

R12.2 April 2022 Blog

Faith – Part 2 of 3

(All Scripture passages are from the New King James version)

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith and hope are inextricably linked. One requires the other. The Greek word for hope used in the verse above means “to *expect* or *confide*: - trust”. The value of a hope (both secular and spiritual) is determined by the one providing the answer to the hope. For example, if I hope for riches, and if I look to my company or my ingenuity to provide that wealth, then it is a worldly hope, a me **hope**. However, if I look to God to meet my needs and provide and give thanks for whatever I get, then it is a spiritual hope.

It is not wrong to have a worldly hope as long as you look to God to provide it and on His time schedule. For example, while hoping for riches, you declare that God is in control and has your best interest at heart, and you are satisfied that whatever comes is God saying, “this is best for you”, then your hope is spiritual.

Importantly, our hope will determine whatever or whomever we believe in. So, whomever or whatever we hope in should have the capacity to deliver our hope to us. I know in my life, when I first came to Christ, I didn’t want God to have a role in my secular success. I became spiritually bipolar – what the Bible calls double-minded. This is not good.

Here are several questions from our opening verse (Hebrews 11:1) that you should carefully consider:

1. How would you define “the substance of things” you hope for?
2. What is the “evidence not seen” in your life?
3. What are your hopes for today? Make a list. How many of your hopes are spiritual and how many are secular?
4. Would you agree that a lot of our relationship with God is found through our hope?

Let us explore faith again from the Old Testament examples provided to us in Hebrews.

Heb 11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

By faith, I believe God created the Universe. No matter how much our scientists “bob and weave” on this question, I believe God did it. Today, their euphemistic substitute is called “intelligent design”. This is but a tricky way of saying “we are in control”.

How about our heroes in Hebrews 11? Let’s look at Joseph.

Heb 11:22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

Note with me that:

- Joseph remembered that the Exodus was prophesied for Israel's leaving Egypt and going to the promised land (that is, the Abrahamic promised land).
- At the time of Joseph's death, Israelites were slaves to the most powerful country in the world – Egypt!
- Joseph was so committed to God's sovereignty that the only thing he had left to consecrate was his bones. Joseph said, "Take them (bones) with you." Gen 50:25
- His proof, conviction, evidence was the Abrahamic promised land. This was the only hope he still had at the end of his life.
- He bet his body on this utterance and God's capabilities.
- At the Exodus, Joseph's request was fulfilled. Ex 13:19

There are many competing sources that will vie for your hope. For example,

1. The company you work in
2. Your wife
3. Your family
4. Your skills
5. Worldly success
6. etc.

But if we believe in God and accept His forgiveness so we can relate to Him and go to Heaven, it appears to me that He should influence our hopes. Again, what hopes do you have from God, and what hopes do you have from the world or your personal skills? If we believe in God and Jesus, they should get to define our hope.

Let me ask you these questions: Is it true that God offers you many hopes for your life? Are they motivating you? Are your hopes today society-given, culture-given, education-given, peer group-given, college experience-given, or from God (such as Heaven and eternal rewards)?

Remember, whoever gets to define your hope will define your life. The source who defines your hope becomes the god of your life. Is your hope in God or in this World?

Here are spiritual comments on hope for your consideration:

1. **Rom 15:13** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Rom 15:4** For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

3. **Eph 1:18** the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
4. **Col 1:27** To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
5. **Tit 3:7** that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
6. **1Pe 1:13** Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
7. **Rom 5:3-5** And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Note in these last three verses that our hope is an extraction of what we experience – tribulation, perseverance, struggle. Our experiences, tough or easy, refine our hope, and that hope in God does not disappoint!

Application:

1. Take time over the next year and investigate your hope in the world or God with much prayer. Share this with your accountability circle and/or your wife and have them evaluate your thinking.
2. Keep a diary of your progress and thoughts on this. Make needed adjustments.
3. Be willing to have likeminded men of God hold you accountable.
4. Let me repeat, my major hope is that “God is in control and has my best interest at heart”. What is yours?