

## WE CHOOSE FAITH

Hebrews 10:38-11:1-3, 6

I speak today on the subject “We Choose Faith”

I want you to know that this is not a “name it and claim it” sermon because God is not a “name it and claim it” God and I am not a “name it and claim it” preacher.

I do not believe we speak what we desire and God automatically grants it because we are His children and we have spoken it - we don't do that with our kids and He doesn't do that with His I do believe God has made promises in His Word and that He desires us to have faith in Him and the promises He has made to us

I understand that there is a difference between Israel and the Church and that the Old Testament is filled with promises made to the nation of Israel but I do not believe we as New Testament believers may only receive the promises of the New Testament and that if we as believers are living in a state of holiness and submission to the will and Word of God, the Lord gives us the “general “ promises and will bring “specific” promises to us in our time of need

The key is to choose faith, that is, live by faith and receive His Word when you are given it

“Faith” is to be our daily manner of life - Hebrews 10:38 says “...the just shall live by faith...”

Faith in Christ is something that can be seen in your life - Hebrews 11:1 says “Now faith is the SUBSTANCE of things hoped for” - SUBSTANCE is something real, tangible, observable

Have you ever met someone that you knew was a Christian before you asked them?  
Why is that? Because you saw something real in their life...you saw their FAITH in Christ

When we live by faith in Christ we are showing the world that we believe He is REAL - that all the things we are hoping for are REAL. And this is NOT “I hope these things are true” but I KNOW THESE THINGS ARE TRUE because Jesus Christ IS Who He said He was and He will Do all He said He'd do! He is MY HOPE - His Word is the HOPE I am basing my life upon

Jesus gives us the HOPE of eternal life,  
the HOPE of sins paid for through His death, burial and resurrection,  
the HOPE of receiving forgiveness of sins when we believe He died and , rose again to pay for our sins and we receive Him as our Savior by faith  
the HOPE that He is with me always and never leaves me or forsakes - I am a child of God  
the HOPE that His will for my life is perfect and He is always working in me His master plan  
the HOPE that He will come again and take me to Heaven one day

My HOPE is built on nothing less than JESUS blood and righteousness!

The believer lives his life as if the things he hopes for he already has

Faith in Christ is something that proves the reality of Jesus Christ and all He promises in His Word - Hebrews 11:1 says "Now faith...is the EVIDENCE of things not seen..." EVIDENCE is that which substantiates and proves something to be true.

Have you ever had someone tell you "I knew you were a Christian before I asked you." Why is that? Because they saw something real in your life...they saw your faith in Christ.

You cannot see Jesus in someone's heart but you can see Him in the way they live their life by faith in Christ. It is outward proof of what is REAL on the inside... in your heart.

Living by faith doesn't make you something great - our faith is in Christ - He is the object of our faith. His Word is the foundation of what we know about Jesus and what He has said to us.

We do not base our faith on our own opinions, feelings or personal beliefs - our faith in Christ is founded upon the Word of God (the Bible) - Hebrews 11:3 says "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

We believe the world was literally created by God in seven days because the Bible says so - Genesis chapter 1 declares "...God created the heaven and the earth." The worlds were framed by the Word of God - He spoke and it came into existence and then He wrote in His Word that He did it!

Creationism is a Bible fact! We believe God created this world because He said He did in the Word of God.

Our faith in Christ is not blind. It is not a leap in the dark.

Our faith is founded on His Word - We have faith that all God says in the Bible is true and will come to pass. God's Word is the surest evidence in the universe.

Now what has God said in His Word that we can put out faith in? What has He declared in the Bible that we can embrace as SUBSTANCE and EVIDENCE to live by faith in Christ?

### **1. GOD HAS SAID HE WILL SAVE ALL WHO PUT THEIR FAITH IN HIS SON, JESUS AS THEIR PERSONAL SAVIOR.**

Hebrews chapter 11 is often called "The Hall of Faith" - it tells of one Old Testament saint after the other who lived by faith in God. It tells of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, four of the judges, King David, Samuel, it makes indirect reference to Daniel, the three Hebrew boys, the women whom the prophets raised their dead and many who died martyrs deaths for their faith.

Now some would say that this was faith only in Jehovah of the Old Testament and not Jesus of the New Testament. They would teach that the Old Testament saints were saved by faith in God and not Jesus Christ.

Turn to Hebrews 10:1 “For the law having a shadow of good things to come...” Those Old Testament saints from Moses on lived under the “official” law, and in the days of Abel through Abraham they still lived under “law of God written in their conscience” - God would speak to them and they believed what God said. An example is Abraham acting in faith when God gave Him the Abrahamic covenant.

Under the law they offered blood sacrifices to the Lord to cover their sins and receive forgiveness of sins from God. Hebrews 11:4 says Abel offered a blood sacrifice to God to atone for his sins even back then.

In all these blood sacrifices God gave them a picture of the sacrifice His Son, Jesus was going to make for all men one day on the cross of Calvary. It was a SHADOW of the SUBSTANCE that was coming! (Remember the next chapter says, “faith is the SUBSTANCE) There is a difference between SHADOW and SUBSTANCE but know this, there is never a SHADOW without a SUBSTANCE. You can have a SUBSTANCE that doesn’t cast a SHADOW but never a SHADOW where there’s no SUBSTANCE.

Those blood sacrifices were shadows of Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross...If you don’t think so, read on Hebrews 10:1-10

Jesus said in John 8:56 “Your father, Abraham rejoiced to see MY day; and he SAW it, and was glad.” - Abraham realized every time he made a blood sacrifice to atone for his sins he was trusting the blood Jesus would come to sacrifice one day for him and all men thousands of years in the future.

Today we are on the other side of the cross. Jesus came 2,000 years ago and made the sacrifice on the cross to pay for our sins. He rose from the dead the third day and ALL who will believe He is God come in the flesh to die for us and rise again and pay for our sins and receive Him as their Savior, the Bible says “shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

Man tries to get to Heaven every way but through Christ. He feels that there is some work he can do that God will accept or that if he is a good enough person God will allow him to go to Heaven. Abel’s brother, Cain, tried to be accepted by God through his own works but God rejected him.

The ONLY work God will receive to pay for man’s sins is the work Jesus Christ did on the cross and the empty tomb.

Our place is to put our faith in Jesus as our Savior - to receive Him personally.

The gospel of John declares the salvation that comes through faith in Jesus...

John 1:12; John 3:16; John 5:24; John 6:47-48; John 7:37; John 8:32, 36; John 10:9-11, 27-29; John 11:25-26; John 12:46 and one my favorites... John 14:6!

Man can try to get to Heaven through his works and goodness but God says you MUST come through Jesus Christ! No man can be good enough or work hard enough to atone for his sins and be accepted by a Holy God and be permitted to Heaven. This is not faith, it is works and the Bible clearly says in Ephesians 2:8,9 “For grace are ye saved through faith...not of works...”

WE CHOOSE FAITH - if you have not received Christ DO SO NOW! (Pray the sinner’s prayer)

God has said that He will save ALL who will put their faith in His Son, Jesus as their personal Savior.

## **2 GOD HAS SAID THAT FAITH IN CHRIST AND HIS WORD PLEASURES HIM**

Notice Hebrews 10:38 “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, (that is not have faith in Christ) my soul shall have no PLEASURE in him.” - God is NOT PLEASED when we do not have faith in Christ and His Word.

But notice the opposite is declared in Hebrews 11:6 “Now without faith it is impossible to PLEASE him...” - You cannot please God without faith in Christ and His Word and you do please God when you have faith in Christ and His Word.

The verse before this speaks of Enoch, who lived before the flood. This was a wicked day when men were exceeding sinful. Yet there was a man who dared to walk with God - to live his life by faith. Enoch is the man God translated, the man who God just took away to Heaven one day while he walked with God, not allowing him to die  
It says in Hebrews 11:5 that “...he pleased God.”

Faith has ALWAYS pleased God! It still pleases God! When you put your faith in Christ and believe what He says in His Word is true - God is pleased!

God said of His Son Jesus when He was baptized in the river Jordan, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well PLEASED.” You cannot go wrong putting your faith in God’s Son who pleases Him. Your faith in the One Who pleases God is guaranteed to please God.

Faith in Christ is believing He is Who the Bible says He is and all He has said in the Word is true - Hebrews 11:6 says, “...for he that cometh to God must believe that HE is...”

Do you believe Jesus is the Son of God?

Do you believe all He has said in His Word is true?

This is called “living by faith” and the Bible says your faith in Christ pleases God.

Some folks are trying to please God with their own works, their own goodness, their own accomplishments, their own plans and dreams BUT God is pleased when we simply put our faith in His Son and His Word.

Evona and I have been walking a road we never imagined would be our life. When the doctors confirmed that I have cancer, we were stunned. There were no indications of something like this. We knew it was something more than a cold or flu or even pneumonia...but cancer? The only thing that has allowed to keep going is faith in Christ and His Word. We know that Jesus has NOT done us wrong and that He has not forsaken us and that He has not ceased to be in control of our lives and He has done all things right.

**The Word of God promises us** in Hebrews 13:5 that He will never leave nor forsake us.

**The Word of God promises us** in John 14:13 that He will hear us as we pray and He will answer our prayers.

**The Word of God promises us** in 2 Corinthians 12:9 that His grace is sufficient for us and His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

**The Word of God promises us** in 2 Timothy 1:7 that He has not given us the spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind.

**The Word of God promises us** in Ephesians 3:20 He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us.

**The Word of God promises us** in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that He is faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we're able and with the temptation make a way of escape

**The Word of God promises us** in Romans 8:28 that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

When you and I put our faith in the One Who spoke these promises and the promises themselves - GOD IS PLEASED. We are placing our faith in the "God of the Book" and the "Book of God"

As we faced one doctor after another with the look of looming doom in their eyes we felt the roll of disbelief at each progressive bit of bad news. It went from "abnormalities on an MRI" to "several masses on my brain" to "spots scattered on my ribs" to "lung cancer." At each phase we had to keep trusting Christ that He is real and His Word is true and He has all of this planned and that He will accomplish something that will bring Him glory through it.

As Evona and I do this - and as you do this in your life no matter what situation you're in (and don't think we think we're the only ones going through a valley - we know we are surrounded by people who are facing their own valleys) you can be assured that as you continue to put your faith in Christ and His Word that GOD IS PLEASED.

What do you do when you're pleased with someone? Perhaps when you're pleased with your children? You extend your favor to them even more.

Faith in Christ and His Word can expect God to extend increased favor.

Man may choose to live his life pleasing himself or others but if you would please God it takes faith.

**WE CHOOSE FAITH!** We choose to put our faith in Christ each day and the words He has given us in His book.

GOD HAS SAID HE WILL SAVE ALL WHO PUT THEIR FAITH IN HIS SON, JESUS AS THEIR PERSONAL SAVIOR.

GOD HAS SAID THAT FAITH IN CHRIST AND HIS WORD PLEASES HIM

### **3. GOD HAS SAID THAT FAITH BRINGS REWARD**

Hebrews 11:6 says "...he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

God assures us that when we live by faith in Christ and His Word He will reward us.

Now is this down here on Earth or one day in Heaven? IT IS BOTH!

Faith in Christ and His Word brings reward both here and in eternity.

The Bible promises us rewards in Heaven when we live by faith...

Matthew 5:12 tells us to rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is our reward in Heaven

Matthew 6:20 tells us the rewards we'll receive in Heaven cannot be corrupted or stolen

Matthew 16:27 tells us Jesus will one day come and reward every man according to his work

Revelation chapters 1 through 3 promise rewards in Heaven for those who overcome and 1 John 5:4 tells us it is faith that overcomes

Revelation 22:12 the Lord declares, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

The Bible promises you that if you will live by faith in Christ and His Word, God will reward you in Heaven! Don't give up! Don't stop trusting Him! Keep your faith firmly planted in the Lord Jesus...He will come again one day (maybe today) and He will reward you with eternal rewards in Heaven!

But the Bible also promises us rewards for living by faith down here...

Mark 10:29 and 30 tells us that when we live our lives by faith in Christ and do His will which may mean great sacrifices, He will reward us hundredfold NOW IN THIS TIME...and in the world to come

John 10:10 tells us that Christ came that we might have life and have it more abundantly

Galatians 2:20 tells us that Christ lives in us and the LIFE WE NOW LIVE IN THE FLESH we live by faith of the Son of God

Galatians 4:19 tells us what we sow we will reap and we shall reap in due season if we faint not

Philippians 4:19 tells us God will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ

There are rewards NOW for you when you live by faith in Christ and His Word - don't miss them because you fail to live by faith!

Now you may say, all of this "faith in Christ" is in "general terms" - don't expect God to give you specific promises for your specific needs, only general promises to get you through the generalities of life.

I feel very sorry for you. You are missing something great.

I believe God is a “specific” God and that each saved person is one of His “specific” children and that He uses “specific” promises from His Word to meet our “specific” needs.

If you are in a state of holiness - that is, you are living your life with no sin between you and God and if you humbly submit to His will for your life no matter what that might be, and if you seek His Word from the Word - I believe He will give you something “specific” that you can put your faith in and stand upon.

I have experienced this before cancer invaded my life...

As a child, I heard the Gospel preached at the Good Shepherd Baptist Church here in Tampa. It penetrated my sinful heart, I repented of my sin and I believed Jesus paid for my sins and received Him as my Savior. you cannot convince me I was not saved and that I received Christ in my heart and everlasting life - He spoke to me “specifically” from John 3:16 and Romans 10:13 and **I choose faith!**

In 1984 I had a tragic car accident that took the lives of three friends and left me broken. I confessed my sin before God, I submitted myself to His will and I asked Him to speak to me from His Word and lead me to whatever He wanted with my life. He gave me a multitude of verses confirming my call to preach the Gospel. You cannot shake my call - you cannot convince me there is another path for me - I know that it is God’s will I preach - He spoke to me “specifically” and **I choose faith!**

In 1995 Brother Scotty Drake (our founding Pastor) resigned the pulpit of Fellowship Baptist Church to pursue missions work and I was convinced I was not supposed to pastor this Church. My wife and I went on a vacation to pray and seek God as to His will. We confessed all known sin our lives, we submitted to His will and asked Him to speak to us from His Word and everywhere we went for weeks He gave us Scripture that confirmed I was to become the pastor of this church. You cannot convince me that I am not in God’s will as your pastor - He spoke to me “specifically” and **I choose faith!**

In 1998 I knew the church was in need of relocating from our former property to pursue a great vision the Lord gave us and I spent countless months continually confessing my sins and submitting our church to God’s will and asking Him to speak to me from His Word and He gave me Isaiah 54:2 “Enlarge the place of thy tent...” We bought this property and built these buildings and God has poured out His blessings upon us and confirmed to us over and over again that we are in His will on 301 in Thonotosassa, in the middle of no where! You cannot convince me that we are not exactly where we are supposed to be as a church - He spoke to me “specifically” and **I choose faith!**

In the days after my diagnosis, my wife confessed her sins to God, submitted herself to His will and asked Him to speak to her and He gave her Psalms 30:2, 3 “O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.” You can decide for yourself if you think God gave us this verse, it matters not - we believe God is not finished with me yet - that I will grow old with my wife - that I will raise three boys into men of faith - that I will pastor this church to it’s greatest days - we believe God spoke to us “specifically” and **we choose faith!**

I know what all the tests have diagnosed. I have received the “prognosis” from the doctor. We have been online and read the statistics. We are not in denial. We are not oblivious to what men are saying...**we simply choose faith!**

We are human. We have moments when we cry and we experience fear. We have thought of what the outcome has been in the lives of others we’ve seen walk this road...**we choose faith!**

At 4 AM one night I was writing in my journal (I started it the day after I went in the hospital). God stopped me and I felt Him speak to my heart. He told me three things and this is what He said: He told me that “God can use a man more than a memory” that “I will live my legacy and not leave it” and to awaken my wife and tell her “Listen to the Word Christ is speaking to our hearts and not the words men are speaking to our minds.” I woke her up and told her all three and we wept and we held each other and **we choose faith!**

I want to read you a page from my journal yesterday: “I am in the office working on my sermon for Sunday. I want to preach on the subject, “We Choose Faith.” This has been Evona and my these since God gave us Psalms 30:2,3. Many are saying how bad this cancer is and the poor prospects of my recovery. You can see that “look” in their eyes. But I choose faith! I believe God will heal me. I believe it! Xrays and scans and prognosis say the opposite - but I choose to believe God is saying He will heal me. The Bible promises that faith pleases God and He rewards it so how can we go wrong choosing faith? It is the pathway to pleasing God - it is the road to reward from God!”

Now I want to challenge you to experience a life that is beyond what I can describe and explain and a life that men will not understand and think foolish...I want to challenge you to **choose faith!**