned word, but I like it. It means "to carry over from one thing to another, carried across." You translate from English to French, you carry it across from English to French. What was totally English becomes totally French. So Enoch was translated—he was here and then he became totally there. And both men in the Bible who were translated—that's Enoch and Elijah—went entire. They didn't leave anything behind, it was total: spirit, soul and body. Going on... he was not found because God had moved him over ...

The word means "to move from one place to another." I remember the second sermon I ever heard in Pentecostal church was about Enoch. That was the text: "Enoch was not for the Lord took him." I don't remember all the man said, but he was one of the preachers that believe in making things very vivid. This was in England in 1941. He described the situation after Enoch had disappeared and he said, "People couldn't solve the mystery, so they called for the CID," which would be the FBI in America. "And the CID came with their tracking dogs and they followed the scent just so far and then there was no more scent neither north, nor south, nor east, nor west. The logical conclusion was he'd gone up." Coming from a background of years in logic I said, "That's logical enough!" So, I've always got a special feeling in my heart for this verse. Going on in verse 5:

> "... for before his translation [or his transfer] he was attested that he had pleased God."

How did he please God? By walking with God. It pleases God when you walk with Him. It pleases me when my wife walks with me. We walk together, we have a good time. One way to please God is to walk with Him. I've got some Scriptures on that, we're coming to that. Verse 6, one of the most important verses in the Bible.

> "But apart from faith it is impossible to please Him ..."

It's not very difficult, it's impossible.

> "... for the one who comes to God must believe that He [God] is [or exists], and that He becomes a rewarder to those who diligently seek Him."

Do you believe that? Good.

Now, let's go to our outline which you'll find on Page 11/1. This was the most exciting chapter to make an outline of of all the chapters I've done. I got so excited, there are six pages of the outline! Guess how long it'll take us to get through those!

To make it a little less lengthy, I've used two standard abbreviations which are explained there at the top. E for example and P for a principle. Wherever you see E, that's an example. There are in this chapter more than sixteen, because there's a long list at the end which isn't numbered. There are sixteen individual examples of faith in this chapter.

Going to the outline, chapter 10 closes by emphasizing the necessity of faith. What did it say at the end? We are not of those who draw back, but of those who believe to salvation, have faith for salvation. The key closing thought was having faith for salvation. Now the writer in this chapter explains in tremendous detail what faith is.

As I've indicated, I was at one time a logician. My specialty was definitions. I wrote a thesis on definitions. Most people imagine if you can't define something you don't know what it is. That's not correct. You can't define the chair you're sitting on, but you know what it is. It's very hard to define a chair, extremely difficult. Don't let anybody tie you down that if you can't define something, you don't know what it is. If I say, "Sit on the chair," and you sit on it, you know what a chair is. The test is practical, rather than theoretical.

Most things in the Bible are not defined. This is very real to me because I was a student of Plato who was a disciple of Socrates. Socrates' whole emphasis was on defining things: righteousness and so on. Socrates took the line, "If you can't define it, you don't know what it is." I have to say that that is not really correct. But, definitions, nevertheless, are very illuminating and they can be very helpful. Basically, most of the key concepts of the Bible are not defined in words. That doesn't mean we can't know what they are. There are other ways of knowing besides being able to define. A child can't define, but it learns language and proves it by the way it acts.

However, what I'm leading up to is in the inscrutable wisdom of God, the Bible does define faith. It's probably the only key concept which is defined. We have the definition here in verse 1. Before we go into the definition, I want to deal with this general principle and it's so general I didn't mark it every time we came across it because it applies to every example. One general principle that applies to every example: faith must be accompanied by appropriate action. As we go through, note the various kinds of actions prompted by faith in the examples that follow. It's very important that we don't get a stereotyped idea of what faith is. Faith can be expressed in many ways and as Brother Ed said the other day, "In America you can have faith for prosperity. Thank God for that. But behind the Iron Curtain, Christians are persecuted. That takes faith, too." Don't imagine that faith can only be expressed in owning a Cadillac. That's not so. The people that don't own Cadillacs behind the Iron Curtain may well have more faith than some of the people that do own Cadillacs in the United States.

What I'm trying to say is don't get set in a mental mold that you can't recognize faith when it comes out in a rather surprising way.

Let's look at James 2 because it's a very important chapter. James 2:14–16. How many of you can say "Praise the Lord" for James? I mean, it's rather easy to say "Praise the Lord" for Paul than it is for James. I'm told that Martin Luther said, "The epistle of James was a thing of straw because," to his way of thinking, "it conflicted with his great discovery 'by faith alone.'" However, I side with both Paul and James. I believe they're both right, because they're both in the Bible. If we can't make room for both of them, then we have a rather little mind.

We're going to read now James 2:14–26 in the NASB.

> "What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?"

Yes or no? Obviously, the answer is no. Faith without works doesn't save.

> "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of ... food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?"

That's an example of mere verbal faith. "Be warmed and fed but don't ask me for anything." It's rather a vivid example, isn't it? Verse 17:

> "Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, 'You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.'"

That's a really good pattern to follow. Don't argue faith, demonstrate it. Verse 19:

> "You believe that God is one. [That's the standard confession of the Jewish people. It's very orthodox.] You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder."

It's not enough to believe. Okay? I've seen demons shudder so many times, that's very vivid. When they're confronted by the authority of the gospel in the name of Jesus, many times they will shudder. They believe, but they're on the wrong side. Verse 20:

> "Are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow [of course, that's not addressed to anybody here!], that faith without works is useless?"

Isn't it interesting James goes to exactly the same examples to prove that you must have works that Paul goes to to prove you must have faith. That's no accident, the Holy Spirit arranged it. You see, truth is not static.

You probably heard my example about the grandfather clock with the pendulum? Everybody likes to see truth like the pendulum, right down the middle where you can see it through the little piece of glass. But when the pendulum is static, the clock is not going. That's people who have got a set theology and their clock is not going! What happens when the clock goes? The pendulum swings from one side to the other all the time. As long as it goes on swinging, everything's all right. If it stops, everything's all wrong.

You'll find in your life God will emphasize one thing and just when you say, "Now I've learned the lesson," He'll emphasize something that seems totally opposite. The pendulum has swung. If you don't move with the pendulum, you'll get behind.

Verse 21:

> "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?"

He had to do something to prove that he believed God. And if you read on in the 11th chapter of Hebrews (which we'll not get to this time), he believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead. You know the evidence of that? Turn to Genesis 22 and he said to the young man, "We will go up the mountain and worship and we will come back." He not only believed it, he confessed it. He had to go all the way. It wasn't enough to say at the foot of the mountain, "We'll come back." He had to go right up the mountain, lift the knife and be poised to kill his son. God said, "Now I know." So, it was what he did that perfected what he believed. Verse 22, that's my version of that.

> "You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,' and he was called the friend of God."

You'll notice that that's the same verse that Paul uses in Romans 4 to prove it's by faith. Here's James proving it's by works. Is that fair? Well, it's all the Bible.

Let me point out, there's a lesson. You say, "I believe God." Praise the Lord! One day God will say, "Go up Mount Moriah." Then you can't say, "Lord, I already believe." God will say, "I want to see your works." When you put it into practice, your faith will be perfected.

When Abraham came down from Mount Moriah, he was a different man. There are people who've been through such tests that nothing will ever shake them again. When Abraham had been through that test, he didn't need to be

tested anymore. “He that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.” That’s an amazing statement, isn’t it? I’m not offering to interpret it.

Verse 24:

> “You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.”

I don’t want to be in any way controversial, I have many good friends who are Lutherans. But, there was such an emphasis in Luther’s teaching on that, “It’s by faith alone,” that some Lutherans are afraid of doing anything in case it would cease to be faith alone. I’ve heard of a Lutheran church that wouldn’t hold prayer meetings because they were afraid that would be works. So you see, we need to balance; the pendulum has to keep swinging.

Verse 25:

> “And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?”

She risked her life—that was her works.

> “For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”

I have noticed that in praying for the sick—especially certain sicknesses, particularly arthritis. Ruth will bear me witness, we’ve seen many examples of this. Sometimes when I pray for a person with arthritis I usually tell them, “I believe that arthritis is usually an evil spirit. My method is to tell that evil spirit to go. Your responsibility is to let it go.” I say, “If you do your part, I’ll do mine, and God will do His.” There have come a number of occasions when I have felt for sure that the person was delivered. Most times a person with arthritis is so used to being sick that they can’t adjust to being healed. I say, faith without works is dead. If you’ve got faith, do something to prove it. I usually get them to stand up and start by stamping on the devil. I say, “Stamp as hard as you can.” Many times they won’t believe that their knees won’t hurt. Then I say, “Now, if you really believe, walk down the aisle and come back.” When they’ve done that I say, “Run around the building and come back.” Ruth will bear me witness, we’ve seen many people healed that way.

But, if they never acted, they would have stayed sick. God had done His part, but they had to move in with works. “By works faith was perfected.”

This is a principle that applies all the way through and that’s why I’ve dealt with it at the beginning so that we don’t have to keep going back to it. As I said before, I suggest as we go through this beautiful chapter you take time to see the different works or deeds or acts by which faith was expressed.

Now we’ll go to our outline on verse 1. 11:1, the middle of Page 11/1. We have here faith defined in relation to hope and sight. Here’s the definition in verse 1:

> “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for …”

It’s not the assurance, it’s an assurance. It’s “a” conviction of things not seen. The word that’s translated assurance occurs in Hebrews 1. I’d like you to keep your finger in chapter 11 and turn to chapter 1 for a moment. Verse 3, speaking about Jesus in His eternal nature.

> “He is the radiance of [the Father’s] glory … [the way the Father’s glory shines out is through Jesus] and the exact representation of His nature.”

The word nature there is the same word that’s used in Hebrews 11:1 and it means “the underlying substance.” Jesus is the exact image of the invisible God. No man has seen God, but when you see Jesus you know exactly what God is like, because He’s the exact image of the invisible, underlying substance of God.

That’s why God won’t permit idolatry. Do you know why? Because He has His own image. That’s Jesus. He doesn’t want anybody to try to improve on that or substitute anything for it.

Going back to Hebrews 11:1: Faith is the underlying substance of things hoped for. I point out here faith is in the present, hope is in the future. That’s by definition. We often get them mixed up. I’ve had so many people say to me, “I believe God will heal me.” I know what they mean is, “I hope God will heal me.” It’s not the same thing. God has promised results to faith that don’t come to hope. Faith is so real it’s a substance, it’s not something imaginary. It’s not a theory, it’s not a doctrine; it’s a substance. That’s why I won’t change that translation.

How do you know if you've got the substance? If I could answer that question I think I'd be the most popular preacher in America! I've heard so many preachers tell and they've never said it all. God just doesn't divulge that one. Many times I've thought I had faith and didn't have any at all. Have you ever experienced that? Other times I didn't think I had any faith, and I was amazed at the results. In the early years of my ministry some of the most amazing miracles took place that I've never seen surpassed when I prayed for people simply because they asked me to pray for people. My son-in-law here can remember some of them; he was with me at that time.

I can remember a Mr. Poole. He was well up in his 60s; he'd just got saved. He had that kind of condition of palsy that you shake all the time. He had a weak heart and I thought, Thank God the dear old gentleman got saved before he goes home. He came up for prayer! I preached a very intellectual sermon that night on Romans 8—the difference between the flesh and the spirit. It wasn't suited to a healing ministry at all, but he asked for prayer so what could I do? I reached for the bottle of olive oil and we anointed him and he started to behave like an airplane that's about to take off! I mean, his arms flayed and he was shaking and vibrating and we stood back and watched him. What's going to happen next? This went on for ten to twenty minutes. By the end of that time, he was apparently totally healed. Why he came for prayer, on top of all his other problems was he'd fallen down some steps and injured his arm. I think that's all he came for prayer for, actually. Anyhow, by the end of that time his injured arm was so strong he saw us all standing around and he went around the ring shaking everybody by the hand. It's a strange thing—my son-in-law is here tonight and he can remember that—it made you wince when he shook your hand.

Then he got to a young man who'd been miraculously healed a little earlier whose name was James. He stretched out his hand to him and then he drew it back and said, "No, I can't shake hands with you. You're a hypocrite." That young man went as pale as a sheet. I mean, he was. That was a word of knowledge. You could have put a word of knowledge to me on a plate at that time and I wouldn't have known what it was! That man, Mr. Poole, he lived as long as we remained in London which was about eight more years. Our meetings were at the top of five flights of stairs. You could hear people puffing when they got to the top. After that I never saw him walk. He went everywhere at a sharp trot. Up the stairs, down the stairs, in the street. I mean, he got an injection of something that just lasted for the rest of his life. I have never had less sense of having faith than I had at that moment.

But you see, faith is not feeling. When you feel so confident you may have faith and you may not. But remember, faith and humility go together. The moment you're the man with all the answers you cease to have faith. Usually, that might be an overstatement. You want real faith? Let God put your nose in the dust. That's another experience I've had. I want to show you this is no idle word. Lamentations 3. This actually happened to me in the desert in about 1943. It's Lamentations 3:25 and following.

> "The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the LORD."

I was in the army and fed up with being in the army. I hated every moment of it. This is what the Lord gave me.

> "It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and be silent since he has laid it on him. Let him put his mouth in the dust, perhaps there is hope."

I remember one night going out and I said, "God, I can take no more." I threw myself on my face in the sand and I literally put my mouth in the dust. I came back, opened my Bible and there was that passage. You never know how real the Bible is until you're in the place where you experience it.

We're going back to Hebrews 11:1. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for." Faith is a substance, it's the underlying basis of what you hope for. If you have a basis of faith, then your hopes will be fulfilled. If they have no basis of faith your hopes have no guarantee that they will be fulfilled. The only guarantee of hope fulfilled is a basis of present faith. Faith in the present; hope in the future.

Then it says "a conviction about things not seen." Faith is a conviction. In the world today there's very little of real conviction. People will trade anything, compromise about anything, adjust, change— Not the person who has faith. Faith is a conviction. I like that word. The world respects a man of conviction even if they don't share his convictions. They recognize him.

It's conviction of things not seen. Bear that in mind. Faith relates to the unseen. Let's get that straight. Faith is in the present, hope is in the future. Sight relates us to this world;

faith relates us to the unseen world. Those are the two basic distinctions that are made in that verse.

Principle number one, principle number two, I've stated them but let's look at them.

Principle number one: Faith is present, hope is future. Without faith, hope has no solid basis. It's just wishful thinking, which the world is full of.

Principle number two, faith relates to the unseen. It's very, very important. Bear that in mind. There's another Scripture that brings that out so clearly. Keep your finger in Hebrews 11 and turn to 2 Corinthians 5 for a moment. Verse 7 which is a very short verse.

> "... for we walk by faith, not by sight."

Okay? By faith and not by sight. If it's by faith then it's not by sight. If it's by sight then it's not by faith. Don't ever mix them up. You don't need faith toward what you can see. You only need faith for what you can't see. That's one reason why faith is so precious is, because it's the only legitimate way to relate to the unseen world. There are illegitimate ways, which are the occult, but the only legitimate way to relate to the unseen world is by faith.

Going back to Hebrews 11:2. Faith was the key to the victories of the Old Testament saints. They were very different in their personalities, their achievements, their problems, their backgrounds, but they had one thing in common. What was it? Faith. It's so important to see that.

I was thinking once about some of the great Christians that have inspired me at different times. I've been a great admirer of Mary ?Slesso?, people don't read much about her. She used to be known as the White Queen of Calabar in West Africa. And other people like Madam ?Guillon? and very, very different people. I said to myself one day, "What do these very different people have in common?" My own conclusion at that time was, They know how to claim the promises of God. That can be in two totally different fields that apparently have nothing in common except just that.

What I want to say, and I think this is a good point to stop, the same applies to God's successful servants in all ages. You want to be successful as a Christian, there is one unvarying requirement which is faith. Don't try without. If you don't have it, don't try to make do. Seek God for it.

We could look to the other great Scripture there, Romans 10:17 which I'm sure most of you know.

> "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."

That's what got me out of hospital. Faith comes. If you don't have it, you don't need to go on without it. It comes by hearing the Word of God.

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Sermon

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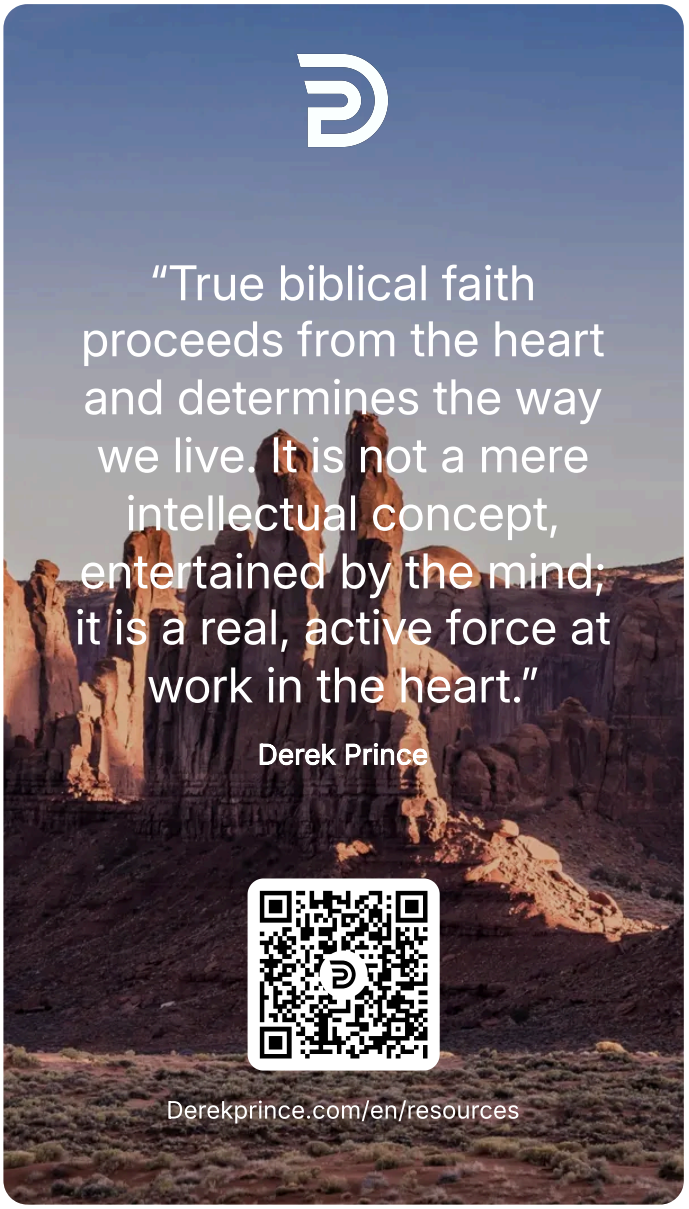


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