

S. N. Mar 25, 1973 A.M.

FAITH--THE SPIRITUAL DYNAMITE

Hebrews 11

These could be the most important 30 minutes of your life. Undoubtedly there are many people listening to me today who feel that they are floundering. Your life is hollow and very disappointing. You are saying what is the use anyway. But I want to talk about the basic happiness and purpose in life. You do not have to have money, culture, or social position -- but you must have this. For today I am going to preach on faith.

During the persecution of the first century, a humble Christian was brought before the judges. He told them that nothing they could do could shake him. Because he believed that if he would be true to God, God would be true to him. Do you really think you will go to God and his glory, they asked. I do not think - (I know) he said.

Christian faith is (more than hope). It is a hope turned to certainty.

Today we take up God's honor roll.

I. Nature of Faith -

In V. 38 - Chapter 10, our writer takes a (new direction) -- he plans to go ahead. He warns his readers of the danger they face if they refuse to go into covenant relation with Christ. He stated, the (just shall live by faith.)

Now this quotation is from Habakkuk. It is the only verse from the Old Testament that is quoted 3 times in the New Testament. Martin Luther made the battle cry of the reformation, this text. Now this chapter 11, is referred to as the roll call of faith. And it is the favorite chapter of many people.

I think some of the Hebrew Christians were in peril of drawing back. They needed faith to go on, with Christ to grow in His service. Therefore, he undertakes to give an elaborate description of their blessings and privileges in Jesus Christ.

It is important to remember that God has never had two ways of saving men. The revelation of his grace has come gradually. Yet, the one real thing has been faith.

The only place in the Bible where a definition of faith on this important matter is attempted is here in this place. He selects gems of the Old Testament history. And brings them together like apples of gold in baskets of silver. It is a portrait gallery - it is a Christian manual. While the whole substance of our religion is compressed. And illustrations give it dignity and power. The followers of Christ need only look into it. And he will find food and strength.

Now as you read this, theologians speak about different kinds of faith. They talk about historical faith as it is limited in the Scriptures. They talk about a temporary faith as a seed that fell on stoney ground. Others talk about faith of miracles - that if one has the faith the size of a mustard seed grain, it shall be able to remove mountains. They also call it a justifying or saving faith, in reference to salvation.

Faith is one of the plainest and most (common exercises) of the human mind. It is to the mind what the hand is to the body as an instrument.

V. (1) - All faith is essentially the same - the substance of things hoped

for - the evidence of things not seen.

Now many people here have never been to (Paris) But we believe that such a place exists. And the faith that give us this existence in our minds, is just as true as if our ~~eyes had~~ seen it. There is no hesitation that we would set out this place because it is a perfect reality to us.

*W. Orange
shown at Smithfield
in his house*

The only difference between the Christian faith and common faith in the world is the circumstances of the case. The things which a Christian believes are things which do not come under human observation. But things that are beyond the human vision - the unknown world.

The faith of the Gospel is giving assent to the revelation to which God has made. Christian faith in its whole extent is [taking God at his word.] When he said, I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Then we look upon him with reverence. When he says, this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased - hear ye him. This is faith.

In V. (3) he talks about the work of (creation) That by faith we understand how God was able to make this world, and create it out of nothing.

The first three verses deal then with the nature of faith. In philosophy it is expressed - I'll believe it when I see it. It is the opposite of faith. Faith has nothing to do with one's senses. But it does not need faith to believe what he can see. The only place where faith can be applied is in the area where one must trust God, for what he cannot see.

(Charles B. Howard) a preacher, I think he is still living today. He is retired from Campbell College as a professor, in N. C. His mother, Betty

Cooper Howard, had T. B. But she refused to lose her baby when the Doctor told her it was either her life or his. She died in child birth. And her son was reared by his sister. After Charles Howard had been preaching 22 years - the Doctor who had attended his mother told him she had prayed he would be a boy. That she was trusting God to make him a preacher. Faith must stretch on out into the future and trust God. This is the way of life for the Christian. Now faith is the substance of the things we hope for. The proof of the reality of the things we cannot see.

There was a popular belief when this book was written that the world was made from existing materials. And thus the earth was made up of flaws. But our writer says, no, God made the world from nothing. By faith we understand and he is convinced it was the word of God.

Some people think you can have faith only if you over-whelm your reasoning. And the available facts, and blindly believe. Faith is not victory over your reason. God gives us ample evidence upon which to base our faith. Paul is saying that we are sinners without excuse because the truth of God has been given. Rom. 1:18-21.

II. FAITH BEFORE THE FLOOD - V. 4-7

We have mentioned the nature of faith in the first place and now he comes to give us a demonstration. And in a series of demonstrations, he will help us to understand the matter of faith.

By faith, (Abel) offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. God doubtless revealed to the first parents the possibility of salvation from the fall by bringing a sacrifice. Abel was complying by faith with this direction. Now Cain had no faith in sacrifices, brought the fruit of the ground.

Faith is taking God at his word. And this is what Abel was doing.

(It) has been said ¹ that dead men tell no tales. But the writer asserts that Abel being dead, yet speaketh. The first example of a demonstration of faith shows us faith perpetuates. The full story is related in Gen. 4:1-15. Two men are at worship. They represent two ideas of religion, found in the world today. One burns an offering and it is rejected by God. His brother brings an offering and it is accepted. In a jealous rage, Cain rises up and kills his brother Abel. God sets a mark upon him and drives him out. (Why) was Cain's offer rejected and Abel's accepted. We read that Cain brought the fruit of the ground, Gen. 4:3. This was a thank offering. Cain was proud of it. And he was (unwilling to pay his dues) And refused to make his offering blood for his sins.

Abel brought the firstlings of the flock and offering this a sin offering. Because he saw himself as a sinner. And the lamb was a substitute for his sins. Therefore, Abel, being dead - yet speaks.

V (5) - (Enoch) by faith was translated that he shall not see death. According to (Jude) Enoch was a preacher - he talked about the Lord and judgement. He believed, he preached.

He (walked) with God by faith, and that faith triumphed over death. And it takes him to Heaven without even dying on this earth.

Now translated is derived from the compound Latin words trans - across or over. And Ferro, the irregular verb to bear or to carry. He was (born across or over the river of death). This is the case of Enoch. He was well-pleasing unto God. He was the first man who ever entered Heaven in body and soul - both of them. The times he lived were in great wickedness. But he set a godly example before his children in that he pleased God. And that's why God translated him directly from this earth to Heaven - and he passed through death.

I know we have all heard the story as the little girl talked about this when she said that Enoch in his life walked day by day with God. And Enoch was a friend of God's and he went for a walk with God one day. And on that day, they walked a long way. And it was getting late, God said Enoch - we are closer to my house than yours. Why don't you just come home with me and he did.

V. (7) - By faith (Noah), being warned of God, of things not seen as yet moved with fear - prepared the Ark to the saving of his house. By which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness - which is by faith. He triumphed over judgement by faith. By acting thus upon the word of God, he condemned the world. And every tap of Noah's hammer was a part of his preaching, of righteousness to his generation. It declared his faith - the things that he went about to do.

Noah stands out as a man who had a working faith. He had been warned of God, and this tremendous faith of Noah - in the face of great obstacles is found in the book of Gen. It is needed in our time.

Faith moved him to action. If one obeys - he trusts. If he trusts, he will obey.

I read a story about a high-wire artist named Blondin. He used to thrill audiences by walking across Niagara Falls on a wire rope. He caused a great sensation one day but announcing that the next day he would push a man across the same wire in a wheelbarrow. Newspaper announced that he promised this event. Many people argued that it was impossible.

On the streets of Niagara on the day of the proposed performance, a preacher by the name of Mr. Ruth freely expressed his belief that the rope walker would take his man across safely. While such a discussion was going on Blondin, happened by. It was a pleasure to meet you Mr. Ruth, he explained. I have been looking all day for a man like you - I want you to get into the wheelbarrow. Nearby observers said you could hardly see the preacher's retreat for the dust. Faith is getting into the wheelbarrow. Faith is total trust and commitment. Noah had that kind of faith - to place himself in God's hands. With complete trust to save him. And like Noah, we are called to build an Ark - and this is done when we get into Christ. But there is a work of faith for us - we are the people. Jesus is the Ark. And we must witness to him and take the good news to every soul. We do this just as Noah, with fear of the coming judgement. There is no time to slumber, we must be steadfast. I Cor. 15:58.

Therefore, we see that before the flood there were men that had faith. Abel, Enoch, and Noah.

II. FAITH DURING THE TIME OF THE PATRIARCHS

All the way from Abraham to Joseph, he considers these men of faith.

V. 8-22.

V. 8 - He begins with Abraham, the promised seed. He was a man who had faith and took the first step by being called out of his own place into another land.

V. 9 - By faith he trodded the pilgrim path as a stranger, living in tents.

V. 10 - He looked for a city - whose foundation, builder, and maker is God.

V. 11 - We have reference to Sarah's faith - that it was impossible from a human standpoint that she should ever become a ~~mother~~, of the promised child. But there was the fulfillment, because of her faith. She counted him faithful who had promised.

Now the only way to interpret Abraham's mission in life is by faith, as this man left with his wife, his nephew, and moved on west. He had many objections.

Horace Bushnell, said that every man's life is a plan of God. And your faith has failed you unless it has helped you to interpret your life in terms of the will of God and to know that. Like Abraham, he was called for a specific purpose.

(Mary Martin) of Peter Pan fame, says that the best advice she ever had came from her father when she was a girl. You'll find, he told her, that the world is full of people who think they know your duty. Don't shut your ears - listen to them all. But hear the truth and do what you know is right.

She said the advice stood by her in private life she is Mrs. Richard Halliday. And she and her husband had a daughter named Helen Heller. At an early age, Heller began to appear on shows with her mother. And Mary Martin took for granted that her daughter would follow her in the theatre. But during the high school summers, she worked as a nurses' aid in a New York hospital. In her senior year, she told her parents that she was going to take up nursing. Mary Martin said, her father and I had nothing to say. Heller tried again to make us understand. You keep telling me that I can be a good actress. I don't know. It doesn't mean anything to me. But when a Doctor tells me I'm a good nurse, I know it is true. (It echoes inside me.) And I know that is what I want to do with my life.

Her grandfather, if he were alive says Mary Martin, he would approve as we do - though she has chosen a different line from mine. I know it will be a good one for she hears the truth.

Now that is what happened to Abraham - he heard the voice of God calling and saying to him "go". And Heller Martin felt that the plan for her was nursing - it echoes inside me she said. There was something inside which responded - and she knew that was what she wanted to do with her life. And Mary Martin says if her grandfather were alive, he would approve as we do. Even though she had chosen a different line of work - he knows she hears the truth.

Now if we discover God's plan for our lives - two things will happen. First, we will get a (purpose) which will give meaning to the days work. The office, the store, the classroom. It will not just drag along for us - we will not be bored to death. But there will be a purpose - not just a grind. But it will be divine service.

~~Second~~, it offers us (power) When you are doing what you believe to be the will of God - then you can count on the strength of God.

V. 17-19 - Abraham was a man who had faith and it gave him great courage to face some of the darkest experiences of life. Take your own son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, of which I shall tell you. This father had waited for years for this son, was he ready to meet this sort of test. A three day trip to the mountain, and there on the altar - the wood was layed in order. The boy in question did not see a lamb, The father takes a knife and just before the fatal blow - an angel restrained him. And a substitute is there nearby.

When you find your life up against some situation as Abraham faced it, where does faith fit in the picture. When the will of God places some demand upon your faith - are you going to rebel.

God will not require the sacrifice which he seems to command of Abraham because he met the test of obedience. Sometimes it works out that way. Sometimes God saves you from the sacrifice you dread.

The story teaches, you must be ready to sacrifice the most dear thing for the loyalty of God. It may be some personal relationships. You must chose

between the will of God and the relationship which may mean so much to you.

When Bunyan was in jail, he was thinking of what must happen to his family if he was executed. The thought of the little blind daughter who was so dear to him - it haunted him. He said, I saw in this condition - I was a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his wife and children. Yet though, I must do it.

The dearest idol I have known
Whatever that idol be
Help me to tear it from thy throne
And worship only thee.

Abraham was a man who would sacrifice the dearest thing in life for God. This happened in the early church. In a home, one parent would become a Christian - the other did not. The children became Christians and the parents did not. The sword came down upon that home, and unless there had been those who had counted Christ dearer than all besides, there would be no such thing as Christianity today. God must come first in our lives or else he comes nowhere.

If we take God at his word and stake everything on him, even when there seems to be nothing but a blank wall before us - the way of escape will open up.

Faith is still doing its good work. This picture is as modern as 1962 in (Forest Hills, Long Island). A six year old Marchia had always been known of perfect health. Then one day the whole world was doomed for my husband and me. Our sentence was to watch Marchia change from a plump beautiful child

to a tortured bit of humanity - with eyes that pleaded to know what was happening. The story goes on how the mother learned to live with that dark truth. And her faith grew so she ceased to think of it and rather think of it as a kind of miracle. Finally when the day the little girl closed her eyes in peaceful sleep, she said, I miss Marchia and long for her. She was all of my life and the way seems long without her. But I never question why. I have full faith in God's wisdom. No longer can I ever truly fear anything again. Because life as I know it now, is but a small part of all eternity where our child is.

V. (20) - It tells us that (Isaac) when he had left Jacob and Esau concerning things to come - declared unto him he would perform what he had promised Abraham.

V. (21) - By faith (Jacob) when he was dying blessed both of his sons and worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff.

V. (22) - And (Joseph) his faith, is made mention of when he gave a command concerning his bones - his body. He speaks of the time just before his death.

V. (13) - All died without seeing the promise of God fulfilled. They had not received Canaan as an inheritance yet but the nation had not received its promised greatness. The Messiah had not yet come. They were still living in a strange and foreign land.

We must greatly admire these (giants of faith) who did not have a Bible as ours. Or a minister or a preacher to show them the way - and yet they

trusted God. All died short of realizing the promise but they did not despair of faith and hope. Their faith conquered death. And the birthright of the promise was passed along the line.

And the birthright of faith is passed along the line in training up a child in the way that he should go. And God's blessings will go out beyond our homes. Now if we empty vessels - nothing will go. Abraham did not own any land until Sarah died. He bought a little plot for the family burying ground. When he died, this is all he owned. Neither Isaac or Jacob owned anymore. Joseph was a great man in Egypt but he knew that they would go back and inherit the promised land. All these by faith, kept God's promise. Abraham believed that God held the future. By reason that he was 99 years old and Sarah was 89 when Isaac was born. God gave us to him from the dead. If God commands a sacrifice - then he will do it.

IV. FAITH IN THE TIME OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS

V. 23-39.

V. 23 - (Moses) who occupied a large place in this section. And in him we see faith working under various circumstances. In providence he was placed in Pharaoh's house. He was probably made an heir to the throne. By faith, it took him out of the palace and sent him into the wilderness. And when he was come of full age, and at 40 years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and aligned himself with the slaves in Egypt. He sought his home in the desert.

Let us keep in mind that faith before the flood, and faith before the

Patriarchs period, and faith during Moses and the prophets time was nothing more than taking God at his word) It was not mere speculation of this - it was a practical and a voluntary thing. Arguments may convince people that the Bible is the word of God. And all the statements are true. But its demands are just but we may not act upon these - to take God at his word and follow these example that have been shown, is to settle something in your heart. And it is a living - working faith. A germ that grows in your heart. The simple text which you may determine the genuineness of your faith - have you made your calculations according to the word of God. Are you endeavoring sincerely to live in obedience to his commands. The Bible declares that we are sinners - that we need to repent. Have you then prepared to meet your God.

Now Moses was a (proper subject) to discuss faith. He is a familiar name and a brief account. And in an unusual way during the time he was an infant was concealed for three months. And at last, put in a little ark of bullrushes and Pharoah's daughter who was down at the river to wash and bathe made the discovery - and then in turn hired the mother to nurse the child for her.

Another great consideration about Moses is that he made a tremendous choice.

V. 24-25. It was an inward action that he was free to make.

This (choice) consisted of (two things) - of wealth, glory, and authority with religion of idolatry. Or poverty, shame, oppression, and a hope for reward beyond the grave. Here was a mighty struggle going on - maybe prayer and sleepless nights . We have only to appeal to our own human nature.

To really learn how difficult and hard it was for Moses to give up one for the other. A place of honor in the palace to go out among the brickyards. He chose to suffer the affliction of the people of God. Than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Here was principle. Here was faith.

Wisdom was displayed in the choice which Moses made. He suffered with his kinsman. And he ascended to the throne to liberate his brethren.

Now suppose Moses had decided to play it safe, and say, well, I'll live longer than Pharaoh. And then I'll settle this thing. And even admitting that Moses might have survived the king, and succeeded to the throne. There were jealous Egyptians.

And the idols in that region would have been in his way.

It is no doubt about it that this was a snare of Hell. Well, wealth, pleasure, power, and honor. All these before Moses. Now which plan would he adopt. Pharaoh did go to his grave his grave first. And there were the trials, the plagues, and now Moses has been in Heaven at least 3000 years. And I imagine he rejoices with the blessed. They tell us that Moses and Elias talked with Jesus on the Mount. Peter and John attested to it. Now do you think that he now regrets it. Do you suppose that he says, that sacrifice of giving up all that wealth, etc., is just too much for me. No, I think he is well satisfied, with his choice.

There is so much in this chapter - that you just can't spend too much time on each man. But Moses, we can learn much about his faith. The basic

thing here that we see in Moses is that it was not a sentimental impulse. He was not just tipping his hat in God's direction. It was not just a once a week routine of some kind of religious creed that he went through. But faith put him in the main stream where there were swift moving currents. And it was up to date with him.

Faith is up to date with us. You take a close look at Egypt and what it had to offer. Moses was placed in the ~~royal~~ family. The son of Pharaoh's daughter. It was not the easiest thing in the world for him to give up because Egypt offered a great deal of wealth. Another thing he gave us were the indulgencies, of the oriental court. What kind of choice would you have made. Would not some of you said, well, I'll just live it up.

The same thing is true today - Moses made the (identification with the people of God) Who were they. They were Hebrews, Israelites, and down-trodden slaves. And here was a crisis of a decision. And he cast his lot with them.

You say Moses was a fool - but I want to say to you that I think Moses had some solid reasons behind his choice.

For one thing, the (pleasures of sin were short-lived) They do not last long. All the pleasures of sin have the death rattle in their chest.

The second solid reason is, (the future belongs to God) In this passage you discover here that God had something better to offer. And today, he does.

V. (29) Faith takes men across the Red Sea.

V. 30 - Faith defies the facts. Here is a note concerning Joshua and the story of the fall of Jericho. This strange story is in the book of Joshua. Strong - fortified city.

V. 31 - The second story is the story of Rahab who perished not because of her faith, that enabled her to escape Jericho, and to find salvation.

V. 32 - Other heroes of the faith during this time - Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. He just sort of scans the whole of history. He does not take them in a particular order. Or note the characteristics - but binds it together as being a story of faith.

V. 33-39 - Tells us about the suffering and the defiance in the different periods of history. He just gives an illustration.

V. 33 - He said faith for them stopped the mou~~th~~s of lions. He is talking about Daniel in the lions den.

V. 34 - He talked about how faith quenched the violence of fire. The three Hebrew children and those who escaped with Peter at the edge of the sword. And out of weakness were made strong and waxed valiant in flight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

V. 35 - Women even received their dead back to life again. Looking for a better resurrection - they had faith that they would live again.

V. 36 - They had other trials and discouragements, imprisonments.

V. 37 - They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, and afflicted.

You talk about people suffering for their faith. When Antiochus in a mad rage - he turned aside to Jerusalem. He attacked the city - it is said that 80,000 Jews were killed.

10,000 were sold in captivity. The worst was to come. He sapped the city, the temple, the golden altars. And he offered swine's flesh on the altar. They forbid the Scriptures and the law. And if they were found they underwent great miseries and torments. They were whipped with rods. Their bodies were torn to pieces. They were crucified, while they were still alive and breathing. They were also strangled. (Women and sons) whom they had circumcised and the kings appointed hanging their sons around their necks as if they were upon their crosses. If they found a sacred book of the law, it was destroyed. And those miserably perished who owned it. It was a deliberate attempt to wipe out a people's religion.

It is a fact that we owe our faith to those who were willing to be martyrs and to under go the most severe punishment imaginable. As story ^{of 7 Brothers} ~~after~~ story Maccabees ^{4:1-14} tells of those who were ^{bound to} ~~put~~ under wheels, and those ^{put} in frying pans. And those who fingers were wrapped with irons, and had to walk on hot cinders. They would whip and tie them to wheels until they dislocated and fractured every limb. They heaped up fuel and set fire to it. And they put them with wild beasts and let them drag all the flesh off them. So they died in faith.

- One His Tongue cut out - Tortures
- 1 Mc. 2:28 - with dew wilderness & dried cover, Mitz -
- 2 Mc. 5:27 - Cows - King Sakhah secretly -
- 2 Mc. 6:11 - Mitz - came like wild beast -
- 2 Mac - 10:6 -

deliberate Attempt to blot out Jewish Rel -

Following, Funeral, for Wife, man took small boy home - After Supper - separate Rooms to Sleep - Man heard Sobs across hall - son, tearfully said oh Father, I am lonely, could I sleep in your Room in Mother's Bed? - The Boy went back with Father - long Silence - Father it is so dark in here, do you ~~with~~ face toward me? your son my face is toward you, go to sleep - Later - Father looked through Window into Dark Blackness of The Night, saying half aloud "Oh heavenly Father, it is so dark, do you face toward me" -

There are Times we can't see -