

## FAITH IS THE FOUNDATION

### HEBREWS 11:1-2

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

[2] For by it the people of old received their commendation.

In the name of Christ:

Faith is defined as being certain of what we can't see. It is a certain hope and assurance. The faithful life involves authenticity, where a person does what he says he is going to do, that person is authentic, has integrity. He doesn't shortchange anyone, doing what is right by all.

To understand this, there is a story of a father, who was known far and wide for his quality-built homes. In the building of his homes, he always insisted on using the very finest of materials and always the very finest and best of contractors. He kept a list of those he knew he could depend on, those he could count on for quality work. The people who bought his homes were often willing to pay a premium price, because they knew the quality of home they were getting with this particular man as the builder. And so it was, then, with that background, that this particular father, and also husband, was celebrating his 56<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the husband and wife decided to take a trip to a far-away land. He went to his son who had worked so closely with his father but had some different ideas about how to build homes and how to save money and cut corners.

His father sat down with him and laid out the blueprints for a particular home in a community of houses that they were working on.

He said, “Son, you know your mom and I are going to be gone for a long time which will give you ample time to build this home. Will you take on the responsibility of building this home for me in my absence?”

He said, “I sure would, Dad. Be happy to do it.”

“Well, I know you can do it, son, but let me ask you: Will you also use the finest quality materials in the building of this home?”

“I will Dad, just according to specifications you have outlined.”

“Son, will you also use the finest and best of contractors that we’ve grown to know over the years so well, those with experience?”

“Dad, you know you can count on me to use the ones that we’ve always used.”

The dad said, “Son, I’ll be proud of you – I know I will, please take care of it. Your mom and I will be back.”

The parents went away to a far-away land and were gone long enough for the house to be built. Well, the son has his own way of looking at things, and he decided that there were ways he could save quite a bit of money. Instead of using 2” x 6”s as his dad had put in the blueprints, he used 2” x 4”s. Instead of putting insulation in the walls – well, his dad would never know – would the people really notice? He left the insulation out of the walls. He cut corners everywhere that he could cut a corner, and, even with the

choice of contractors, he found contractors who would do it much more cheaply than those he had ever used before. Even he discovered their poor quality of workmanship; nevertheless, he got to pocket a lot of extra cash and for that he was very, very happy. Then his dad returned from that long trip. His father came to see the house and, from the outside, this home looked beautiful. It fit in beautifully with the other homes. Only the son and those who worked on the house knew the kinds of materials and workmanship that went into it. The father didn't know this.

The father looked at his son and said, "Son, I can't tell you how proud of you I am this day." He asked him, "Son, did you use the best materials?"

"Yes Dad."

"Did you use the best contractors?"

"Yes I did Dad," he said, lying to his father.

And his father said, "I am so proud of you." Reaching into his pocket for the keys, he said, "Son, I know that you and Alice are going to get married next year – this is your mother's and my gift to you."

Just as the son in our story cut corners in building the house his father asked him to build, could we be cutting corners building our spiritual houses? Are you trying to save and to scrimp? Maybe you think you don't need as much time as other people do in worship or in Bible study. Will you be protected from all of life's trials and tribulations, that, while they may come, they will not overcome, because the Lord has built your spiritual house. You will withstand those storms of trials and temptations. Unless the

Lord builds the house, those that build it labor in vain. In vain . . . so, we let the Lord build our house.

Remember the story that Jesus told about the two men who built their homes. One built his house on the sand and the other built his house on the rock. Remember what happened to the man who built his house on the sand? Great storms and waves came, and all kinds of rain and winds came. What happened to his house? Well, the rain washed the sand away and took out the foundation of the house, and the house collapsed and washed out into the ocean. What about the man who built his house upon the rock? The storms came, the winds blew, and the house withstood the storms, didn't it? That's a picture: the rock that we build on is a picture of building our lives and our spiritual homes on Jesus Christ Who is the rock of our salvation. He is our rock and our fortress. He is our redeemer and we build our lives on Him. He is the foundation. Faith in Jesus Christ is the foundation that we build on.

The rains and storms of life come along. Just look at the situation in America and all around the world. People are hurting all over the world. People are withering in the heat of the storm, feeling weak and afraid. We feel those same emotions. But Jesus is our Rock, He alone stands firm. Throughout troubling situations in our lives, our emotions soar and plunge, but "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever," as the writer to the Hebrews assures us. (Hebrews 13:8).

But what is faith? We open a box of Cracker Jacks because we think there's a prize in it, pour them out, and we find a prize, just as the box said. Well, it does take a degree of simple faith to believe that that prize was going to be in there.

Then we can talk about traveling faith. You get on an airplane and sit down and grip the seat so tightly that the armrest almost comes off in your hands. You've got traveling faith, don't you? You might be nervous, but you've got traveling faith. You lift your hands up for a moment so you can buckle your seatbelt, but you put your hands back on the armrest and you pray the whole time. What are you praying? You're praying the Lord is going to be with you and the plane is going to go up, and then the plane is going to come down and land very softly on the runway, right? Sometimes driving in your city, especially when there is construction, you need traveling faith for safety, and you need traveling faith that there's going to be a road that is going to be open so that you can get where you are going. You have traveling faith. Faith that your automobile is going to get you there safely, and, if not, you have faith in your insurance company!

You have not only traveling faith, but have financial faith, don't you? Financial faith is faith that God is going to take care of you financially, that God is going to provide for you and your family, not just today, but in the future as well. That financial faith is based upon the fact that, in the past, God has done just that. He has taken care of you. You have financial faith in the present, because the Lord is taking care of you now. There are difficult times, but we trust and have financial faith that the Lord is going to take care of us. Some of us really struggle. We look to God and we ask for greater faith and for help and assurance. The widow whom Jesus commended in Luke 21 had financial faith. While the rich were tossing their gifts into the temple treasury, Jesus' eye was caught by the poor widow who "put in more than all the others," because "she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." What she really had was giving faith. She was able to give it all, because she had faith that God was her security, not her money.

But faith, whether it's as simple as believing the Cracker Jack promise, or trusting the airplane, or even knowing God will care for you in all circumstances, offers much more, doesn't it? That faith is saving faith.

What is saving faith? Saving faith is in our hearts by the work of the Holy Spirit. It is faith that trusts in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, for forgiveness of sins, for life eternal. It is faith that trusts in the event of the Cross of Jesus Christ. There are some who call themselves Christian today and do not believe that Christ really died, but that He was only a messenger. We have faith that that objective event really happened - that Christ died on a cross for you and for me; therefore, we have forgiveness of sins. His blood was shed and He was buried in a tomb. We also have the faith of the women on Easter morning who came to the tomb where the angel greeted them and said, "Whom are you looking for? He is not here, He is risen." We know that the tomb was empty. Were you there? I wasn't there. Through faith we participate, and we believe and trust in Jesus Christ and His merit and His work and the cross and the empty tomb for our salvation. It's ours, even though we weren't there, and that's because of what Jesus has done, what He has accomplished. That's the Good News for God's people today. It is saving faith - a foundation upon which we build. Then God comes, and He has a set of keys to a spiritual house that He is building for you and for me. He is building our lives, maturing and growing us, and He gives us the keys to that spiritual house. He makes us stewards and managers of all the time and talents and treasures that we have, of everything we are, of everything we will be. He makes us stewards of that. Faith is the foundation. The responsibility is ours to be good stewards and live lives that are pleasing to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. May you, by the living of

your life, please the Lord. May your spiritual house not only grow and mature, but may it be one that sees all of God's blessings and abundance of His grace. "For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith. It is not of yourselves, but it is a gift of God," and He really has given it to you. Build your house, build it on the faith which the Lord has founded in your heart, in Jesus name. Amen.

Dearest Heavenly Father, we thank You for the blueprint for building our spiritual house and for the work that You do, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, to guide, to lead, to strengthen, and to build us up firmly on a foundation of faith and trust in You alone for salvation. Let us ever keep our hearts and our minds focused on You and what You have done, that we may do for You and others. Amen