

# How Faith Works (Heb 11:1-3)



*'The Just shall live by Faith'* (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38, C.f. Hab 2:4). God has only two categories by which He classifies humanity:

- i. those who believe – righteous – godly.
- ii. those who do not believe – unrighteous - wicked.

There is no third category of people in the sight of God because there is no way to be righteous before him and to live a godly life apart from faith.

## 1. What is FAITH ?

*'Now faith is the substance (reality or underlying substance) of the things hoped for, the evidence (conviction) of things not seen. For by faith the elders obtained the good testimony [pleased God]. By faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.'* (Heb 11:1-3)

- a. The emphasis is not on the visible but the *'invisible realm'*. What is behind the visible and material world is the invisible world. And what is behind the invisible world is God's spoken word at creation. ('Ex nihilo' - God created the world out of nothing.) Modern physics is still grappling with this truth stated in the Scriptures thousands of years ago. The physicists are not able to fully comprehend it, hence the terms like matter, antimatter, dark matter, negative matter, etc.

*'By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.'* (Ps 33:6)

- b. What is behind God's creative word that brought this world into existence? It is the Almighty God, your Father and my Father in Jesus Christ. He is the greatest and ultimate reality behind all other realities we will ever face in life. Do you know this truth deep down? Truly knowing this deep down and relating to God this way every day, will comfort and strengthen you like nothing else ever can. This truth will give you the confidence with which to face any situation you come across in life.

Not only did God create this world by the power of His Word, but He is also still presently 'upholding' and sustaining all things by the word of His power (Heb 1:3). Should God simply stop upholding and sustaining this world by His word, everything will collapse into oblivion!

- c. How do we relate to this invisible reality of God behind all that we see and experience today? What is the link for us to live here in the visible material world and also connect to the invisible eternal world? Faith - *'Now faith is the substance (underlying reality) of the things hoped for, the evidence of the things not seen.'* (Heb 11:1)

The world says, *'seeing is believing.'* But Apostle Paul said, *'For we walk by faith, not by sight.'* (2 Cor 5:7) With our senses and intellect, we can relate to the visible, material, temporal world which is governed by the physical law. But it is only by faith we can relate directly to the invisible realm which is governed by God's eternal word. Paul said, *'That which is seen (visible) is temporal, but that which is not seen (invisible) are eternal.'* (2 Cor 4:18)

## d. THREE Conclusions

- i. The word of God is the only reliable source of truth that we can depend on as the compass of life.
- ii. It is only our faith that can relate to the invisible and eternal realm of God and God's unchanging Word.
- iii. The believers often are conflicted between the VISIBLE realities which relate to our senses, and the INVISIBLE realities which relate to our faith.

If we are to overcome this world, there is only one way – the way of faith. *'For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.'* (1 John 5:4). *'The just shall live by faith.'* (Rom 1:17)

Apostle Paul declared, 'We walk by faith, not by sight.' (2 Cor 5:7)

## 2. Faith #1 - Seeing the Invisible God

- a. Moses - *'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.'* (Heb 11:27) This is why Moses could endure the 40 years of loneliness, failure, frustration, delays and uncertainty in the wilderness. In his natural surroundings, there was no source of encouragement whatsoever. Moses kept his eyes on the invisible God. His ability to 'see God' enabled him to endure the hardship.
- b. Paul - *'Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'* (2 Cor 4:16-18)

Apostle Paul said all that he went through (2 Cor 4:7-12; 6:3-10) was a 'momentary light afflictions.' His was an unusual sense of proportion – in the light of eternity. Paul said, *'We do not lose heart.'* How? By the eye of faith, he was in contact with the eternal invisible world and God who inhabits that world. What is the key for the people of great faith? Their ability to see the invisible God through the eye of faith.

- c. Do you see God in the same way in your life and circumstances? Do you have that kind of contact with God? Through faith, we can have that kind of relationship with God. Already 3 months have passed in the lockdown. There has been a steady increase in mental illness and suicide rates across the world! When you go through times of confusion and uncertainty, how do you navigate life with confidence and clarity? Where is the moral and spiritual compass you can depend on?

The unchanging God and God's eternal word. According to His very word, God is shaking the world. God is not against you. God is for you and with you. God is preparing the Church so that we can see Him more clearly and walk with God in close fellowship through faith. There is more that is going on in the world than a simple health crisis. There is a great power struggle between the light and the darkness. God exposing the darkness, and He is setting up the world for the great harvest. Are we ready?

## 3. Faith #2 - Hearing God's Voice

- a. Faith Comes – *'So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'* (Rom 10:17) If you don't have faith, you can have it because faith comes. How does faith come? By hearing the word of God. Notice it is 'hearing' the word – the 'Rhema Word' of God beyond reading - 'the spoken word' of God.

Seeing the invisible God deepens your trust in God and imparts confidence in you to endure the hardship. Hearing the spoken word of God releases God's creative power into your life for God's glory.

How do we hear the specific word of God for us? It may come through hearing the preached Word, or reading and meditating on the word, or during the time of prayer. The portion of God's Word will be quickened and made alive in your heart by the Holy Spirit at a specific time for a specific purpose.

- b. THREE Stages of Hearing God's Voice
  - i. You avail yourself to the word of God through the ear gate (hearing the preached word) and the eye gate (reading and praying the word) by paying careful attention in an attitude of faith. This spiritual discipline must be cultivated.
  - ii. At the time and moment of God's choosing the Holy Spirit quickens and makes alive a particular word or passage to you by the Holy Spirit. This spiritual sensitivity must be cultivated.
  - iii. This results in faith coming and God's power is released to you - the seeds of miracles for healing, deliverance, provision. 'Now the faith is...the evidence [conviction] of things not seen.' (Heb 11:1) We then confess and proclaim God's word in agreement. This spiritual boldness must be cultivated.
- c. The Importance of Relaxing - Fretting or panicking makes hearing God's voice very difficult. *'Be still (cease striving) and know that I am God.'* (Ps 46:10) *'But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you*

*have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.* (Matt 6:6) This 'inner room of stillness' must be cultivated.