



What is Faith?

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Hebrews 11:1

Faith is a substance! We do not tend to see it that way; we look at it as being very otherworldly. But it is not; we use faith every day. For example: you pick up the phone, call a department store to place an order and they ask for your credit card number. Then they send you a receipt. Now that receipt is what you hold on to while you are waiting for the item to arrive; it gives you assurance that the product is on the way. And the same is true in the spiritual world. God promises to answer your prayer. You believe Him. But your faith is the 'substance' you hold on to while you are waiting.

Faith is also 'evidence'! Why would you believe that somebody you cannot see on the other end of a phone line would send you something just because you order it? Because it happens every day for others, and because it has happened to you before. Therefore, you are not being presumptuous or silly when you go to your door expecting it to be there. You are not the first person to trust God and you will not be the last. Listen: *"Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations"* (Psalm 90:1). People have been trusting God for thousands of years and has He ever let them down? Never! His past faithfulness is all the 'evidence' you need. So, it is not foolish at all to put your confidence in a God like that, is it?

Heavenly Father, thank you for Faith, the gift you give and I use and the promises of yours that I accept by faith. Help me trust you because of your faithfulness to deliver! In Jesus' Name, Amen

Unleash Your Faith



▶ We lose our Identity through **Addictions**

Disintegration – loss of feeling (FIRE)

“For this people’s heart has become calloused” Matt13:15

Isolation – depression (DARKNESS)

“Everyone who does evil hates the light” John 3:20

Denial – insanity (Gnashing of teeth)

“Jesus was [healing] on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him.” Jn 5:16

▶ Hell provides **resolution** to injustice

“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath” Rm 12:19

▶ Only **Love** can overcome Hell in the **Heart**

Fear of damnation will never change the fundamental state of the heart.

Guilt Produces a **Question**: What is the bare minimum I have to do to get out of trouble?

Faith Produces **Motivation**: *“The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20*

Faith that Lasts

Proof – *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8*

Personal - *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12*

Pursue – *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Luke 11:9*

NEW BEGINNINGS

Luke 16:19-31

The Rich Man and Lazarus

¹⁹ “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In hell,^[c] where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

²⁵ “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

²⁷ “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

²⁹ “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’

³⁰ “‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

³¹ “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

Repentance – to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the transformation of one's life to feel regret or contrition *b* : to change one's mind

Do not be too quick to condemn the man who no longer believes in God: for it is perhaps your own coldness and avarice and mediocrity and materialism and selfishness that have chilled his faith. – Thomas Merton

Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from grace. - Thomas à Kempis

I have a friend who is in Alcoholics Anonymous, and he says, “If I am late to church, the last five rows or so of people all turn around and kind of scowl at me, Why can’t you be on time? Don’t you know what time it starts? Why can’t you be responsible, like us? If I am late to my AA meeting, my Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, everybody stops, the whole meeting stops. They get up and hug me, because they know the fact that I came at all, there were probably demons inside me trying to keep me away from their meeting, but my coming was a great victory because I acknowledged, I have need.”

And I think that’s what the Church should be based on. We come together not because we are superior, we come together because we recognize we do have need. We need to worship, we need the strength that we get from our faith, from our dependence on God, much like Alcoholics Anonymous. I wish my Church was more like an AA meeting.