

What is Faith? Open with Prayer

Definition of Faith: Complete trust or confidence in someone or something. Strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof.

Faith is confidence in what we hope for, and the assurance that the Lord is working, even though we cannot see it. Faith knows that no matter what the situation, in our lives or someone else's that the Lord is working in it.

Hebrews 11: 1-7 (from the Message Translation)

The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see. The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors, set them above the crowd. By faith, we see the world called into existence by God's word, what we see created by what we don't see. By an act of faith, Abel brought a better sacrifice to God than Cain. It was what he believed, not what he brought, that made the difference. That's what God noticed and approved as righteous. After all these centuries, that belief continues to catch our notice. By an act of faith, Enoch skipped death completely. "They looked all over and couldn't find him because God had taken

him.” We know on the basis of reliable testimony that before he was taken “he pleased God.” It’s impossible to please God apart from faith. And why? Because anyone who wants to approach God must believe both, that he exists and that he cares enough to respond to those who seek him. By faith, Noah built a ship in the middle of dry land. He was warned about something he couldn’t see, and acted on what he was told. The result? His family was saved. His act of faith drew a sharp line between the evil of the unbelieving world and the rightness of the believing world. As a result, Noah became intimate with Christ. (Thus ends the reading of this beginning first scripture)

My personal testimony is that By Faith, I volunteered to go into a hospital for help with depression. By Faith, I stayed there for six weeks. Why would I do that? Because even if I couldn’t see that I would get better, I was experiencing a Christian facility where those treating me had faith at the time I didn’t have. Did it work? Yes, I was encouraged to continue therapy until I could experience Joy. By faith, I one day at a time moved into the Joy of the Lord.

James 2: 17-20 (From the Message Translation)

Isn’t it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense? I can already hear one of you agreeing by saying, “Sounds good. You take care of

the faith department, I'll handle the works department." Not so fast You can no more show me your works apart from your faith than I can show you my faith apart from my works. Faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove. Do I hear you professing to believe in the one and only God, but then observe you complacently sitting back as if you had done something wonderful? That's just great. Demons do that, but what good does it do them? Use your heads! Do you suppose for a minute that you can cut faith and works in two and not end up with a corpse on your hands? (Thus ends the reading of this second middle scripture)

I would like to share a poem about everybody waiting for someone else to do something. The title of the poem is That's Not My Job!

This is about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everyone was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Have you ever got upset when Nobody did what you

thought anybody could do? Again, Faith without works doesn't lead to success. We need faith but we also need to put action to our faith.

Psalm 46: 1-11 (From the Message Translation)

God is a safe place to hide, ready to help when we need him. We stand fearless at the cliff-edge of doom, courageous in sea storm and earthquake, before the rush and roar of oceans, the tremors that shift mountains. Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, God-of-Angel-Armies protects us. River fountains splash joy, cooling God's city this sacred haunt of the Most High. God lives here, the streets are safe. God at your service from crack of dawn. Godless nations rant and rave, kings and kingdoms threaten, but Earth does anything he says. Jacob-wrestling God fights for us. God-of-Angel-Armies protects us. Attention, all! See the marvels of God! He plants flowers and trees all over the earth Bans war from pole to pole, breaks all the weapons across his knee. "Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God, above politics, about everything." Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, God-of-Angel-Armies protect us. (Thus ends the third and ending scripture)

**Focusing on Psalm 46: 1 (from the NIV translation)
God is our refuge and strength**

Reading from the Upper Room on August 7, 2020 by Al Trucano from Nebraska who passed away before this was published. The title is an Ever Present help. I was able to relate to this reading because of the derecho storm we all experienced August 10, 2020. Listen carefully to see if you can relate.

My part of the country has experienced many destructive storms this summer. They often bring large hail sometimes as big as baseballs... that can crash through windshields of cars, destroy crops and buildings, and even kill our livestock. The psalmist (the one we just read) seeks to bring courage and hope to God's suffering people wrote about such destruction. As we heard the verses of Psalm 46, we can be comforted through the many storms we have experienced. When we see entire houses destroyed and businesses blown apart by the weather, we begin to realize how vulnerable we are. So we turn to God for strength in the midst of our weakness and fear. When we turn to God in the face of storms of any kind, we can find our faith deepened and realize we are not alone. God, "our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble," is the one who causes fear to dissipate and gives us courage to forge ahead through every adversity we may face.

What is a storm? Definition of a storm: A violent disturbance of the atmosphere with strong winds

and usually rain, thunder, lightning or snow. As a verb: Move angrily or forcefully in a specified direction. Our storm on August 10, 2020 brought lots of destruction and especially to our town of Madrid. When the storm came, Paul and I were at the EFREE Church for a memorial service for Jackie Thompson which didn't happen that day. After it was safe to leave, because of electrical poles blown over and trees, we had to be creative to get home. What usually takes us 5 minutes to get home took 45. I know we each have our own story about the day the storm blew in town. The physical storm blew in and faith with action next took place. Helpers were all over helping with chain saws, generators and whatever needed done. The physical storm has been being dealt with just like the Covid physical storm. The physical storm passed quickly but what about the spiritual storm in each of us? Our spiritual storms last a lot longer and won't be over till God says that it is. In the mean time, we must praise, pray and persevere.

So where is our faith in these storms of life? Taken from R.T. Kendall's book "Seeing Jesus as he Really is" in his chapter the blood of Jesus. "It's the blood of Jesus that gives us eternal life. If you're born again, you're living in eternity right now. You are never going to die. You might die physically but you're alive to God. You're going to live forever with

Him. When you die physically, you're just going to step outside your body and go straight on to be with the Lord.. Everything you are doing right now is going to count for eternity. Every act of kindness, every act of generosity, every time you help somebody and bring them to Jesus, you're laying up treasure in heaven."

I want to close with a quote in the book, "Because of Jesus"

"What things are possible for you today through faith? All things are possible, because your faith is in the God who knows no impossibilities." I will leave you with this thought to ponder in the following week. Where will your faith journey with God lead you Today?

Let's pray.