RELATE CHURCH

Your Journey With Christ · Discipleship · Lesson 12 of 27

Faith and the Promises of God

Relate Church • Foundations for a Growing Faith

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

HEBREWS 11:1

Introduction

A group of people once asked Jesus how they could do the work of God.

> [29] *Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."*
>
> **John 6:29 NIV**

God desires belief and faith from us.

> [6] *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*
>
> **Hebrews 11:6 NIV**

Wishful thinking says, "I hope everything works out all right. I have faith that it will." This is very superficial thinking.

Biblical faith says, "Lord, I trust You!" True faith in God rests upon God's character and His promises.

Walking By Faith

Our walk with God began with grace through faith.

> [8] *For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift —* [9] *not from works, so that no one can boast.*
>
> **Ephesians 2:8-9 CSB**

God's grace and faith are gifts He gave to us.

Because we are saved by grace through faith, Colossians 2:6-7 tells us how we ought to live now.

> [6] *So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him,* [7] *being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.*
>
> **Colossians 2:6-7 CSB**

We can gain understanding into what faith is by considering the verses below.

> [25] *So take courage, men, because I believe God that it will be just the way it was told to me.*

Acts 27:25 CSB

Speaking of Abraham and the promise God made to him:

> [20] *He did not waver in unbelief at God's promise but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,* [21] *because he was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was also able to do.*
>
> **Romans 4:20-21 CSB**

> [1] *Now faith is the assurance of [things] hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*
>
> **Hebrews 11:1 LSB**

> *"Faith is the assurance that the thing which God has said in His Word is true, and that God will act according to what He has said in His Word. This assurance, this reliance on God's Word, this confidence is faith. Faith is not a matter of impressions, nor of probabilities, nor of appearances." George Müller*

Faith Makes Many Things Possible and Obtainable

Faith makes answers to prayer possible.

> [22] *"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."*
>
> **Matthew 21:22 NIV**

Faith makes an intimate relationship with God possible.

> [23] *And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.*
>
> **James 2:23 NKJV**

Faith makes bold access with confidence to God possible.

> [12] *…in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.*
>
> **Ephesians 3:12 NKJV**

Faith makes power over Satan possible.

> [16] *… above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*
>
> **Ephesians 6:16 NKJV**

Faith makes hope, joy, and peace possible.

> [13] *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*
>
> **Romans 15:13 CSB**

Real faith moves us from belief in what is true about God to a trusting intimacy with God.

> *…* [7] *for we walk by faith, not by sight-…*
>
> **2 Corinthians 5:7 LSB**

What do you think living out this truth in your daily life looks like?

> [23] *And Jesus said to him, "'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes."*
>
> **Mark 9:23 LSB**

Unbelief Can Exclude You From Seeing God's Work

> [58] *And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.*
>
> **Matthew 13:58 LSB**

> *"The opposite of faith is not doubt; it is unbelief. Doubt only needs more facts. Unbelief is disobedience and refuses to act in accordance with what God has declared." Adaptation of Charles G. Finney, Systematic Theology*

Thinking Like Thomas is a Choice

> [24] *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.* [25] *So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands*

the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." [26] *After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."* [27] *Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing."* [28] *Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"* [29] *Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."*

John 20:24-29 NASB95

Jesus responded to the doubts Thomas had by telling him to not be unbelieving, but believing. In your times of doubt, do you expect Jesus to respond to you in the same way He responded to Thomas?

Objects of Faith

Some of the unworthy people and things people place their faith in are listed in the verses below.

[23] *Thus says the LORD:*
"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,
Let not the mighty man glory in his might,
Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;
[24] *But let him who glories glory in this,*
That he understands and knows Me,
That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.
For in these I delight," says the LORD.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 NKJV

[16] *The king is not saved by a mighty army;*
A warrior is not delivered by great strength.
[17] [A] *horse is a false hope for victory;*
Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength.

Psalm 33:16-17 NASB95

[3] *Do not put your trust in princes,*
in human beings, who cannot save.

Psalm 146:3 NIV

> [5] *Trust in the LORD with all your heart,*
> *and do not rely on your own understanding;*
> [6] *in all your ways know him,*
> *and he will make your paths straight.*
> [7] *Don't be wise in your own eyes;*
> *fear the LORD and turn away from evil.*
> [8] *This will be healing for your body*
> *and strengthening for your bones.*
>
> **Proverbs 3:5-8 CSB**

> [26] *The one who trusts in himself is a fool,*
> *but one who walks in wisdom will be safe.*
>
> **Proverbs 28:26 CSB**

What do you think is the inevitable result of placing faith in people and things?

Only God should be the object of our faith.

> [22] *Jesus replied to them, "Have faith in God."*
>
> **Mark 11:22 CSB**

Your confidence and faith in God are built and strengthened according to your knowledge of who God is, His character, and the promises He has made to us.

Examples of Faith

Hebrews 11 is a key chapter on faith. The people in Hebrews 11 waited years and never saw God's promises completely fulfilled in their lifetime.

> [39] *These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised,* [40] *since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.*
>
> **Hebrews 11:39-40 NIV**

What happens to your faith when God asks you to wait? Does your faith in God grow stronger or does it diminish?

The Promises of God

Think about a time when someone promised you something.

- How did you evaluate whether or not this person would keep his or her promise?
- Did the person keep the promise made to you?
- How does this affect your attitude toward a person making future promises to you?

God also makes certain promises to you. Some of the things the Bible says about the words of God are listed below.

> 56 *"Blessed be the LORD! He has given rest to his people Israel according to all he has said. Not one of all the good promises he made through his servant Moses has failed."*
>
> **1 Kings 8:56 CSB**

> 34 *"I will not violate my covenant*
> *or change what my lips have said."*
>
> **Psalm 89:34 CSB**

> 8 *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,*
> *and your ways are not my ways."*
> *This is the LORD's declaration.*
> 9 *"For as heaven is higher than earth,*
> *so my ways are higher than your ways,*
> *and my thoughts than your thoughts.*
> 10 *For just as rain and snow fall from heaven*
> *and do not return there*
> *without saturating the earth*
> *and making it germinate and sprout,*
> *and providing seed to sow*
> *and food to eat,*
> 11 *so my word that comes from my mouth*
> *will not return to me empty,*
> *but it will accomplish what I please*
> *and will prosper in what I send it to do."*
>
> **Isaiah 55:8-11 CSB**

> [4] *By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.*
>
> **2 Peter 1:4 CSB**

God's promises are trustworthy.

> [13] *When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself,* [14] *saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants."* [15] *And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.*
>
> **Hebrews 6:13-15 NIV**

Promises to Claim

> [22] *The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease,*
> *For His compassions never fail.*
> [23] *They are new every morning;*
> *Great is Your faithfulness.*
> [24] *"The LORD is my portion," says my soul,*
> *"Therefore I have hope in Him."*
> [25] *The LORD is good to those who wait for Him,*
> *To the person who seeks Him.*
> [26] *It is good that he waits silently*
> *For the salvation of the LORD.*
>
> **Lamentations 3:22-26 NASB95**

> [7] *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."*
>
> **John 15:7-8 NASB95**

> [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.*
>
> **Romans 8:28 LSB**

Each Scripture passage above shows that God places conditions on some promises.

Why do you think God places conditions on some promises?

God's attitude about fulfilling His promises to you is found in 2 Corinthians 1:20.

> [20] *For every one of God's promises is "Yes" in him. Therefore, through him we also say "Amen" to the glory of God.*
>
> **2 Corinthians 1:20 CSB**

Our attitude while waiting to receive the fulfillment of God's promises is important.

> [11] *Now we desire each of you to demonstrate the same diligence for the full assurance of your hope until the end, 12 so that you won't become lazy but will be imitators of those who inherit the promises through faith and perseverance.*
>
> **Hebrews 6:11-12 CSB**

Why do people make promises and swear oaths to one another?

> [16] *People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument.*
>
> **Hebrews 6:16 NIV**

Why did God make promises to His children?

> [17] *Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.* [18] *God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.*
>
> **Hebrews 6:17-18 NIV**

It is helpful and encouraging to note and remember God's promises. You may want to keep a list of these promises, their conditions, and their results. God's promises often form a chain like the example below.

2 Chronicles 20:1-30 is a powerful example of how Jehoshaphat utilized the promises of God in the face of an onslaught from the enemy.

- The first thing Jehoshaphat did is found in verses 3 and 6-12.
- How God answered Him is found in verse 15.
- Jehoshaphat's response to God's answer is found in verse 18.

- Jehoshaphat believed God and acted according to God's promise.
- Jehoshaphat encouraged others to believe God too in verse 20.
- The result of them believing God's promise was God fulfilling His promise (verses 22 and 27).

Can you name a promise you have discovered in your Bible reading?
How has this promise helped you?

Memory Verse

> [6] *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*
>
> **Hebrews 11:6 NIV**

Points to Remember

- Faith is based on the truth that God is trustworthy to keep His word and to fulfill every one of His promises.
- People may entrust their lives to a number of things that ultimately fail. The only worthy object of faith is God.
- God's words never fail. God always does what He says he will do because He is faithful to His word.
- Believers should claim God's promises because He desires to respond to our faith.

Points to Ponder

- How have you seen God fulfill His promises to you?
- What have you promised God?
- Are you trustworthy to Him?

God did a great thing to restore the people in Israel during the time of Nehemiah. This brought a great expression of faith from the Levites and other leaders, as expressed in Nehemiah 9.

Through the eyes of faith they pointed to some wonderful things about God, the object of their faith. In the first twenty verses, the people praised God for being:

- Glorious (verse 5)
- Unique, exclusive (verse 6)
- Creator, bringing something out of nothing (verse 6)
- Life-giving (verse 6)
- Worthy of praise (verse 6)

- Sovereign, in control (verse 7)
- Deliverer (verse 7)
- The name changer (verse 7)
- Promise keeper (verse 8)
- Righteous (verse 8)
- Aware of pain (verse 9)
- Wonder worker, able to change anything (verse 10)
- Helper and leader (verse 12)
- Fair and just law giver (verse 13)
- Provider (verse 15)
- Gracious, compassionate, forgiving (verse 17)
- Faithful guide (verse 19)
- Never abandoning (verse 19)
- Teacher (verse 20)

Thank God for all the reasons you have to trust Him completely!