

“Faith and Its Examples”

Fixing Our Eyes Upon Jesus, Our High Priest

Hebrews 11:1-7

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Jeff: Our heavenly Father, we are thankful for this day, for the time You’ve given to us. Father, as we gather in this place, we’re mindful that we are here because You first loved us. That love brought us into union with Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and into union with You by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. And we don’t stand alone. We stand with one another together in the Lord Jesus, living stones situated next to one another, that we might indeed be Your temple, the temple in which You dwell. Father, as we come here we are so thankful to come and to study Your word and to study it together, and realize that this is a means of grace by which You work in us, that we might not be the same today as we were yesterday, but that we might be changed, shaped after the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Father, as we are changed, we pray that we would indeed be a blessing not only to You as certainly we are in Christ, but also to others.

And Father today, as we bring ourselves to this passage in the book of Hebrews where we study the examples of those you have shaped after the image of Christ, we pray that Your hand of blessing would be upon us as we watch their example and learn from them. Lord, help us to see through them to the Lord Jesus Christ. And Father, we are thankful for the missionary work that we’ve talked about this morning and for the men involved in it. We certainly pray that as they share the gospel not only in word but also with their very lives, that men and women and children in other countries would see the Lord Jesus Christ and embrace Him. We pray, Father, that You would be building Your kingdom as we know You are. We pray that You will be blessing us this morning as we know You will. And we pray it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Jeff: All right. Let’s turn to Hebrews chapter 11. And this morning we’ll look at verses 1-7. All right. Let me read to you the word of God, and let me remind you before reading it that it is indeed the word of God. We live in a world of words and this is the only safe word. And it’s the only safe word because it is a true word from an infallible God. It doesn’t wander from the truth. And because it is His word it is authoritative.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: Listen to the word of God. *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation.*

“By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

“By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

“By Faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death. And he was not found because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having

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pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists, that He rewards those who seek Him.

“By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.” This is the word of God.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: I’m tempted to ask this. Did I get the words right? *(Laughter)*

Participant: Almost.

Jeff: I almost got it right? *(Laughter)* All right. This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: All right.

Participant: You’re improving.

Jeff: I’m improving. *(Laughter)*

Participant: Eighteen months.

Jeff: That’s right. *(Laughter)* A habit is forged in 18 months. But those Presbyterian principles work hard against that kind of habit. I’m just saying. *(Laughter)*

All right. Well I want to talk to you about three things this morning. I want to talk to you about some introductory things. I want to talk about *a definition of what faith is*. But this is not really a basic definition of what faith is. I want to talk to you about a definition, a description. We’re going to be working through what is here in Hebrews chapter 11. And then I want to talk about *some of faith’s examples*, some of the ways in which we see faith worked out from the description/definition that we see. And so just those things. That’s the way in which the author of Hebrews sets up chapter 11.

So let’s get started with an introduction. Let me simply start by helping you to see the impact of this kind of text that we’re looking at. If I were to say to you, “9/11,” most of you would all know that I’m referring to an event almost 19 years ago today, 19 years ago now. You would know that on September of this year it’s going to be 19 years.

Participant: Eighteen.

Jeff: Is it 18 now?

Participant: Yes, 18 years ago.

Jeff: Eighteen years ago. So isn’t it 19 in September?

Participant: No.

Jeff: It’s 18 in September?

Participant: 2001.

Jeff: 2001. I’m not a mathematician. *(Laughter)* You know, every time my wife does basic math with me she’ll say to me, “You know, it’s a good thing that I’m home-schooling the children.” *(Laughter)* Then I had to puff out my chest and say, “Well, who’s the Bible scholar here?” *(Laughter)*

Participant: She said Nathanael.

Jeff: She ignores me; she turns her head. All right. So 9/11. I hope the rest of the facts are right because this is a numbers game. *(Laughter)* If I were to say to you “93,” what would come to mind?

Participant: The blizzard.

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Second Participant: The World Trade Center.

Jeff: I’m thinking of Flight 93. This is going downhill fast. (*Laughter*) I’m going to cut to the chase. If I said “23,” what would you say? Hopefully Psalm 23, because Psalm 23 was what was supposedly recited prior to the passengers on that flight trying to take back that flight.

And when you think about that sort of thing, I’ve heard discussions about people talking about whether it was really Psalm 23 or was it the Lord’s Prayer that was recited? And the point that I would make to you is that those texts are so popular, so ingrained even in our non-churched culture, that there’s a versatility to it. Did he say the Lord’s Prayer or did he say Psalm 23? Which was it? Did he say both?

Well, I want you to know that the text that we have before us today, or at least part of the text that we have before us today, Hebrews chapter 11, is a text very much like Psalm 23 and the Lord’s Prayer. I mean, think about it. It doesn’t have that kind of standing in the world, in the unchurched world. But it certainly has that kind of standing with us as Christians. What do we refer to it as? Well, we refer to it as the *hall of faith*, don’t we, because this is that text that says to us, man, this talks about the heroes of the faith, those people that are believers who are to be commended for their faith. In fact, when you think about that word *commended*, we read it in the text repeatedly.

And one of the things that we have to ask ourselves is this. When we come to a text like Hebrews chapter 11, we have to ask ourselves, does it stand alone? Is this one of those texts that necessarily emerges out of the book of Hebrews? Is it sort of like one of Paul’s beatitudes where he just sort of breaks into praise, and we don’t know if it really connects to what he’s saying, but we know that something he has said has elicited from him this burst of praise, this burst of praise for God’s glory? Is that what it is?

Well, first of all I want to talk to you about *the structure of the text*. And it’s a very simple structure. And then I want to talk to you for a minute about the tie-in that it has with the rest of the book of Hebrews, because that’s important. It’s not a stand-alone sort of text, as might be suggested.

The structure is very interesting. If you look at verses 1 and 2, it’s got sort of an a-b-b-a pattern, a chiasmic pattern. If you cut off the chiasm and just look at it in terms of the idea of commendation at the beginning and commendation at the end, that’s there, too. I do think there’s a more chiasmic pattern to it, though, when you have faith/commendation, and then in verse 39 you have commendation and then faith. I think that what you have is that you have this chiasmic inclusion that frames Hebrews chapter 11. And so I think that what you have is the writer saying that this is a very important piece in what I’m about to say to you. And he frames it for us as such.

So I think the basic structure is that. Now I don’t think it’s a stand-alone text. I think it’s a necessary text. Why do I think that?

Well, think about verse 38 of chapter 10. In verse 38 of chapter 10 you had that quote from Habakkuk about not shrinking back. And I think that what you have in chapter 11 are those who do not shrink back. In other words, he talked about those who had faith, those who are not cowardly. And here in chapter 11 we have the epitome, the example of those who would be described best as those not shrinking back.

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But I want to show you something else. In that text from Habakkuk, “*My righteous one shall live by faith*”,--and I want to quote the rest of it. “*But My righteous one shall live by faith. And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.*”

You know, the interesting thing is that when you think about the connection between, say, 10:38 and the book of Hebrews, you get an interesting parallel. Let me point it out. You get the idea that those who have faith are those who please God. That’s what you get from that text in Habakkuk. But you also get that very thing when you look at Hebrews chapter 11. Verse 6: “*For without faith it is impossible to please Him*”, that is, God. And that mirrors 10:38. This isn’t a quote from it. But the idea is that without faith God takes no pleasure in us.

And so this idea that those who have faith are those who give forth a life that pleases God. And so there is faith and there is the life which pleases God that arises from faith. So I think those things are there in the text. I think they’re pretty apparent to us. And I think that we need to remember them as we go forward in this.

Now I just want to ask the question. What is faith and how can we please God? Now I actually have this later. But I’ve thought about it and I think that it’s worth our time to think about it a little ahead of time.

So I want us to think about this. And let me put this up here.

Transcriber’s Note: Jeff draws a picture.

Participant: Is that Sig or is that Don? *(Laughter)*

Second Participant: Boy, that’s Sig. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: That’s Sig. *(Laughter)*

Participant: In one of his better moments.

Jeff: In one of his better moments. *(Laughter)* All right.

Participant: You got him to a tee. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: I did? I captured him? All right. Now I want us to think about what faith is. When we think about what faith is, from at least a classic Reformed definition of faith, we think about what? We think about three things. We think about—

Participant: A pen that works. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: We think about a pen that works. *(Laughter)* I can’t spell, either. We think about *notitia*. We think about *assensus*. And we think about *fiducia*. Okay?

What do those words mean? This (*notitia*) is the idea of mind. This (*assensus*) is the idea of will. And this (*fiducia*) is the idea of faith or trust.

Now let me tell you how we oftentimes hear this described. Faith is knowing something and agreeing with it, assenting to it. Now we don’t talk about these two things as being saving faith. Why? Because we know that James tells us that the devils have this much, right? The devils know and the devils agree. If we could get them in an honest moment, we could get them to agree with what they know. And that’s not saving faith.

I mean, I had a friend who went with me to Grove City College and he agreed with almost every Reformed tenet. But he said this. He said, “If there is a God, then I think He would have to be the God of the Reformed conception, because it logically flows. You know, if there is a God, He has to be sovereign, and so on.”

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So he was willing to concede. He was willing to agree that if there is a God, this God needs to be this kind of God. So knowing and agreeing do not make saving faith.

What is it that makes saving faith? Well, oftentimes we say that the Reformed answer to this is *fiducia*. I know that some people pronounce the c with a hard sound, and some soft. We’re going to go with *fiducia*. (*Laughter*)

Transcriber’s Note: The hard c.

All right. Let me just say this. Do you know what I’m going to do?

Participant: Yes.

Jeff: All right. This is the chair example. Is this a chair?

Participant: It’s a chair.

Jeff: It is a chair. It’s a chair because it has chairness. What’s chairness? It has four legs and a seat on it. This one particularly has a back on it. This is a chair. Do we know it’s a chair?

Participant: Yes.

Jeff: And we agree that it’s a chair.

Men: Yes.

Jeff: All right. This is the way the story goes. That’s not saving faith. What’s saving faith? Saving faith is when I—

Participant: Sit in it.

Jeff: Sit in the chair. And what is that, brothers? That’s works salvation. (*Laughter*) Because what did I just do? I just included my doing in my knowing and assenting. And that’s not a good way to go. I’m just saying that I’m with Paul on that. Works is not a good way to go.

That leaves the question for us. Well then, how do we understand *fiducia*? Well, I want to tell you something. I happen to believe that we are a unified dispositional complex.

Participant: Yes, oh yes.

Jeff: Yes, I know you do. (*Laughter*) We are fragmented due to our sin, right? And what is our dispositional complex? Well, philosophically and theologically our dispositional complex is *mind, will, and emotions*.

Now here’s the deal. For years and years and years the evangelical world has said this. You cannot trust your emotions. You know, don’t trust them. And what are they doing when they do that? They are trying to fragment the dispositional complex. But the dispositional complex of mind, will and emotions is unitary. I cannot separate myself from my emotions. Do you see me separating myself from my emotions? (*Laughter*) No.

Now because we’re unitary, we want our minds, our wills, and our emotions working together. I know you’ve heard me say this before. But I’m going to say it again. The closest that you get to a unitary dispositional complex is when you’re in love. I’m thinking about her whom I’m calling, and hoping that she’s on the phone because I love her, you know. Everything about me—my mind, my will and my emotions,—are all centered upon this woman that I long for, right? And then I marry her and I ignore her. (*Laughter*) I digress. Anyway, that’s not me. That’s not automatically where I have to go. David, ask my wife, right? (*Laughter*)

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All right. Now my point is this. My point is that when we are redeemed we are redeemed to think, will and want one thing. And that’s the Lord Jesus. Okay?

So let’s bring it back to our classical definition of faith. I know Jesus, I want Jesus? No, I will Jesus. I want Jesus. So this (*notitia*) corresponds obviously to mind. This (*assensus*) corresponds obviously to will. And *fiducia* corresponds to emotions. And what does the unbeliever not have? He does not have a desire for God.

Participant: Right. That’s what R. C. Sproul says.

Jeff: The regeneration of God changes his desires. And now all of a sudden he knows and agrees and wants one thing. And this saving faith produces good works. Go ahead.

Participant: It’s just that Sproul makes this point.

Jeff: Oh, does he?

Participant: Yes. Sproul makes the point that desire is the thing that the believer has, the one who is born again, that the unconverted person, the one who is not born again, does not have.

Jeff: Well, he’s right.

Participant: He’s exactly right. (*Laughter*) When I heard it, I’d already come to that conclusion. At least he agrees with me. (*Laughter*)

Jeff: Well you know, that’s kind of funny, because what I just critiqued was D. James Kennedy’s “Evangelism Explosion”, right? And I think he and D. James Kennedy were pretty close friends.

Participant: What did Kennedy believe?

Jeff: He would use the chair example.

Participant: President Reagan said that first we believe that America’s military can help small countries. Reagan said that America is the world’s last greatest hope. Now do we have the will to save them? And it’s all based on the fact that America values those other countries. So it starts with that.

Jeff: Anybody else? I’m not touching that political example. I’m not touching that. Just kidding.

Participant: Or a treaty is really critical. It’s like the covenant that you taught us about.

Jeff: I’m going to go with these two guys. (*Laughter*) anybody else? No? Okay, so what is faith? You say, “Well, wait a minute; you just did that.” No, what I want to do is that I want to return to the text. And at this point I want to ask, is that what we find in Hebrews chapter 11? Is this a definition or is this a description? And I want to tell you that I think it’s pretty clear that it’s not this, that is, it’s not the definitional aspect of faith that we just talked about,--*notitia*, *assensus* and *fiducia*. It’s not that.

I think that what we have in Hebrews chapter 11 is a description of faith and not a definition. Now keeping that in mind, he’s going to describe for us what the life of faith is, but not definitionally. He’s going to do it descriptively, and then he’s going to give us some examples of it. Now hopefully I’ll work this out as we go.

The first thing I want you to notice then is that *faith enables us to see the reality of our hope*. Look at verse 1. “*Faith is the assurance of things hoped for.*”

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Now I want you to think about this in light of what I just said. Without the *fiducia*, without the desire, you’re not going to be able to see even what you claim to know and agree with.

Take Immanuel Kant. Immanuel Kant wrote *The Critique of Pure Reason*. And Immanuel Kant writes this book. And he basically says, “I’m going to do this wonderful thing where I show that the realists are not correct and the idealists aren’t correct. There’s a combination of both.” In other words, the mind is an ice cube tray. And there are discrete bits of data out in the world that need to be sucked in through my senses, categorized with the ice cube tray of my mind. And then my mind creates the reality in time and space that I see. Therefore time and space exist within me. Quality, quantity and all those things exist within me. So I am the center, in one sense, of the universe.

Now he gets to the end of the book and he says this. Now the question is, does God exist? And he says, “Well, if God exists, if God made me, then He didn’t make me so that I could know Him.” Why? “Because God only made it so that I could know perceptions, that I could know discrete bits of data taken into my mind or taken in through my senses and then categorized by my mind.” God is not a percept. So He has created me in such a way that I can’t know Him.

And so he says this. He says that if there is such a God, He has made me, he has constituted me in such a way that I just can’t know Him.

Now my point is this. Here’s a guy, partly through that book, who says, “You know, when I gaze up at the starry heavens, I know two things. I know there’s got to be a Creator and a moral law within.” (*Laughter*) But you got to the end of the book and you said, “God’s not a percept that you can know.” And so my point is this. My point is that you can know and you can assent, even if your assenting is in ignorance to some degree as Kant’s was. But you don’t have any desire for Him. You don’t have any desire to vindicate Him. Yes?

Participant: To bring this down to earth,--not that you aren’t already doing that,--but wouldn’t the Kantian understanding of reality and perception be what we’re seeing in millennials? I have a millennial daughter. And it’s like the only reality is kind of like what they just take in, and then they just create this universe within them. And everything else is unrelated to that.

Second Participant: It ends in twelve years.

First Participant: What?

Second Participant: The world ends in twelve years.

Jeff: I think it’s a form of that, where the world centers around me. I take in truth, I assimilate truth, I make truth mesh. Different truths mesh, using that truth with a small t. You know what I mean? That’s it. But I think that you take the millennial, because millennials are oftentimes spiritual, right? They’re not righteous, but they’re spiritual. And so you ask them, “Do you believe in God?”

“Sure I do.”

“Do you agree that God is love, or propositions about that?”

“Sure I do.” But if you really get to talk to them, you say to them, “Do you have a desire for Christ Jesus as Lord?”

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“No. No, of course I don’t.” And I think that’s kind of the idea that you and I are thinking of, right? So then faith, saving faith, includes this piece.

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for.” You know, Greek words have a range of meanings when you translate them. *Assurance* can mean many things here in this text. I’m giving you just a few of the meanings—reality, substance, essence. That’s what it can mean. Faith is the assurance, the reality, “*the substance of things hoped for.*”

Now when you take that on board, that means faith is the eye to see that the thing we do not now see but hope for is really there. Faith gives us the eye to see that what is not there is really there.

Now, you know, the guy that I talked about in college had this knowledge. He said that if there is such a God, yes, I agree with your conception of Him. But he had no *fiducia* to enable him to see the reality that he could only speculate about. Faith actually enables us to see the unseen. Go ahead.

Participant: Instead of hope, could you replace it with desire in your sentence? I mean, it’s kind of speaking to the desire.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: That’s like the big piece there. Is it interchangeable in that way?

Jeff: I think that in the way we’ve been talking about it that it is. He has no desire for God.

Participant: Hope is one thing. But I think that desire is different.

Jeff: And I think that Biblical hope can be viewed like that. I’m thinking about Biblical hope. But Biblical hope is not that I hope it won’t rain ten days from now, right? Biblical hope is when your dad tells you “I’ve got a bike for you for your birthday.”

“Can I have it now?”

“No. I’ve got it in the back room.” And I’m hoping for the day of my birthday to come because I know I’m going to get it, right?

Participant: I kind of think back to what you were saying about almost more of an action thing, where you put your faith in action. It’s not things you’re going to hope for. Sometimes I think it’s knowing it’s going to work, but you just don’t know how. So you desire that maybe you do something, but you don’t see the end to it. You know the desire is there. I wish I could think of an example. You have your faith not knowing what the outcome is, but you desire it. And you feel that it’s going to happen, no matter if it’s out of your control.

Jeff: Well, the resurrection is what I desire. And I don’t know when that’s going to happen. But I have a desire for it, right? Is that the idea you were thinking of?

Participant: Well, it’s like that I guess I’m going to behave this way, even though the world doesn’t say that’s the way that I should behave. And I know that’s the way I desire to be because God wants me to be that way. I guess that’s kind of how I’m saying it.

Jeff: Yes. And I would say that the desire to act in a way that is pleasing to God arises from your faith. The pleasing way in which you act before God is the fruit of that faith.

Participant: Yes, right.

Jeff: And so when we get to the examples of faith, I actually think that’s what he’s going to drive for. The faith produces this life that is pleasing to God. Yes?

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Participant: I was just going to say, can you give us an example of that playing out for us now, as we might think of something in which we have the assurance and that we hope for?

Jeff: Yes. Can I wait to get to the examples, though? Can I give you an example of that when I get to the examples?

Participant: Sure.

Jeff: Sure. All right.

Participant: Give one now. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: You know—

Participant: I’m sorry. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: He’s a rough guy. All right, let me give you an example. *(Laughter)* Leaving Judaism, right? In this particular case the question is do you really have a desire for Christ? So they know things. They claim to agree with things they know. But they’re returning to Judaism. The question is, do you really have eyes to see?

The second point, the second thing I want to say to you in this descriptive way about faith is that *faith itself demonstrates the reality that it alone can see*. You know, paraphrases have their place. J. B. Philips has a way of paraphrasing some of the passages that are just excellent. Romans 12:2 is one of those passages that I just love. “*Don’t be pressed into the world’s mold.*” I love that way of expression. This is the way he puts verse 1 of Hebrews 11 in his paraphrase. “*Only faith can guarantee the blessings that we hope for, or prove the existence of the realities that at present remain unseen.*” I actually think that J. B. Philips has captured the two points that we’re talking about here when we think about this description of faith. Faith itself guarantees the blessings. And faith itself is the proof of the blessings. I think that’s the idea.

And I think that’s what you find in Romans 8:18 and other places in Scriptures. Paul says, “*The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us.*” How does he know? Faith. That’s the idea. Yes?

Participant: Can you move back one slide?

Jeff: Sure.

Participant: The sufferings of this present time. This word *suffering* is really interesting to me because in Eastern theology and spirituality that would be the word *passion*. I’m not sure if you’re using the same word here in English. Passions can be suffering, but they can also be desires. So I find it very interesting to see that desire can be passion and it is also suffering. And then you can see the desire. It’s remarkable here in this desire, as it says here. I just felt that it was interesting.

Jeff: Yes. That’s actually a great point. In Puritan theology there is the difference between *passions* and *affections*. And here’s the difference. The different passions operate on you from without. And so when the Westminster Confession says that God doesn’t have passions, everybody says, “What?” And what they meant was that nothing acts upon God in such a way that it elicits a response from Him. God is alone sovereign. He created all things. God doesn’t have any rivals.

So God is without passions. But the affections arise from within. And so what we’re talking about here in this *fiducial* is not sort of whipping people up with passions. It’s sort

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of like saying, “Now let’s put on the movie that’s going to scare you to death that makes you all flee from hell today. But forget what you did tomorrow,” right? I mean, let’s not work on you with passions and whip you up into a frenzy, getting you to confess Christ as Savior, and then go home and forget what you did. No, what we’re talking about here is a work of the Spirit that produces affections from within. That’s the idea. Anyway, that’s what I’m talking about, that kind of stuff. But you get the idea. That’s a great point. So we would have that thought as well. But that’s how we would express it. Okay?

All right. So the point that I would make is that understood this way descriptively, simple faith is enough. For those wanting to depart and go back to Judaism, simple faith, if it is really genuine and truly saving faith, is enough to cause them to stay, because they’ll be able to see the realities that are yet unseen. That’s the idea.

All right. The question that is before us now is *why creation?* Don’t you ever wonder why creation figures into this point? And I’ll tell you why creation figures in. It’s as simple as this. Creation figures in at this point because what the author is saying is this. He’s saying that faith helps you to see what is yet unseen.

Now look at creation. It was made by Him who is unseen! It is evidence of the unseen!

Now I don’t know if you love this or not. And just like I’m not a mathematician, I’m not a scientist, okay? But I find it striking that nothing doesn’t mean nothing in the world of physics today. What is nothing is just more laws of physics that gave rise to, say, the Big Bang. So there are just laws of physics that we haven’t discovered yet, that we haven’t worked out yet, that produced what it was that we now experience in the world.

And yet I would say to you that what we find in the Book of Hebrews is that the author of Hebrews is saying that when you go back to the very second prior to creation, when nothing existed, well that’s the Unseen that produced creation. And faith sees that. Faith understands that.

It’s odd when you think about it. But what he’s doing is that he’s saying that the things that you see are actually proof of the Unseen. Go ahead, Don.

Don: I think it’s interesting in our culture that it’s the exact opposite of what verse 3 says. *“By faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God, so that the things which were seen were not made of things which are visible.”*

Transcriber’s Note: NKJV.

Don: Yet the whole theory of evolution is based on the opposite, that we came from slime or the Big Bang, or whatever. Like you said, something started it, but they don’t want to acknowledge God.

Jeff: Yes, absolutely. Yes?

Participant: Talking about the creation, in the Psalms it says that *“the heavens declare the glory of God.”*

Jeff: Yes. And you know, if I go back to Immanuel Kant, here’s a guy that can’t help but confess that. Francis Schaeffer used to talk about that in a unique way when he talked about Francis Crick who had something to do with what was it, the atom? Or was it—

Participant: DNA.

Jeff: DNA, something like that.

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Participant: The double helix.

Jeff: The double helix. Wasn't it Francis Crick who would capitalize the n in nature in his books? And he pointed out that Carl Sagan would capitalize c in cosmos. And Schaeffer's point was that they normally suppress it in unrighteousness, but it creeps out every once in a while that there has got to be a governing principle in all this, whether it's the use of the N in nature, or the use of the C in cosmos. They have some form of higher power, no matter what they make it to be. And that's Immanuel Kant, that's whoever.

Participant: But that's also Hinduism, because in Hinduism the only eternal thing is matter. Hinduism is one of the most ancient religions in the world, if not the most ancient religion in the world. So that's also why in Hinduism that there's reincarnation and recycling, because you're always recycling because there's nothing new. It always was. So creation comes first.

Jeff: Animism, right? I mean, that's basically what Hinduism is. Anybody else?

All right. Let me get to *faith's examples* because we're running out of time here. Let me give you the structure of what we're going to look at. We're not going to look at all of this today. 1-7 is *the antediluvian period*. 8-22 is *the patriarchal period*. 23-31 is *the Mosaic era*. And then 32-40 is basically *the rest of the Old Testament kingdom*.

I want to look at three examples today. And basically what I want you to see is that I want you to see a common theme that occurs here. You see *the commendation of faith*. You see that throughout. You see *the life that pleases God*.

What you find first of all is that you find Abel who is what? He's murdered for his faith. And the idea of *through which* is an interesting one. Does *through which* refer back to the sacrifice, or does it refer to the faith itself? I actually think it refers to the sacrifice, because it's the sacrifice that emerges from his faith. And so he is pleasing to God.

Now here's what I want you to notice. Actually I'm going to leave this for a second. I want you to notice this. I want you to notice that Abel is murdered because he is pleasing God. I want you to notice that Enoch pleases God and triumphs over death. And I want you to notice that Noah has faith and is pleasing to God, and faces the judgment and comes out unscathed.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: There's a sense in which that all of the examples that we are looking at here in this particular section deal with how faith and the life pleasing to God that arises from saving faith triumphs over judgment and death and produces eternal life. And so I think that's the primary focal point of these three examples, helping us to see the unseen in that regard. Yes, go ahead.

Participant: You may be talking about this next week. But I'm kind of curious how this ties into Romans 12:3, where the last half of that talks about *“each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”* So if God assigns us a certain amount of faith, how do we—

Jeff: Yes. I can answer that fairly quickly here. I think that what you find is that you find that the renewal of the mind that he talks about in 12:1 and 2 is actually explained in verse 3. We are to have a renewed mind that thinks of others better than ourselves. And then that measure of faith that is given is followed by gifts that are to be elicited in

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service in the church. So really, 12:1-6, or whatever it is, is a passage that really hangs together.

I can't think about Romans 12:1-2 without thinking about Ligonier Ministries and the renewal of my mind, and that philosophy. But when you really look at 12:1 and 2 in context, the renewal of my mind is not really about philosophy or theology or that kind of thing. And don't get me wrong; that's not a criticism of Ligonier Ministries. I love Ligonier Ministries. Did I tell you that I like R. C. Sproul? *(Laughter)* But that passage is really about the renewal of your mind in how you think about others and how you serve others.

So the think the measure of faith at that point actually speaks not to sort of the amount of emotion or desire that I have for God. But I actually think that it speaks there of what I've been given in order to serve the church.

Participant: Jeff, you're referring to romans 12.

Jeff: Isn't that what you were talking about, Romans 12?

Participant: So then that would tie in with Philippians 2:3 and 1 Peter 4:10?

Transcriber's Note: Philippians 2:3, ESV. *“Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”*

1 Peter 4:10. *“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.”*

Jeff: Well, whatever those are. *(Laughter)* I'll take your word for it. Anybody else? All right, I'm going to wrap us up today. I've got a trip to Erie to make. I need to end. It's a quick trip. I've got to pick up meat on the way home. *(Laughter)*

Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank You for this day and the time You've given to us. Thank You for Your word, for the blessing of it, for our time together, for the joy that we have in being together. And thank You for the Holy Spirit who exists in our midst. Father, thank You for His work in us, for His transforming work that enables us to go out of this place and be different people, different men, so that we could be in a world that is certainly different, and that we can bring to bear upon it the gospel of Jesus Christ. And so we hope and pray and long for it to be changed according to His likeness as well. Father, bless us, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Men: Amen.