

# UNDERSTANDING FAITH SERIES

## FAITH IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

This morning we are going to look at faith in the Old Testament and faith in the New Testament. Lets us not forget that the old and the new are different. There are differences when faith is exercised in the Old Covenant and faith is exercised in the New Covenant. The bible does show that there is a difference between faith in the old and in the new.

*Heb. 11:1-3 Now faith is the assurance of thing hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old received divine approval. By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.*

*We also want to see verse 40 Since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.*

In the book of Hebrews chapter 11 we have a listing of men of faith from the Old Testament. Lets just run through the list and see how it starts with Abel in verse 4 *By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice.* Then in verse 5 *By faith Enoch.* Verse 7 *By faith Noah.* Verse 8 *By faith Abraham.* Verse 11 *By faith Sarah.* Then he continued to list all the various men of faith after some explanation. In verse 17 Abraham is mentioned. Verse 20 Isaac is mentioned. Verse 21 Jacob. Verse 22 Joseph. Verse 23 Moses. Moses was mentioned again in verse 24 and 27. Verse 30 it was Joshua by faith the wall of Jericho fell down. And Rehab the harlot in verse 31.

The conclusion is in verse 32 onwards. *And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign enemies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated of whom the world was not worthy-wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.*

He named all the Old Testament folks, mighty men of valor, dedicated lives, and he says not one of them received or manifested the promised. Verse 40 he describes God having provided something better for us. Now there is no doubt that their examples of faith can inspire us. And there are many things we can learn from the Old Testament folks like Abraham, Noah and all these other people men of faith by their examples and how they believed God. There are a lot of things we can learn from them. But the bible explicitly tells us that faith in the Old Covenant and faith in the New Covenant are like two different dimensions. And unless we see the difference between these two in the New Covenant we will sometimes limit ourselves to that Old Covenant style. We are supposed to progress beyond them.

Lets understand this topic of salvation. In the Old Covenant looking forward to the coming of Jesus saved them. From the time of Adam right on to the closing period of John the Baptist all those who were saved have to look forward to what Jesus was going to do. Whether they look forward through a lamb sacrifice like Abel where the lamb represented Jesus. Or through all the Old Testament patterns like the Tabernacle of Moses. They were all looking forward to salvation that was coming in Christ. For them it was in the future.

And over on this side of the New Covenant we look back at what Jesus has done. Everything is past. He came, He lived, He died, He rose nearly two thousand years

ago. And we look back at what He has done, believe it and something happens today. There must be a difference between looking forward and looking back. Looking forward has an element of the future tense, which has a stronger aspect of hope. Their faith was in the future. In the New Covenant, however, our faith has become for us a past tense.

In both dispensations there is an element that is similar. Whether it is the Old Covenant or the New Covenant when people exercise faith they move into a different realm. This earth is limited by time. Time is one of the dimensions on this earth. When people exercise faith whether it be the Old Covenant or the New Covenant they move out of the time dispensation and they move into that spiritual dimension. And in the spiritual dimension they must count it as done. So Abraham looked forward to what God promised and what he believe is counted for him as righteousness. So they looked forward in time while we look backwards in time.

And in both cases when we exercise faith we move into the realm of the spirit. In the realm of the spirit there is no time. Time does not exist as far as God is concerned. It only exists in our experience of life on this planet earth. So time only exists as far as we are concerned. As far as God is concerned yesterday, today and forever is the same. Which is why the bible says He was, He is and He is to come. There is no difference in time for Him. The future to us is the same. He is the Eternal God. He is unaffected by time. But we here are affected by time. And when we want to move in the realm of faith. We have to get out of this time dispensation and move into the spirit realm.

Nobody can exercise the kind of faith God wants them to unless they move out of the time limitation and move into the dispensation of God. Heb. 11:1 the first word says "now". *Now faith is*. Faith is in the "now" all the time. As far as the spirit realm is concerned they have received it. When Heb 11: 39 says *And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not received the promise*, it means that they did not receive the manifestation of the promise on this planet earth.

In the New Covenant when we exercise faith we also have to move into the time

dispensation. That is why if you want to exercise faith, and if you are going to limit God by time by saying, "I am going to confess this for two months and if it does not work I am going to stop," your faith has not moved into the spirit dimension which is timeless. Like our friend Kenneth Hagin used to say that if you are prepared to stand forever then it won't take too long to come. But if you are only prepared to stand for a limited time and so call exercise faith, your faith has not moved into the spirit dimension that is unlimited by time. Some people will only pray and believe something for a certain time. They don't believe forever. If you are going to say I will try it for six months usually it does not work. Faith has to move into that limitless, timeless realm of spirit where you receive from God.

Now here is the main difference between the old and the new. Just as it is different if you buy goods by credit and when you buy it by cash. In the Old Testament they were so called saved on credit. The lambs and all these sacrifices were their credit card that says that they are going to be saved in Christ. When they die they go into the depth of the earth into a waiting hall called in Luke 16 Abraham's bosom. And in that very place where they are there is a chasm between those who are unbelievers and those who are believers. So people like Abraham and Isaac, Jacob, David and all the prophets went forward to that part where it is called Abraham's bosom. When Jesus came He brought all of them out. And in the gospel of Matthew 27 it says that on the third day when He rose from the dead, the graves were opened and the dead rose up. And some of them walked about Jerusalem for a while before they went up to heaven. In the Old Testament when you die you go into the waiting room waiting for Jesus. In the New Testament when you die you go straight up to heaven. The waiting room has been torn down. As far as salvation plan is concerned there is a difference between the old and the new.

And between the old and the new there is also a difference when you believe for healing. In the old because they look forward to what is to come in Christ, they cannot claim Mark 11:23-24 for their personal healing. Neither can they claim First Peter 2:24. They cannot because Christ has not died yet. So none of them can believe that they have received and confessed and act according to faith. Sometimes people wonder why must we be doing this when no Old Testament folks used to do this. This is special for our dispensation. The realm that we live in is different. We have First Peter 2:24 whereas the Old Testament people don't. So that is why it is part and parcel of a Christian life in some areas of your life. You have to keep

exercising faith and believing and confessing them to come to pass. In the Old Covenant when it comes to healing because Christ has not come yet they were relying on the Old Covenant of healing which they have to invoke by prayer. In the Old Testament you will find there are times when the people prayed for healing. Moses himself asked for healing for his sister Miriam who had leprosy. There is a dispensation where they have to keep asking in order to invoke that covenant. The principle by which they exercise faith was slightly different. They believe that it was their right to ask but they have to ask and send in a petition.

In the New Covenant healing has moved into the realm beyond just a promise. It's a realm of a completed covenant. In other words God is not going to do anything more about the healing of the world or of us. Everything that He has done as far as healing is concerned has been done in Christ. Christ took upon Himself in Matthew 8 verse 17 all our sicknesses, all our infirmities. God is not going to do anything. In fact heaven has declared that it is completed. Heaven has declared that the work of healing has been completed. There is no need to ask any more. There is no reason to ask any more. There is a different realm in the new and in the old. The same in many areas as far as all the works of Christ are concerned.

Therefore in seeing some examples of the differences, let us look into what is it that makes such differences and in what areas. We have to know what areas are different. We will in the New Testament pray some prayers that are Old Testament style. There are some areas that must be looked into since we tap into them in a completely different way. And the key is found in Christ. Whatever Christ has bought for, paid for with His precious blood must be treated in a different manner in the new if you exercise faith in the New Covenant. In the Old Covenant they were not born again. Their spirits were unregenerate. They have faith in God. But in the new because we have been born again and our spirits were regenerated, God is able to grant us the faith of God. There is no mention of the regenerated spirit in the old. There is no such possibility in the old. I pray God gives you a revelation of the wonderful covenant that He has given us because far too many New Testament saints are living with the Old Testament notion of God.

After all that Jesus had done here we are still exercising faith in God in the Old Covenant way. Having an Old Covenant faith in God is just like using a bicycle all

the time. And one fine day there is this wonderful person who came and he said here is a motorbike. You got on the motorbike and you started pushing it like a bicycle. Now wouldn't that be dumb? You say, "I wonder why there are no pedals on this motorbike?" You are not supposed to pedal. You missed the whole point. On the bicycle you do the moving. But the motorbike does the moving for you. That's a whole lot of difference. All you need to do make sure you pump in the petrol get the engine started and there you go. It carries you. There is a difference between a vehicle that carries you and a vehicle that you propel. There is a difference between a self-propulsion vehicle and a human-propulsion vehicle.

Faith in God depends on our vision of God. If you see that God is able then you could trust Him in that area. So according to your vision of God, your perception of God you have faith in what God is able to do. If you see a God that is just capable of just doing something then you will only trust Him in something. If you see God who is capable of all things then you could trust Him in all things. Faith in God is necessary. It depends on the revelation of God to our lives, our perception of God.

However faith *in* God and faith *of* God is different. In the Old Covenant they have to keep on believing. There was a lot of human propulsion. They have to keep pressing through. They have to keep cycling and cycling. In the New Covenant you will still see a few guys cycling. They have not discovered the benefits of the New Covenant yet. They know the book of Hebrews 11:1-39 but they forgot verse 40, *God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.* If God said there is something better for us, then it is better. If I were to tell you that I have a better mode of transport for you and yet I give you the same I should not have used the word *better*. If I say this is a better shirt than yours, then the word *better* means that it includes everything you have plus. In verse 40 it says God provided something better for us. God in the New Covenant sees that we are regenerated. And that is something that He longs to do that He was not able to do in the Old Covenant. Something in the new that He was capable of doing.

Verse 40 does not actually end there because chapter 12 verse 1 starts with a *therefore*. Sometimes they put the verses and chapters in the wrong places. The bible is inspired but the verses and the chapters may not necessarily be inspired. So in

chapter 12 verse 1 please take it as a continuation of chapter 11. Now he is telling us about all these men of the Old Covenant, all these wonderful examples for us. And then he says that there is something better for us. He goes on and says Heb.12: 1 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses.* Now he is continuing on the same subject because a cloud of witnesses are these Old Testament saints who have gone on to glory. These men of faith in the Old Covenant are the witnesses so great a cloud looking down on us today in the New Covenant exercising faith. *Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us. looking to Jesus.*

Let me express this in the Old Covenant they didn't have "the Lamb" they have a lamb. They have only a symbol of a lamb. In the New Covenant we have "the One". The one and only Lamb of God. They didn't have Jesus. They had only a symbol of Jesus. They didn't have knowledge of Jesus. They have only a shadow of revelation about Jesus. But we have Jesus. We have seen His works. We have it recorded for us.

And Paul says *looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.* The word "our" is not in the Greek. It is in italics in your bible if your bible is the King James Bible. All the other translators never put in italics what they added. Only the New King James has italics. If the translators added something in italics to the scriptures, it is because they fear to add to God's Word. The word "our" is not in the Greek. Read it without the italic *our* and you understand the big statement that he is making about Jesus, *Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of faith.* Jesus is not only the author and finisher of our faith. Jesus is the Eternal manifestation of faith Himself. He is the beginning and end of our faith. He is the source and the completion of our faith. So in the New Covenant we not only can have faith in God. We have the Spirit of faith. The Old Covenant they have Him working with them but in the New Covenant we have Him living in us. There is a divine impartation of a substance in us in the new whereas in the old there is no impartation of any substance.

Verse one of Hebrews 11 says *Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of thing not seen.* But it's a spiritual material. Faith has spiritual materiality. Faith is a substance. In the old they do not have that substance. They had only faith in God. It was their faith in God. They were not born again and therefore they could not

possess this precious substance. But in the new that same substance of faith is that faith that was in Jesus. You don't have just your own faith. Jesus lived on this earth and everything that He did was through His faith in God. He kept the Old Covenant completely. But that was not His full purpose. When He died and He rose again He wanted to take what was in Him, that force, that ability, that was inherent in Him and somehow in a wonderful miraculous mysterious way put that substance into us. That is what God wanted to do all the time. He could not do that in the Old Testament because Jesus has not come yet. There was no one to whom this substance of faith could be perfected. But God was waiting all the time for that.

Suppose I would be able to extract that substance in Leonardo Da Vinci that gave him the ability to paint and put it into you. You find that you could paint as well as he did. That is only an illustration since there is no such earthly possibility. Jesus lived His life, He cast out demons, and He healed sicknesses. He lived a perfect life over sin, over death, over the enemy. Jesus did not only come to leave a pair of tablet of stones and put there *these are my commandments*. Jesus came to put His life in us. He came so that in the New Covenant we will be re-produced by Him. He came and moved into that spirit realm. From that spirit realm He could take from His substance of faith and He places it into our lives when we are born again.

Lets see what Paul says how powerful this measure of faith is. In the book of II Cor. 4 verse 13 *Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believe, and so I spoke," we too believe, and so we speak.* It is called the spirit of faith. This spirit of faith was working in the Old Testament and it was working with them. It helped them to believe and speak. But in the New Testament that spirit of faith is not only working with us. The spirit of faith lives in us. And it's the faith of Jesus that is imparted into our spirits.

And that is why Paul in the book of Colossians chapter 2:7 *Rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith* (He never said in our faith. In the faith, that is of Him.) *as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.* In verse 12 *And you buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.* Notice the faith is connected to what God did in Christ. It is not just your faith in Him. It is the impartation of that same operation of

faith that worked in His life when Jesus was raised from the dead. And in the actual Greek it says, through faith of the operation of God.

In Gal. 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.* In the New King James *"in the Son of God"* and all the other translations there is the word *"in"*. In the Old King James the word *"of"* is used. *Of the Son of God.* If you are a student of the English language you will realize that *"in"* and *"of"* are different. *"In"* is position. *"Of"* is gender, nature. It talks about a flow of impartations, of name. So here Paul says the life I live, I live by that faith that has been energized in me. Not my faith but by the faith of Jesus imparted in me. Paraphrasing what Paul is saying, he is saying, *"He is the author and the finisher of faith because there is a substance of His faith that operates in my life. It is that same energizing force that raised Him from the dead that now operates in me."* If only Christians would meditate on that it is so powerful. There is an operation and energizing of His faith. And the life that we live we are not to live by our faith. We have to live by His faith. Even the prophecy in the book of Habakkuk when he says *the just shall live by faith* is qualified, as *the just shall live by His faith.* And that is what he prophesied. He prophesies about the time coming when people will no longer just live by their own faith but God will impart His faith in the New Covenant in them. And they are going to be sensitive to the working of God outwards through them. And everything that you do in the New Covenant flows from that working of the faith of Jesus within your spirit man that is flowing forth.

In the book of Ephesians chapter 2:8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God.* Any bible scholar will tell you that the gift directly applies to faith and indirectly to grace. By grace you have been saved through faith and this faith is not yours. It is a faith that is a gift of God. And the gift of His faith and the substance of His faith come into your life when you are born again. And the same one who said that emphasizes his inward working through his life. Remember he talks about the grace working he talks about the faith working too and they are connected. The gift of faith is by God's grace.

In verse 7 of chapter three of Ephesians *Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace which was given me by the working of His power.* He tells us it is

the inward working of God flowing through us.

Then look over at Colossians chapter one verse 29 *For this I toil, striving with all the energy which He mightily inspires within me.* Paul says as God works in him he works out. He seeks to work out what God works in him the faith of Jesus Christ.

By now I believe you would be firmly convinced that faith in the new and faith in the old are totally different. But exactly what makes the difference and what principles do we tap on that difference? In the new since its already working in you and the only problem is not struggling in our life to get ourselves to believe. In the Old Covenant if it is faith in God you would struggle to try to believe. But in the new it is more a struggle to yield. It is just like the same illustration about the bicycle and the motorbike. In the bicycle you have to really pedal and struggle. But when you get on the motorbike you get very tense. If I were to ride a motorbike and you get tense I wouldn't want you to be a pillion rider. I used to pillion ride before. You are not supposed to be very tense while the guy taking you. When he turns a corner you cannot bend the other way. You have to be very relaxed. If you are a very tense person clutching to the bike it won't be easy taking you around. That is why it is not easy to save a drowning man who is struggling. It is easier to save a drowning man when he yields. It makes it more difficult when you fight and struggle. In the early days I didn't quite know how to pillion ride. And when the motorbike turned one way so thinking to balance up I made my body turn the other way. The front rider said, "If I go this way you have to follow along in the same direction. If you force your body to turn the other way, you will make the motorbike shaky and unstable." He is carrying you no doubt but your struggle makes it very hard to carry you. So the easiest thing is to yield the force.

And in the New covenant the greatest development in faith is more yielding than struggling. There is a sort of effort you do to yield your faith when you spend time with God. But the greatest development of faith is learning to yield. And you would think that people like Kathryn Kuhlman have great faith. It is not so much that they had that great faith. She will tell you in one of her interviews by the *Christianity Today* magazine, she said her main key that she has learned is how to yield. In the old there is such effort, struggle in the fight of faith. There is a fight of faith but

there is a difference. In the new you yield yourself to God. And it is a past perfect tense. Everything has been completed in Christ. When you face sicknesses and diseases you don't even sort of struggle as much as you yield to the faith of Jesus in you. Many of those who try to fight sicknesses with their will power do not succeed. It is not will power to say something. The key is in yielding to the faith that has been placed within. Of course that faith can be established and grown and nurtured by the Word. The main key in the New Covenant to tap on that faith is to yield.

You could see people who struggle for healing. Another different person with the same sickness hears the Word. Its true Christ did die for my sickness. Yield daily to the realization of His faith in your life. There is a quietness about yielding to that faith in us. And it comes forth from inside. In a short while this guy gets healed and that guy didn't get healed. The key is yielding. Charles Spires was one of the early evangelists in healing. He wrote about healing in one of his books and he said in his meetings he could tell which person would actually be healed by the manifestation. Or whether it is their own faith in God or it's the faith of God working in them. And only when he sensed a faith of God working in them would he demonstrate a healing. Kathryn Kuhlman reached that point in her miracles services when she realized that in a great meeting is that faith of the operation of God working. It is that faith that comes from Jesus. How was that imparted? Through the gospel.

You remember Acts 14 the gospel was preached to the man crippled from birth. The gospel is all about Jesus and as the man hears about Jesus what He has done, the faith of Jesus starts operating in his life and Paul saw that he had faith and gave a command and he was healed. And if you want to develop strong faith and if He is the author and finisher of faith what must you do? Go to Him. See the key. Yield to Jesus. In your life you constantly worship Jesus and you constantly yield to Jesus. When you have a real close fellowship with Jesus your faith grows. If I were to say I have the only blue bible in the world, and you wanted a blue bible you have to come to me. Jesus is the only one who can author and finish faith. He is the only source of faith. In the Old Covenant they didn't know that He was the source. But in the new He has been manifested. He has been declared as the author and finisher of faith. If you want faith you go to Jesus and worship Jesus. That is why in the New Testament we can have more miracles than in the old. Because if we could worship God to the extent that everybody catches a vision of Jesus faith catches on

and the wonderful power will manifest. It is the faith of Jesus that is being imparted. Every time you meet Jesus, Jesus infuses faith into your life to reveal Him. Jesus told the Pharisees, "Why do you go to the scriptures and don't come to Me?" All that we study in the New Testament is about Him. So in the new the key in flowing in the impartation of faith is yielding to Jesus.

And the second aspect in the New Covenant is because we live past the time of Jesus. The power of praise is utilized more powerfully than the old. Since it is already done you worship and you praise Him. Lets look in Colossian chapter 2:7 *Rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught abounding in it with thanksgiving.* What does that "it" refers to? Some of the new translations omit the "it". It says abounding in it. What is he talking about the "it?" What does the "it" refers to? Faith. Being established in the faith and then abounding in it. That means it abounds in you with thanksgiving. No wonder every epistle is full of thanksgiving. If you live in the New Testament and you don't know how to worship God and give thanksgiving to God you have missed the whole New Testament. Everything in the New Testament operates through thanksgiving and praise because of the time span we live in. Everything in the old operates by symbols and shadows. If you don't have that you cannot operate. That is why we are declared to be a people of praise in the epistle of Peter. That is why Paul in the New Testament says in everything gives thanks. Because only when you are in thanksgiving the faith of the operation of God operates as you are giving thanks to God. Have you noticed it every time you are in places that worship God whether you got weak faith or not the faith is there? But when you move out of that position you get involved with the things of the world, you get anxious, you get worried, you don't praise God anymore something is missing. It's the faith of the operation of God we must know how to abound in it, and nurture it. And thanksgiving cannot be underestimated. It is the force of the New Testament. It is not only a force in order to bring something, but it begins with something that is already there. It can only be released and abounded in with thanksgiving. Do you notice that those who live a life of praise and worship and thanksgiving faith is alive in them? In that position of worship and thanksgiving the faith of Jesus Christ abounds and flows mightily.

