

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz production
Week 46
Hebrews 7-13

I love Hebrews 10. It is an amazing chapter filled with many wonderful gospel truths. President Holland gave a talk many many years ago highlighting this chapter and teaching some life changing principles. It was a BYU speech in 1999 called "Cast not away therefore your confidence"

<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/jeffrey-r-holland/cast-not-away-therefore-your-confidence/>

That however, is not what I would like to discuss today. During our short time together today I would like to attempt and do the impossible: I am going to try and define clearly the definition of faith and show how we can be more faith-filled in our daily lives. This is important because in Hebrews 10 we read that "the just (also translated as the righteous) live by faith. (Hebrews 10:38)

Hebrews 11 defines faith as: "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

I'm sure you have heard this expression before. It does help in our attempt to understand what faith is. But, to really clearly understand what faith is, let's first look at what faith is not.

Faith is Not: Hope, it is not a wish, it is not a belief. Faith is not a feeling deep inside of us that we are not able to explain. What I mean by that is, when someone asks you about your faith the explanation that we commonly give is seldom the definition with which we rely. When someone asks you how you know that God lives and how we know that Jesus is the Christ our response of: "Because I feel that it is true", is not sufficient or accurate in the true meaning of faith.

And yet, we are a faith filled people. But, we struggle to illustrate what it is and how we experience it.

I can assure you that you do have a lot of faith, even those without a belief in God exercise faith every day.

In its most basic form faith is trust. Trust that what someone says is true.

-When you go to the bank and deposit a check, you have faith that the person at the bank will deposit that money into your account.

-And, we trust that the bank will hold our money safe until the time we need it.

-We have faith in doctors to properly diagnose our ailments and we trust that they will administer the healing remedies.

-Doctors have faith that the text books they studied to become a doctor are true in their science and philosophies.

-We have faith in teachers, employers, and leaders that they will lead us to success in our lives.

In its more basic forms: we have faith when we flip on a light switch that the light will turn on. Some might argue that this is knowledge because we have done it a millions times and it always works. And they would be correct in a sort of way. We can have knowledge that every time before when we flipped the switch that the light came on. But we can not guarantee that every time we do it that we will get the same result. We do not control the electricity that is coming into our homes. Therefore, we know it has worked in the past and that has strengthened our faith for the present and the future.

Here is another example:

We have faith when we go out to our car that it is going to start. And if we have a newer car we can be almost certain. However, if our past experiences have shown that our car will not always start when we need it to, then our faith begins to waver. Perhaps it is even reduced to hope. We then have no faith, but simply hope that our old clunker will start for us.

See it is our experience that really outlines how our faith looks. If we have been let down at times by people of things we tend to not trust in those things in the future, but if there has never been an issue then we might trust in those people or things more and more.

If your bank was constantly putting your money in other peoples accounts, how long would it take you to change banks? If a certain airline crashed 1 in 10 planes, how likely would you be to book that airline for your next trip? The level of your faith in them would be non existent.

Every day we put our trust and faith in other flawed mortals. Everyday of our lives, and yet when it comes to exercising the power of faith in the almighty creator we draw back.

Let's look at some examples of the power of faith in God as illustrated in Hebrews 11:

Noah is a perfect example. Could you imagine what he went through? Here he is the older guy with grown children living in the desert and God says to him: Noah, I want you to build a boat because I am going to send rain...huh? Would you do it? It hasn't rained in months and when it did it was a good thing. And God says to you, build a boat. I'm sure Noah wasn't just sitting around looking for something to do, hoping God would give him a project that would occupy his time. No, based on my experience I'm almost positive that Noah probably was working full time, had a very demanding church calling probably with the youth. His family had needs and his plate was full. And God said; drop it all, and trust me, just do as I ask. And Noah had faith. He had faith that the voice he heard was God's. He had faith because I'm sure there were other moments in his life, evidence that God had spoken and His word was true. So when Noah heard that familiar voice, He would trust that God was speaking and that He was planning something miraculous. And perhaps that is where we fall short. We hear God speak and then we think. Well, maybe that was just my own voice. Maybe that was something I ate last night. And we miss the opportunity to have faith or trust in God that He has a plan and is doing something miraculous in our lives.

Abraham had a similar experience. But we know a lot more about him and his past. He had many opportunities to hear and obey God's voice. From telling him to leave town to his old wife having a baby. I'm sure it was not a surprise when he heard that familiar voice of God saying: Hey Abraham, that son that you have. The one that I promised all the generations of the earth will come through him. I want you to sacrifice him as an offering to me.

To us this may seem like such a ridiculous idea. There is no way that a loving God would command me to do this. It contradicts everything else that He has told me. I'm sure this is not God that is asking me to kill my son. This must be the adversary or something I ate last night. But not Abraham. When he heard God's instruction, knelt down and asked God; This is what I heard, Is this correct? Do you really want me to sacrifice my only son? And after receiving the confirmation from God, he stood up and packed his things and his son and headed to mount Moriah to do as He was commanded. Reasoning within himself. If God told me that through Issac shall all thy seed be called and now I am to sacrifice him then God has power to raise him from the dead and that is what He will do because God can not lie. Abraham had complete trust and faith in God and His word to the point that he acted and obeyed Gods command completely.

And we ask: Well, wasn't it scary? Wasn't Noah scared that the people would make fun of him for building a boat in the middle of the desert? Wasn't Abraham scared that He would be responsible for killing his only son. Wasn't he scared that maybe he didn't hear God's voice correctly? Do you think Moses was scared to lead millions of rebellious Israelites into the desert to wander around for 40 years?

Nope. because all of these instances required faith and you can not have faith and fear at the same time. So we can in confidence say that these guys were not scared to do what God asked them to do. They went forward trusting in a Father that showed them evidences in their lives that He was watching over them and leading them to joy and peace. These examples were the huge events that the small whisperings were leading to.

So in summary what is faith? Faith is trusting in God's word, that He is leading your life to a life like His. It is trusting God and obeying Him through actions as He commands.

So the big question is: What has God said to you and to me that we need to obey in order to increase our faith? I'm so glad you asked. Before we can expect God to give us some great task to do. Some miraculous opportunity to show our total commitment to Him, we must first do what He has already asked. The scriptures are filled with the words of God asking us to love Him and to love His children. To give up our earthly idles and repent of our sins. But in all this, please remember the words of President George Q. Cannon:

“No matter how serious the trial, how deep the distress, how great the affliction, [God] will never desert us. He never has, and He never will. He cannot do it. It is not His character [to do so]. ... He will [always] stand by us. We may pass through the fiery furnace; we may pass through deep waters; but we shall not be consumed nor

overwhelmed. We shall emerge from all these trials and difficulties the better and purer for them.”” George Q. Cannon, “Remarks,” *Deseret Evening News*, Mar. 7, 1891, 4.

Sure life is hard sometimes. But if we are constantly seeking to hear and obey God's voice then our faith increases and we learn to trust in Him and His words more. Remember what precedes the miracle? It always has been and always will be faith.

But faith is not faith without first hearing and discerning the word of God. That is the key element in our quest to find the power that lies in faith. It has to be His will and it has to be communicated to you through His voice or that of the Holy Spirit. Once that is felt and we are willing to move forward without fear then the power of God will be manifest in our lives. Of this I testify.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.