The Life of Faith

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.
Hebrew 11:6

(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)
II Cor 5:7

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.
18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.
19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:
20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."
Romans 4

Introduction:
1. The Christian life is by faith, in which we make our choices based on God's commands and promises.
2. If you can see a thing, it is temporary; Christians live by faith in things that are not seen (II Cor 4:18).
3. Did you observe creation? Have you seen God? Have you seen an angel? Have you seen heaven?
4. The religion of Jesus Christ is found in a book, which contains the sayings and words of God to us.
5. Faith includes trusting God for life, needs, and problems; but our emphasis today on faith is different.
6. Faith is not only what we need when trouble comes, but it is the driving force in obeying God today.

Abraham's Example

Abraham believed a past tense declaration of a future promise (4:17).

A. The Lord declared Abraham to be the father of many nations when he was 99 (Genesis 17:5).
    1. God changed Abram's name to Abraham on this date for this great event (Genesis 17:5).
    2. Ishmael was 13 years old when God declared this fact about Abraham (Gen 17:24-26).
    3. Though Abraham had a son named Ishmael, he only represented one nation (Gen 17:20).
    4. Isaac was not born until the next year, when Abraham was 100 years old (Gen 21:1-7).
    5. The issue at stake here is many nations, which was not true yet, as the context declares!
    6. What is the true fulfillment of the promise of many nations? Jews and Gentiles in Christ!
B. God is able to do things as difficult and impossible as raise dead persons i.e. reproductively.
C. God's purposes and promises are so certain of accomplishment that He uses the past tense.
D. The great God already sees things in your life here and your life in heaven as if already done.
E. Abraham's faith was before Him Whom he believed – the God able to keep all His promises.
F. The key in this verse is God … before Him whom he believed … the Source of the promise!

Abraham had hope in a promise that seemed beyond hope (4:18).

A. He believed against hope, because it was hard to hope for something so naturally impossible.
B. He believed in hope, because he wanted to believe God's promise of a great seed and nations.
C. The combination of faith with God's power and promises leads to impossible expectations.
D. There are things you would love to accomplish or believe, so you should believe in hope!
E. God had told Abraham his seed would outnumber the stars, and he believed Him (Gen 15:5).
F. Any doubts or issues that reduce hope in God's promises must be categorically rejected.
G. Hope is the confident expectation and waiting for some thing promised based on words said!
H. Hopelessness is the mark of an unbeliever, because as long as there is God there is hope!

Abraham's strong faith did not consider the negative circumstances (4:19).

A. Weak faith looks more at the wind and the waves than it does at the Lord (Matthew 14:30).
B. Abraham could have considered the dead reproductive state of his and Sarah's bodies.
C. No matter what you think of patriarchal aging, Abram and Sarah were dead reproductively!
D. Abraham could have worried about all the details that were involved in their childbearing, such as, if God did rejuvenate Abraham and her ovulation, could her womb take a child?
E. Abraham could have read medical journals as to how the event could possibly take place, such as, were there any precedents for such a thing occurring before or natural explanation?
F. He did none of these things! These things are contrary to real faith! They show weak faith.
G. In every issue of faith, your flesh, the world, and the devil will suggest countless reasons why it cannot happen, countless questions about the details, and otherwise cause skeptical doubts.
H. Strong faith mocks anything contrary to God's promises and power i.e. questions, doubts, problems, complications, details, explanations, difficulties, or impossibilities (Mark 4:35-41).
I. Do not even consider opposition or difficulties, because they deny God and undermine faith.
J. When God speaks, there are no considerations or difficulties that can even slow His word!
K. When you think such things, there is no profit, and you open yourself to satanic fiery darts.

Abraham gave glory to God by strong faith that would not stagger (4:20).

A. Staggering in this context is doubtful skepticism or questioning unbelief of God's promise.
B. Abraham would not stagger, because he would not consider any negative thoughts (4:19).
C. Strong faith gives glory to God – it defies doubts, skepticism, questions, or unbelief: it believes God can do anything and all things are possible to Him! The LORD be magnified!
D. Those with doubts or questions are staggering at God's promises and denying Him glory!
E. Great men, elders mentioned in Hebrews 11:2, do not stagger at God's promises (Matt 8:10).
F. Weak men, the generation that wandered in the wilderness, stagger in doubts and fear.

Abraham had full evidence that the impossible would come true (4:21).

A. Abraham was fully persuaded of the matter, though it was impossible by natural means!
B. You will be frustrated trying to persuade men of the truth, unless God has given them faith.
C. But with faith and God's promise, you can be fully persuaded. How much stronger can it be?
D. Faith, resting on the promises and power of God, is evidence of the impossible (Heb 11:1).
E. The certain evidence of God's promises rest on His ability, not the ability of any man at all.
F. The child of God with God's word can be absolutely sure of every promise by God's power.
G. This short and simple verse provides the basis for this: God said it; that settles it! Believe it!
H. God cannot lie, but neither is there a limit on His power to perform. Faith is unanswerable!
I. Full persuasion is defies hopelessness, considers no difficulties, and will not stagger at all!

The Doctrine

Creation

A. With Gen 1:1 and Hebrews 11:1,3, we understand with evidence that God created everything.
   1. We compare Genesis 1:16 to 1:3 and rejoice that God made light before sun and moon!
   2. We read Genesis 1:16 and see that creating the stars was just a small effort of His power.
B. There is no basis or purpose for attempting to prove anything about creation from science, for faith does not require it, it will not convince a man without faith, and it cannot be done!
C. The very best that scientific evidence can give a child of God is entertainment and/or work.
D. If a man requires scientific evidence, he has no faith, so he is unreasonable (II Thess 3:1-2).
E. There is no true scientific evidence for creation, since it was never observed or duplicated!
F. Evolution is not science – it is falsely called science, because it is merely human theories or hallucinations requiring faith in the impossible, not properly knowledge (I Tim 6:20-21).
G. Evolutionists' arguments and questions are infinite, and it would be impossible to answer them all, but there is no need to even answer one of them. Creation is true. Evolution is a lie.
H. If they accuse you of reasoning in a circle, go ahead and agree with them! We reason in a circle from God and revelation; they reason in a circle from man and hallucination.
I. Therefore, evolution is a total joke, as much as a child proclaiming the emperor to be naked!

Canon

A. Why are we missing the book of Jasher and epistle to the Laodiceans (Josh 10:13; Col 4:16)?
B. What about other books that are suggested, such as the Maccabees and Epistle of Barnabas?
C. We are fully persuaded by God's words (II Tim 3:16-17; 4:2; II Cor 3:6; II Peter 3:15-16).
D. We do not care what the Catholics tell us about Hippo (393 A.D.) and Carthage (397 A.D.).
E. We are so sure of this matter that we do not question it, though others do so skeptically.
F. What if someone were to give you 20 strong arguments for the Epistle of Barnabas? So what!
G. What if the Catholics were to require you to confess Bel and the Dragon or be burned alive?
H. What if a U.N. archeological team from many nations found the Epistle to the Laodiceans?

Scripture

A. How do we know the KJV is God's word in English? By faith in promises and fruit! Glory!
B. We are finishing a sermon series and web document listing all the internal evidence, which are the arguments and proofs from God's promises and words identifying the KJV.
C. We reject all the caviling claims of textual critics, who have no basis even for their existence.

Election

A. We are fully persuaded that election is true, because God's word states it (Eph 1:4; I Pet 1:2).
B. We reject what any man or all men might say about it. We will not stagger (Ps 119:98-100).

Baptism

A. Of 2 billion Christians in the world, less than 5% of them believe in baptism by immersion.
B. But with the doctrine, figure, description, and location of baptisms, we defy them all totally!

Lord's Supper

A. Of 2 billion Christians in the world, less than 10% believe the Supper is merely memorial.
B. We compare Scripture with Scripture, and we have no problem rejecting the eating of God.

Heaven and Hell

A. No one has returned from heaven or hell to tell you, or has one? Only in the Scriptures!
B. Neither heaven nor hell can be verified by external evidence or science, but we believe both!

The Application

Capital Punishment

A. This subject is not up for debate, because God has spoken, and we believe Him absolutely!
B. What about the studies that show capital punishment is not a deterrent? So what! Burn them!
C. What about the fact that one innocent man was executed in the last 100 years? So what!
D. How can loving Christians use cruelty to supposedly punish cruelty? Because God said so!

Marriage

A. If God says the fear of the Lord is the best criterion, we are fully persuaded of it (Pro 31:30).
    1. It does not matter what anyone says about temperament, compatibility, family, etc., etc.
    2. If I am that strict, I will never get married. Thank God for safety! Isaac and Jacob did.
    3. Marrying a God fearing person is more than wise; it is a command (I Cor 7:39; 11:11).
B. Since God has declared in both testaments that wives should submit, we do not question it.
    1. If I submit the way the Bible describes and you preach, I will be a doormat. Not a chance!
    2. But modern life makes marriage a partnership. Check out divorce and shacking up lately?

Child Training

A. Why do we believe in corporal punishment in spite of the world? Because the Bible says so!
B. What if PTA and PETA brought up 100 scientific studies against it? We would reject them as science falsely so called and continue to obey God's plain rules and promises (Prov 29:15).
C. What if we see children turn out as "great kids," when parents did not discipline? So what!
D. What if we have difficult times while they are growing up? We believe God (Proverbs 22:6)!

Bible Economics

A. Is it possible for 4-2=3? Yes, of course! God said it; that settles it! Read Proverbs 11:24!
B. But what if I cannot afford to give right now? If you have faith, you cannot afford not to!
C. I cannot afford to save. But savings is not an option for affordability; it is a commandment.

Honoring Parents

A. What is the connection between honoring parents and living a long life? God's promise!
B. Yes, but you do not know my parents! They are wrong sometimes! God gave them to you!
C. How important is this matter, really? About ten verses specifying capital punishment!

Mega-Church Philosophy

A. But how can Rick Warren and the whole religious world and the fastest growing churches be wrong? They seem so happy and prosperous. Because God said otherwise (II Tim 3:1 – 4:5).
B. But surely the details do not matter. But, oh yes, they do matter! Ask Moses about the rock!

Sacrificing for Christ

A. How can I lose my life for Him and find it, or save my life for me and lose it? His promise!
B. God promised 100 times more in this life for sacrificing (Mark 10:28-30). Do you believe it?
C. God is able to provide all your natural needs, just as surely as he feeds the fowls of the air and clothes the lilies of the field (Matt 6:24-34). Therefore, seeking His kingdom first is best!

Conclusion:

1. If you give up the absolute faith described above, you will be reduced to a confused, compromising, and contemporary Christian that is wandering in the congregation of the dead.
2. If you want the most glorious object of faith – it is Jesus Christ as the Son of God (I John 5:4).

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "The Life of Faith," from August 29, 2004, which presents the subject from another angle.
2. The sermon outline, "Details Count!" shows from several examples how God demands very precise obedience.
3. The sermon outline, "Enduring Affliction," which shows the role and duty of faith in troubles that occur.
4. The sermon outline, "Ass's Heads and Dove's Dung," uses Bible history to build faith in serious calamities.
5. The sermon outline, "Two Spies," which focuses on the events of Numbers 13-14 and the faithless Israelites.
6. The sermon outline, "Faith or Feelings," teaching how to make decisions by faith, rather than by feelings.