

## Have Faith In The LORD

2 Chronicles 20:1-30

Whether you spend eternity with Christ in heaven loving and delighting in Him forever, or whether you spend eternity in hell under the judgement of God hating Him forever will be determined by what you believe.

The book of Hebrews puts this in the plainest of terms. It says in chapter 11:6, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

When we think of faith as Christians we must think of it as something more than believing in something that is unseen.

Everyone does that. Everyone lives their lives based on some kind of assumption about the reality that we perceive around us.

Many people in our world are eager to belittle people of faith while not realizing they themselves are exercising faith as they mock others.

It is not believing in the unseen that makes Christian faith unique, it is the object of our faith that is unique.

Again take note of the particular wording of Hebrews 11:6.

It says “anyone who comes to him (God) must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

This is more than faith in anything that suits the whims of the sinful heart.

This is knowing and believing in the One True God, the creator and sustainer of all, the One Who is holy and just, He who is One in His Being and also three distinct and equal persons.

This is God the Father who sent God the Son into the world to save us from our wickedness and rebellion against God by dying in our place on Calvary’s cross.

This is God the Father and the Son who send God the Spirit to convict us of our sin, to breathe life into our spiritually dead hearts, to give us a desire and delight in the things of heaven, to make Jesus Christ our treasure, and to keep us trusting in Him for the redemption of our souls into eternity.

This is what it means to be saved by grace “through faith” according to Ephesians 2:8.

[Since faith is the foundation of our salvation in Jesus Christ, it must be a vital part of our character as believers. Christians must be people of faith. To help us think through what that looks like this morning we are going to spend our time in God’s word in the book of **2Chronicles 20:1-30**. In this chapter we see king Jehoshaphat set an example for the people of Israel and encourage them towards faith. This text shows us four important lessons about faith in the LORD. The first is this...]

**Point #1 – Trials examine faith in the LORD.**

1Peter 1:7 tells us the trials come to believers for the purpose of proving our faith to be genuine which will result in the praise, glory, and honour of Christ at His coming.

The first two words of the chapter are really important to see. It says, “After this...” which should lead us all to ask the question, “After what?”

Chapter 19 answers the question for us. It tells us about a massive effort that King Jehoshaphat undertook to turn people towards the LORD.

He appointed judges and commanded them to be careful to judge with justice because God is just.

He appointed Levites to administer the law of the LORD.

He was seeking to shape the nation according to the word of the LORD.

And then we read this in **verses 1-2** of chapter 20.

Three different nations join together to form a massive army and they are marching against Jerusalem.

Things look pretty bleak, now look at how the king responds in verses 3-4.

He doesn't send messengers to other nations looking for help, he doesn't assemble the generals to come up with a battle plan, and he doesn't send out messengers to try and negotiate with the enemy.

Those things have their place, but when fear strikes the king's heart at the news it says the he “resolved to inquire of the LORD.”

In Hebrew it literally reads that he “set his face towards the LORD”.

That is in the fearful moment of crisis he is fixing his eyes upon the LORD and will not look anywhere else and he encourages his people to do the same.

You see, all these things he has been doing to turn people towards the LORD is the result of his genuine faith.

[Do you remember Jesus parable at the end of the Sermon on the Mount about two houses? One is built on the sand and one is built upon a solid rock. When the houses were first finished they probably looked the same. Tell me, when did the difference between the two become obvious? In the storm!]

It is easy to say we have faith in the LORD when things are easy.

It is easy to fake it when all is safe and secure, but when the doctor tells you there is no hope, when you lose your job, when your family says they want nothing to do with you because of your faith, when they come to cart you off to jail, when your husband/wife is difficult to love, when calamity strikes your children.

When the situation seems impossible or hopeless, these are the things that reveal genuine faith.

[Faith doesn't make us robots. Jehoshaphat is "alarmed" here that means he is afraid. But in his fear he sets his face upon the LORD. That's faith! It is to turn to the LORD. Whether it be in fear, discouragement, indecision, failure, or whatever else might come upon us, we turn to the LORD. In his "resolve to inquire of the LORD" this king gives us a second important lesson regarding faith. He shows us that...]

**Point #2 – Faith in the LORD has a firm foundation.**

God has time and again given us good reason to trust in Him. His faithfulness in the past should give us an unshakeable confidence in the future.

*In the Old Testament God told His people to seek Him in the temple and so the king gathers the people there in the courtyard and then he prays this according to verses 6-12.*

He begins the prayer in praise, affirming what He knows to be true of the LORD.

We would do well to take note of this example for our own prayer life.

Prayer should be much more than asking God for stuff! It ought to be a time of praise and adoration.

"Are you not the God who is in heaven?" he prays. That is a rhetorical question.

He is proclaiming that the LORD is above all. He proclaims that God is ruler of ALL the nations.

He proclaims God's unequalled power saying, "No one can withstand you."

How does he know all of that is true?

He knows what God has done in the past.

*He talks about God giving the Promised Land to the people of Israel.*

They did not win battle after battle to take possession of the land by their own strength.

God is the one who parted the Jordan, God is the one who brought down the walls of Jericho, and the Lord is the one who made the sun stand still.

The king's faith is based upon what he knows has happened before.

He also ties His petition to what Solomon had prayed at the dedication of the temple in 1Kings 8.

Solomon prays looking to the future and says when situations like the one happening right here happen and the people turn toward the LORD seeking Him in the temple, he prays that God would save them.

Jehoshaphat is doing exactly that! He prays according to what He knows to be true about God from the past and according to what God has promised.

That is a rock solid place to put our faith!

[Have you seen all the windmills that have been put up as you drive towards Chatham? Those things are absolutely massive. I'm pretty sure the blades on those things are over 100 feet long. I can't imagine the amount of force that is at work as those blades spin around. The only reason they can do that is because they are attached to a strong foundation. According to the website wind power engineering the foundation is made of around 60 truckloads of cement which works out to 30000 tonnes/66 million pounds of cement.]

Just like a windmill needs a firm foundation, so does our faith.

Our faith in the LORD has a much greater foundation than that of Jehoshaphat.

It's true all the miracles of God's faithfulness he could look back on are wonderful, but we have all that plus the greater foundation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Jesus did more than part the sea and bring down walls, He conquered the grave brothers and sisters.

Nothing can change that and so there is no better place to put our faith.

Christianity is not based on "wishful thinking", it is based on God the Son proving beyond a shadow of a doubt that the grave could not keep Him.

[O.k. so we can see that trials examine our faith, we see that our faith need a firm foundation and we have one. How does that effect our life practically speaking? What does it actually do? We see the answer to that question in what happens next. God speaks to the king and the people through a prophet and what we learn from that is this...]

### **Point #3 – Faith rests in God's promises.**

When we truly believe that God is faithful to everything He says fear and doubt give way to trust and peace.

When the king is finished praying a man named Jahaziel stands up to speak.

He is not just any random person. We are told here that he is a descendant of Asaph.

We know from the book of 1Chronicles that David had appointed the sons of Asaph as leaders of song and prophecy in the service of the temple.

It says here that "the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel."

That means that what this man is about to say is a word from the LORD (**Verses 15-17**).

"Don't be afraid or discouraged" God says because He is going to fight the battle for them.

Most often when God promises the victory to people in the Bible, it happens through the ordinary means of the battle.

On a few occasions, such as this one, God goes an extra step and basically says you don't have to do anything, and does it all Himself.

The only thing they have to do is march out to the battle field take up their positions and watch the LORD win the day.

This is a perfect picture of faith because what do they have to do? Nothing, they simply need to believe what God says!

Hearing this word from the LORD the king says this as they head out to the battlefield (**Verse 20b**).

Everything is on the line here. They are outnumbered and by any earthly measure they are marching out to die at the hand of their enemies.

There is every reason in the world to be terrified, there is every reason in the world to turn around and run away, but the King says, “Have faith in the LORD!”

Just believe that He is going to do what He says!

[When we think of heroes in the bible or in church history, we find this common thread among them. Most of them are just regular people and many of them are deeply flawed, but they are remembered because at critical moments in their life they believed what God said. Noah believed God and built a boat, Abraham believed God and left home, Rahab believed God and it saved her life, David believed God and defeated a giant, and on and on it goes.]

Oh what joy and peace there is for those who believe the LORD.

God has spoken to us in His word.

How much greater is our blessing today of having the complete written word of God so readily available to us?

He has told us that He will win the battle in this world.

No government, no conspiracy, no virus, or anything else under the sun can undo what God has said.

It is ours to believe it.

[Are you wrestling with fear and doubt today? I suspect there are many who are. Are you weary and worn from the circumstances of the world? Faith is the answer. Faith is the place to find rest. That leads us to one more lesson from this text which is this...]

#### **Point #4 – Faith in the LORD always saves.**

God will never abandon those who believe His word and no one can stop Him from rescuing those that belong to Him.

*As Jehoshaphat leads the troops out to battle he appoints men to sing the praises of the LORD.*

Normally, it would make more sense to assign fighting positions but they are not going out to fight they are going out to witness God’s victory.

In verses 22-23 it says that the LORD brought confusion to the opposing army and they end up fighting one another until they completely defeat themselves.

The writer gives us a sense of how much bigger the invading army is than the Israelites by telling us that it took three days to carry off all of the plunder from their enemies.

Their lives, their land, and property are all saved and they didn't draw a single sword or shoot a single arrow.

The simply put their faith in the LORD and they were saved.

It even goes farther than the battle of the day. Listen to **verses 29-30.**

That is what faith in the LORD does, it saves.

[I used to like math in high school. There is just something satisfying about working out a problem and getting the right answer. That was particularly true in physics class. I remember learning how to do the calculations for launching a projectile. It is amazing if you use the right formulas and account for all the variables and apply the calculated force at the calculated angle the projectile will go where you predict. It is amazing math works. Do you know why math works? Because the universe has been created by the LORD who has established physical laws in the universe. Follow the math and get the desired result.]

Just like math works every time, so faith in the LORD saves every time.

God has done more than establish physical laws, He has also established moral and spiritual laws as well.

All of us have broken those laws, but He has made a way for us to be saved.

It is through faith in Christ's dying to pay the penalty for our law breaking.

It is through faith in Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

It is faith in the Lord that saves.

*Our salvation is far greater than being saved from an invading army.*

Our salvation is from the power of sin and death and it will be realized when Jesus returns to the earth and gathers all of His people from throughout history to Himself.

That is the hope of every Christian and we have that hope by faith.

Brothers and sisters let us be people of faith.

When trials come take heart because in them genuine faith is proved true.

Know today that your faith in Christ has an immovable foundation.

Trust in the LORD so that you might find rest in the life.

Have faith in the LORD and be saved.