

Ephesians 2:8 For you are saved by **grace...**

19 weeks we have been beating the same drum of grace. You are saved by it, changed by it, kept by it. And yet, for some it may still be just a vague concept, not the defining reality of their lives. Why is it that some can repeatedly hear the message of GRACE GRACE GRACE, and still not be experiencing the richness of it?? What is the missing piece??

For you are saved by **grace...** through **faith**, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift

Faith is the spark to the forest fire that is Grace (*Matt Chandler).

You can hear all about grace, but if it never takes root in faith, you'll always be on the fringe

Meet me in: **Hebrews 11:1-16**

TITLE: **Faith is Not Invisible**

It's no surprise to anyone older than 3 years old that things in this world are not always as they should be; *we know discontentment*.

Could be because: Current political climate; Family dynamics; The unfair way life's unfolding for you;

In regard to your health you were dealt a bad hand; experienced loss; loneliness, rejection; etc.

We have a longing, a hunger and thirst, that things should be different; better.

It's out of this discontentment/dissatisfaction with the current state of things, that faith blooms.

Faith helps us get through life.

U ever notice, one person's faith gets them through tragedy, while someone else's faith wasn't enough? WHY?

We have to get something clear: **Cultural faith & Biblical faith are not created equal**

Cultural Faith: trusting something deep inside of ourselves

Biblical Faith: not found digging deep within, but rather, standing firmly on something outside of ourselves

One looks *within* (hoping there's enough in there to muster up strength, courage, hope)

The other looks *beyond* (relying on someone else's resources)

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.

It's seeing the discontentment at what's right in front of you while simultaneously looking beyond

...faith is the *reality*... (assurance, substance, certainty); the Greek word (hypostasis)= 'stand under'
—it's what your life is built upon; what you're standing on; the convictions that are shaping your life.

What makes faith so powerful and effective is not how strong faith itself is or how much faith we have- Rather, what makes faith so powerful is the object of our faith.

Example: Plane is going down. You reach for a **parachute**, but I reach for a **plastic trash bag**.

I can have big faith in my plastic bag while you have just tiny faith in a parachute- who will survive though?

You may have small weak faith, but if it's in the right place it is effective.

This might be a good time to clarify what faith is Not and what it is-

Biblical Faith is NOT:

- **a positive feeling or emotion** (I need to have more faith = I need the feels)
- **ignorant submission** (blind surrender)
- **a Christian version of 'the force'** (some Spirit sanctioned superpower)

Biblical Faith is:

The conviction that God is real, and what he has said is trustworthy, thereby, adjusting our behavior accordingly.

Hebrews 11:6 Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

If you really had conviction that what God has said is true, then you would adjust your life accordingly.
If the gospel is true and Jesus really did all these things for me, then it should convict me of how I'm living today.

Hebrews 11:2 For by this our ancestors were approved.

How were people in the O.T. saved? Faith- believing God exists, His word is true and aligning their lives to that
***Eventually Jesus would go to proclaim to them the fullness of their faith (1 Peter 3:19; 4:6)*

Hebrews 11:3 **By faith we understand** that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

Faith isn't an ignorant blind submission; Christianity doesn't scold you for using your mind, it invites you to, because faith is the premise that God is real, His word true and therefore affects our understanding of everything around us. That's the argument in this verse-

What's the best explanation for the universe?

You have to trace the universe back to some origin because something can't come from nothing, so something back there has to be eternal, and that eternal thing is the cause of everything else.

That's as far as science and reason can take you. All science can do is get you to a point where you realize the need to look beyond it. And that's where faith comes in.

You'll either believe in an Eternal God or Eternal Matter....which makes more sense???

Curtis Andrusko puts it this way: **Faith bridges the gap between the unexplainable and the undeniable**

I can't explain every detail of the universe, but I can't deny it exists.

I can't explain how exactly all the billions upon billions of stars were made, but I can't deny they were.

I can't explain how a baby not yet fully formed in his mother's womb comes alive, but I can't deny he does.

Faith allows us to look around at our world and say, *"Even though I can't see God, I can't deny He exists"*

Beauty, love, morality, joy, meaning—all of this had to come from somewhere.

What makes the most sense???????

In the following verse the author gives us case studies of what faith looks like in real life-

Hebrews 11:4 By faith **Abel** offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was approved as a righteous man, because God approved his gifts, and even though he is dead, he still speaks through his faith.

The story of Abel is told in **Genesis** chapter 4. Two brothers each bring an offering to God.

Cain- *‘some of the lands produce’*; Abel- *‘some of the firstborn of his flock’*

“The Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but he did not have regard for Cain and his offering.”

We are not told why God accepts one and not the other. (Life sacrifice VS Lettuce sacrifice; First VS Leftovers)

What we do know is that Abel **gave in faith**, Cain also gave but not in faith.

Q: Does God approve of what you bring Him?

Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken away, and so he did not experience death. **He was not to be found because God took him away.** For before he was taken away, he was approved as one who pleased God.

The story of Enoch is told in **Genesis** chapter 5.

Enoch and God were really close. It tells us twice that he walked with God. Until one day (**verse 24**) it tells us that *“he was not there because God took him”*. (Hebrews 11:5 = he didn’t experience earthly death)

Faith is not just knowing things about God. Faith is inherently relational and personal.

Enoch lived for several hundred years, but these 4 words summed up his whole life: **He walked with God.**

Q: What four words would sum your life?

She was very smart; One of a kind; amazing friend and lover; life of the party; clean and put together

Those are all great words, but the greatest 4 words would be “He (or she) walked with God.”

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Noah’s story is told in **Genesis** 6-9.

God asked Noah to build a boat over 500 feet long and over 50 feet high in the middle of dry land away from water. (Many believe that at this time in history, it had not yet rained ever.)

Noah believed what God said was true and adjusted his whole life towards that. **His faith made him stand out.**

With every month that passed, every plank that was added to the ark, in a way his faith was preaching

“By faith he condemned the world...”

Q: Is your belief in God and in what He says evident to others?

Hebrews 11:8-10 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and set out for a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out, even though he did not know where he was going.

⁹By faith he stayed as a foreigner in the land of promise, living in tents as did Isaac and Jacob, coheirs of the same promise.¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

In **Genesis** 12 God asks Abram to pick up and move to a foreign land he does not know, promising him a new home.

Faith leads to obedience, even when things don't make sense. Faith at its core is looking outside of your own understanding and deciding to obey because you trust that God is right and knows better.

Q: Has your faith caused you uncomfortably obey?

Hebrews 11:11-12 By faith even Sarah herself, when she was unable to have children, received power to conceive offspring, even though she was past the age, since she considered that the one who had promised was faithful. ¹²Therefore, from one man—in fact, from one as good as dead—came offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and as innumerable as the grains of sand along the seashore.

In **Genesis 21** we see Abraham's wife- at first, she wasn't fully convinced- she laughed- yet she had faith. Her faith allowed her to look beyond her limitations, to what God could do.

Q: Is your faith limited by what you see, or liberated by what God says?

The author now goes on to make a sobering claim regarding these people who are commended by their faith-

Hebrews 11:13-16 These all died in faith, although they had not received the things that were promised. But they saw them from a distance, greeted them, and confessed that they were foreigners and temporary residents on the earth. ¹⁴Now those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they were thinking about where they came from, they would have had an opportunity to return. ¹⁶But they now desire a better place—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

This is why it's important to allow the bible to interpret the Bible- what was just unfolded here, that may not have been clear when reading these peoples life stories in Genesis is this:

For them, faith was never about the temporal but the eternal

Faith gives our outlook and our worldview focus- it brings the background into the foreground, and allows us to see this temporary moment with the depth of eternity

MAIN TAKEAWAY- Real Faith always leads to Real Change

God is real. His Word is true. Our lives should reflect that.

"Faith without works is dead" (James 2)

If you claim you have faith but nothing shows you do, you should question where your faith is placed.

Think about a few different areas of your life and ask if you are truly trusting God in these areas:

Finances; Sexual purity; Loving others; forgiving; hospitality; judging

*****CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM

**CALL TO ACTION- I believe God exists.
I believe God's Word is true.
In order to reflect those convictions,
I will adjust my behavior in the area of _____.**

Sign up: **Baptism Sunday, august 11**

BULPEN-

Romans 8:24-25 Now in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know the true one. We are in the true one—that is, in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Faith is not just coming to an understanding of the facts—it's not even understanding them and being convinced they're true—true biblical saving faith is living in a way that demonstrates your TRUST in God.

Michael J Kruger- *"Is that faith groundless? Absolutely not. We have tremendous historical evidence that confirms what we know by faith. The stories we read about in the Bible are historical, and we can trust the books of the Bible as reliable. When we say we have faith in something we cannot see, we don't mean that there are no good reasons to believe in it. It just means that we were not there to see it with our eyes."*

V2- About 500 years ago, what is now known as the protestant reformation came about.

In short, the Church had at the time, taught that to be made right with God and to please God, you had to perform and do an offer. There were sacraments and indulgences and offerings.

But a monk named Martin Luther was reading Romans 1:17, in which Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted ("The righteous shall live by faith").

When he read that, something clicked, and in that moment, he realized the marvelous truth that faith is the only means of salvation and the only way to please God.

He would later write, "I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates." (Luther's works, Volume 34 page 337)

Michael Kruger- *"Of course, we must again be clear about what we mean when we say we 'please' God by our faith. It is not as if faith is meritorious good work that God rewards. No, it simply means that faith is the sole means by which we receive the thing that saves: namely Christ. And since God is pleased with Christ, he is pleased with us."*

Commentator [John W. Kleinig](#) (in) does a great service drawing out the idea of faith as "sight." The word "seeing" appears in 11:1, 3, 5, 7 and 13 with the negative adjective "unseen" elsewhere. "Perceiving" and the negated "things that are invisible" are juxtaposed in 11:3, while "showing" appears in 11:14. The repeated emphasis concerns running the race, faithfully and persistently, with their eyes fixed on Jesus to the very end, like Abraham and Moses, who saw the one and only living God who is otherwise unseen.

From the amplified- *faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses*

JD GREAR- from V6: the emphasis of faith, and what the ancestors held to was:

God is real; His promises are true; Seeking Him is worth the effort

C.S. Lewis: "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

From the article: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/faith-defined>

The Protestant Reformers recognized that biblical faith has three essential aspects:

notitia, assensus, and fiducia.

Notitia. Notitia refers to the content of faith, or those things that we believe. We place our faith in something, or more appropriately, someone. In order to believe, we must know something about that someone, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Assensus. Assensus is our conviction that the content of our faith is true. You can know about the Christian faith and yet believe that it is not true. Genuine faith says that the content — the notitia taught by Holy Scripture — is true.

Fiducia. Fiducia refers to personal trust and reliance. Knowing and believing the content of the Christian faith is not enough, for even demons can do that ([James 2:19](#)). Faith is only effectual if, knowing about and assenting to the claims of Jesus, one personally trusts in Him alone for salvation.

(JD Grear)

do you want to hear something fascinating? Enoch's son was "Methuselah."

Methuselah, the guy famous for being old. According to Genesis, he lived longer than any other human in history, 969 years to be exact.

Scholars generally agree that Methuselah's name means "death," and some say "Methuselah" = (literally means), "When he dies, judgment comes."

Enoch made his son's name a sermon. And--this is so awesome--if you put together the timelines in Genesis, you'll see that the flood came the exact year that Methuselah died.

Enoch named his son as a warning of coming judgment, and then God let that son live longer than anyone else in history, showing that God is long-suffering, that he doesn't want to send judgment. So he just kept letting this guy live.

From: Curtis Andrusko- Faith the Facts:

- Listen, we have an entire generation abandoning faith because they're signing God's name to checks and promises God never made; faith is not a blank check that gets God to do whatever your heart desires in life. Our faith is the certainty and assurance that God will do as God has promised as he sees we are trusting him to do it ... not getting him to do our bidding and fulfill our desires.

Faith is a way of knowing that leads to understanding.

The Bible calls you to start thinking. Biblical faith consists of, requires, and stimulates the profoundest thinking and reasoning and logic and rationality ... and according to v. 3, even the creation of the universe will actually lead back to an understanding that Christianity is true.

What's the best explanation for the universe? Well, you start with a premise: Your premise can be that there is a God, which the skeptic would say is unprovable ... or you start with the premise there's no such thing as the supernatural, which is also, mind you, unprovable.

Faith doesn't make you turn off your mind; it actually gives you a head start to thinking by giving you boundaries and guidelines for thinking and understanding things like science and psychology and how to live a successful life. Christianity isn't in opposition to those things; it actually helps us think better about them because our faith is a way of knowing that then leads to better understanding

faith bridges the gap between the *unexplainable* and the *undeniable*

If you want to deny the claims of Christianity, you at least have to be intellectually honest about it. If there is no God—if this world is just a conglomeration of your feelings paired with molecules and we're all the result of a cosmic accident—then you can't firmly stand on reason or morality, even though those things are undeniable.

If everything I think and feel is just a collection of molecules then there's no reason to trust my reason.

The Christian looks around at the world and says, "Even though I can't see God, what I see in the world is undeniable—beauty and love, the pursuit of morality and justice—all of this had to come from somewhere. What makes the most sense is that all of creation came from a Creator."

C.S. Lewis: "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

Faith is the conviction that what God has said is true and adjusting your life accordingly.

Reality- assurance, substance (Greek – stand under) Your translation or what you memorized might say, "Faith is the substance (sub=beneath, stance=stand)

—it's what your life is built upon; what you're standing on; the convictions that are shaping your life.

If you really had conviction that what God has said is true, then you would adjust your life accordingly. If the gospel is true and Jesus really did all these things for me, then it should convict me of how I'm living today.

If you're building your life on anything other than Jesus you are destined for instability and unhappiness. Why? Because the foundation of your faith is on unstable and inadequate objects.

Relationship- what happens when it fails or they let you down?

Career or Job- what if you become disabled to work or fired?

Reputation- what if people no longer like you?

Faith is your response to the promises of God for your life:

God says, "I will lead you." Faith responds, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I will follow."

God says, "I will provide for you." Faith says, "The Lord is my Provider; I lack nothing."

Faith is never a leap into the dark, because it's based on the firmest foundation there is: the Word of God.

Faith is living in a way that demonstrates trust in God

(The implication of V6) If you DO have faith, you CAN please God.

Faith is not just coming to an understanding of the facts—it's not even understanding them and being convinced they're true—true biblical saving faith is living in a way that demonstrates your TRUST in God.

If you say you have faith but nothing in your life looks different from the world, you should question where your faith is placed. Think about a few different areas of your life and ask if you are truly trusting God in these areas:

Finances

Sexual purity

Forgiveness

Faith pleases God; faith is shown/ visible by my life and actions....but it does not mean that my actions are what earn my good standing with God.

faith doesn't cast away my efforts to be good. Faith casts away my trust that my efforts are what make me good. Grace is not opposed to effort; grace is opposed to earning.

If you say you have faith in Jesus, do your actions line up with that conviction? If your life was put side-by-side with the Scriptures, would we see an intentional effort to live accordingly as you live out your trust in God?