

Faith that confirms

ODCC 22/03/09 (Faith that confirms.doc)

Text: Heb 11:1-6

Introduction

1. I want to speak about faith for a couple of weeks. I have heard preachers speak of various *kinds of faith*. I do not think there are various *kinds* and in the NT only one Gk word is used for faith (with one exception).
 - a. The Gk word is *pistis* and means “a firm conviction, an unshakeable confidence, absolute trust (the kind where you trust someone with your life).”
 - b. I want to speak about faith in an invisible God – how can we believe in what we cannot see?
 - c. Bertrand Russel (British philosopher & mathematician) was an atheist and when asked what he would say if he died and found out he was wrong and God asked him why he didn’t believe, Russel said he would say, “Not enough evidence, God.”
 - d. Atheists say it’s impossible to believe in God and give heaps of reasons – I might deal with some of those later in the year because some of them are worry us all at one time or another.

Not much physical evidence

1. There is not much physical evidence. As I showed a couple of weeks ago, Paul the apostle tells us that the only evidence we can really find for God is in creation. And then Ecc 3:11 says, “*He hath made everything beautiful in its time: also he hath set eternity in their heart, yet so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end.*”
 - a. Creation may convince us of a creator but it is not enough to guide us into truth.
 - b. Over the millenia many philosophers have concluded there is a God but their concept of God and our relationship to God clash with what Jehovah revealed to Abraham and the Jews about Himself.
 - c. And I showed a couple of weeks ago that the reason for God being elusive is because of the sinfulness of man – He has hidden Himself from us.
2. It is impossible to prove the existence of God however God has revealed Himself, as the book of Hebrews tells us, at various times and in various ways in the past but in these last days He has spoken to us through His Son, Jesus.
 - a. The Bible, as we have it today, is one of the best preserved pieces of literature in the world and remains unchanged for thousands of years (although there are many who try and destroy it’s genuineness).
 - b. There are 100s of prophecies made about historical events, things that would happen in the future, such as the destruction of the Babalonyian empire and the rise and fall of the Greek and Roman empires – all which were fulfilled 100s of years after they were made.
 - c. There were over 300 prophecies about Christ most of which were fulfilled through His birth, life, and resurrection.
3. But still, we’re talking about history. Jesus lived 2000 years ago. I want some kind of evidence today.
 - a. Jesus prayed for us knowing that just as He had faced extreme opposition and unbelief, so we too would face opposition in exactly the same way (see 1 Tim 3 & Rom 1).
 - b. He prays in John 17, “*I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word.*” *He prays for you and me that our faith may not fail.*”

Faith from first to last

1. So without much evidence what is one to do? The God-requirement is **BELIEVE!**
 - a. A step of faith is what is required. Abraham was considered righteous because he believed God.
 - b. Our text says, “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him”
 - c. Few people have a Paul experience. On his way to Damascus, determined to stamp out Christianity, and suddenly there is a brilliant light which blinds him and he is confronted by the living Christ.

- d. Some people have those kinds of experiences but very few. My advice: Don't wait for it to happen to you.
2. Our text also says: ***Faith is the substance of things hoped for...***
 - a. What do I hope for? I don't have time to expand on this today but in line with what we're talking about right now, I hope there is a God. I hope He did send His Son, Jesus Christ. I hope Christ does forgive my sin. I hope God will give me His Holy Spirit in this life, to lift me up, to help me, to make my experience spiritual and not just religious, etc., etc.
 - b. My faith is what makes those things real so that I possess them as something tangible.
3. And then, ...***faith is the evidence of things not seen.*** Think about that for the rest of the week. Faith produces evidence.
 - a. Last week I said that faith must be active. My faith needs to call upon God for evidence.
 - b. This is how it works. Read your Bible and when you find a promise which answers a need in your life, pray earnestly. As we've seen, God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (in faith, I must add).
 - c. God is not 5-minute noodles. The promise is that God will reward your seeking. Believe the promise.
 - d. Here's a good place to begin: Jesus says, "I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11:9-13).

Conclusion

1. Relationship with God is spiritual. It is the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth and takes the things that belong to Christ and makes them known to us.
 - a. An unspiritual person – that is, a person who is only concerned with this life and this world – can develop no relationship with God and will never discover Him personally.
 - b. God will prove Himself to the person who believes and develops their walk of faith.
2. My wife and I have had so many experiences and prayers answered that there is no way we can deny the reality of God.
 - a. What I testify to you today, other here can also verify in their own lives. And what we claim today, millions around the world can also substantiate.
 - b. God rewards faith!