

Stepping Into...

Increasing Faith



Stepping Into...

3 levels of Faith

1. Saving Faith.
2. Faithfulness.
3. Increasing Faith.

Saving Faith

Habakkuk 2:4 'The just shall live by his faith'
Quoted in Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11 and Heb 10:38

'For by grace you have been saved through faith,
and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,
not of works, lest anyone should boast'.

Saving Faith

Galatians 2:20

‘I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me’

Hebrews 11:1-7

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ² For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony.

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.

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. ⁶ But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

⁷ By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

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Increasing Faith

Heroes of Faith in Hebrews 11

Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses (and his parents), Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, Daniel, the prophets, etc.

Daniel 11:32

‘Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits*.’

Pastor Brian's Message Notes

Three pages of more details sermon notes...

Stepping Into...

BCC – 9 January 2022 – Stepping into.....Increasing Faith

How do we grow in our faith?

If you took an audit of all your decision making in 2020 and identified all those decisions which depended on God answering prayer – what would it look like?

What is faith and how does it operate?

How do we increase our faith?

How do we exercise our faith muscle?

3 levels :

1. Saving Faith

2. Faithfulness

3. Increasing faith

Saving faith – it is given, a free gift. We need to act upon the invitation and accept it, but we cannot work for it, we don't deserve it, we cannot improve on it.

We are saved by faith.

In Habakkuk 2:4 'The just shall live by his faith'.

Quoted in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11 & Hebrews 10:38

Ephesians 2:8-9 Saving faith is a gift.

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast' Ephesians 2:8-9

Galatians 2:20

'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.'

This means that we must position ourselves to live every aspect of our lives from a faith perspective.

We cannot compartmentalise our lives, every aspect must have this framework. Our lives are not our own anymore. We are now children of God and our lives are hid in Christ

For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3:3

As bondservants of Christ – our life is not our own so we must live in faithfulness to His call.

Hebrews 11:1 to 7

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In Hebrews 11 we see a progression of increasing faith in the examples and what the scripture says about them.

'faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' The sort of hope we see here is not 'wishing'. Hope in the Biblical sense is completely grounded in God and His promises. Romans 5:5 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. The 'substance' should be the very essence of how we live our lives.

'the elders obtained a good testimony'.

V6 To believe that 'He is' means I believe that He exists. Moses at the burning bush had a revelation of Gods personal names: 'I Am who I am' or 'I will be what I will be'.

When we come to God we do not come in our terms but in His and that we accept the fullness of His character. All of him – loving, merciful, just, righteous, almighty, etc, etc. and in addition to that that He is a rewarder of those who dare determined to seek Him out.

Returning to the narrative:

v3 means that we believe His word and what He says about our origins and how the world came to be.

v4 Cain and Abel – Abel’s example is that he approached and served God in the way that God told him to.

Faithfulness – is in response to saving faith. We actively live in line with God’s will and way.

Examples: Enoch and Noah

- Enoch walked with God (one of only 2 people that had that testimony, which is something we need to learn to do).
- For us: an encounter with Jesus. Are we living in close relationship with Him?
- All that we have flows from this relationship.
- The second person who had the testimony that he walked with God was Noah.
- He took his walk a ‘step’ further by acting upon it – the ark. And his actions saved others.

When we are faithful in our walk it doesn’t always make us popular. In 1 Peter the term suffer is used 18 times. He is preparing those who wish to walk with Jesus for suffering because of their faithfulness. We should not suffer because of a bad testimony. But if we suffer because we are identified as a follower of Jesus, we should not be ashamed.

Peter explains that this persecuted is because we do not walk in the ways of the world.

Wilful disobedience against the laws of the land we live in is not faith, unless it directly contravenes scripture.

Increasing faith.

- If we look at the further examples in Heb 11, we see Abraham – who gave up one lifestyle to follow another.
- Surrender is a key area of growing faith, what are you willing to give up?
- Abraham is a great example of believing God for the miraculous, they were in their 90’s when they had their first child.
- Examples of people of faith who did incredible things in hostile cultures:
- Joseph – refused to sleep with Potiphar’s wife and ended up in prison for it.

Moses – was preserved by an act of faith – his family refused to kill him, which was the law of the land in Egypt, (‘not afraid of the king’s command’). This is an example of disobeying the laws of the land when they directly contravene what God commands.

- Rahab – she deceived the soldiers looking for the spies. Rahab is preserving life.
- Daniel - v33 ‘stopped the mouths of lions’,
- They all have one thing in common, they were fully integrated into the culture in which they lived yet without compromise.
- Moses looked like an Egyptian to Jethro’s daughters
- Joseph looked like an Egyptian to his brothers
- Daniel integrated into Babylonian and Persian Culture.

We should not alienate ourselves from the culture we live in.

Daniel understood his culture sufficiently to operate at a high level, yet did not compromise.

- Moses with the access directly to Pharaoh
- Joseph, second only to Pharaoh in power.
- Daniel – chief among the Babylonian court advisors.

This is walking in faith.

- Joseph saved his people – and with it the whole known world at that time.
- Moses saved his people.
- Daniel – had incredible influence in the most powerful nation on earth at that time.
- Yet people knew who their God was.

They were not perfect people in Hebrews 11- Samson is there, and David. Some of them we don’t even know their names.

Some were tortured, beaten, imprisoned, sawn in two (Isaiah), some were destitute, afflicted and tormented.

As we commit ourselves to this walk with God, He will continue to challenge us to go to another level – he will allow us to be tested so that we can grow.

Nothing can stop us from growing in God except ourselves.

All of us are called in our respective areas. Fulfil what God has for you there.

We can begin to ask ourselves the question – what is my faith choice in my situation?

- We need to start praying more dangerous prayers.
- Church is not a behaviour management programme, or a self-help club.
- Church is a redeemed community – saved by grace and baptised in the power of the Holy Spirit.

At the beginning of this year we need to declare that we are going to see the miraculous. To come to the end of what we can do – and step into the realm of what God can do through us.

The only obstacle is ourselves.

Daniel faced a series of hard tests, but previous test of character brought him through. He outlived kings.

Daniel 11:32 'those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits*'.

2 keys words 'know' and 'do'

"Know" indicates a close, warm, and even passionate intimacy combined with head knowledge that produces an "edge" in a person's life. This enables us to trust God and, at the same time, to perceive what He is doing. Its back to the walking again.

This warm, close, and passionate relationship forms the very foundation of a true, working willingness to submit to His sovereignty.

"The people who know their God" do!

It is not easy to live as a believer if we live right: tumultuous, difficult, and sometimes scary and confusing times.

Those who know God will **do** great exploits regardless of their human status, great or small. We have to respond by seeking Him to remain in His spiritual presence, higher level of dependency leads to a higher level of anointing / revelation.