

“When for Deeper Faith I Seek”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Heb. 11:1-6

1. “Faith is not the power of positive thinking; it is believing in God and trusting that His will is always best even when you cannot understand why.” (S. Howerton)
2. “Faith means being sure of what we hope for now. It means knowing something is real, this moment, all around you, even when you don't see it.” (J. E. Tada)

3. A little girl went to her bedroom and pulled a glass jelly jar from its hiding place in the closet. She poured the change out on the floor and counted it carefully, three times. The total had to be correct. No chance here for mistakes. Carefully placing the coins back in the jar and twisting on the cap, she slipped out the back door and made her way six blocks to Rexall's Drug Store. She waited patiently for the pharmacist to give her some attention but he was too busy at that moment. She twisted her feet to make a scuffing noise. Nothing. She cleared her throat with the most disgusting sound she could muster. No good. Finally she took a quarter from her jar and banged it on the glass counter. That did it!

“And what do you want?” the pharmacist asked in an annoyed voice. “Can't you see I'm talking to my brother from Chicago who I have not seen in years,” he said without waiting for a reply to his first question. “Well, I want to talk to you about my brother,” Tess answered back in the same annoyed tone. “He's really, really sick, and I want to buy a miracle.” “I beg your pardon?” sputtered the pharmacist. My brother's name is Andrew, and he has something bad growing inside of his head, and my Daddy says only a miracle can save him now. So how much does a miracle cost?” “We don't sell miracles here, little girl. I'm sorry but I can't help you,” the pharmacist said, softening his manner a little. “Listen, I have the money to pay for it. If it isn't enough, I will get the rest. Just tell me how much it costs.”

The pharmacist's brother waited patiently while the two talked. He then stooped down and asked the little girl, “What kind of a miracle does your brother need?” “I don't know,” she replied with her eyes welling up. “I just know he's really sick, and Mommy says he needs an operation. But my Daddy can't pay for it, so I want to use my money.”

“How much do you have?” asked the man from Chicago. “One dollar and eleven cents,” she answered barely audibly. “And it's all the money I have, but I can get some more if I need to.” “Well, what a coincidence,” smiled the man. “A dollar and eleven cents is the exact price of miracles for little brothers.” He took her money in one hand and with the other hand he grasped her mitten and said “Take me to see your brother and to meet your parents. Let's see if I have the miracle you need.” You see, the brother from Chicago was Dr. Carlton Armstrong, eminent neurosurgeon at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, ranked first in north central US. The operation was completed for \$1.11, and it wasn't long until Andrew was home and doing well. Mom and Dad were happily talking about the chain of events that had led them to this place.

The parents asked Dr. Armstrong what the surgery would have cost if they had been able to pay, and his reply was that it was paid for with the finest currency possible: the faith of a child.

4. It is said that: "Faith sees the invisible, believes the implausible, and accepts the incredible. Then, faith does without the indispensable, bears with the intolerable, and does the impossible." (a paraphrase of Martin Luther)
- C. Faith is precious, especially when we share it in fellowship
 1. 2Peter 1:1; Rom. 1:11-12
 2. Faith is spoken of more than 300 times in the New Testament.
- D. But how is our faith when we are alone?
 1. Who longs for stronger faith most of all? The one whose faith already appears strong.

I. FAITH IS CENTRAL

- A. To pleasing God - Heb. 11:6
- B. To living - Hab. 2:4; Heb. 10:38-39
- C. To walking in the Way - 2Cor. 5:7
- D. To prayer - James 1:5-6
- E. To forgiveness - Luke 17:3-6
- F. To hope - Heb. 11:1

II. FAITH IS CHANGEABLE

- A. Various forms our faith may take over the course of a lifetime of growing it
 1. Weak - Rom. 4:19
 2. Little - Matt. 6:30 (clothing), 8:26 (in the storm), 14:31 (Peter & waves)
 - a. It is possible to have weak, little faith and still be saved
 3. Strong - Rom. 4:20
 4. Great - Matt. 8:10
 - a. It is possible to have strong, great faith and still be lost
- B. What can happen to faith over time?
 1. It can fail - Luke 22:32
 2. It can be denied - 1Tim. 5:8
 3. It can be abandoned - 1Tim. 4:1
 4. It can crash - 1Tim. 1:19
 5. It can stray - 1Tim. 6:10, 21
 6. It can be overthrown - 2Tim. 2:18
 7. It can be cast off - 1Tim. 5:11-12
 8. It can become unbelief - Heb. 3:12
- C. What else can happen?
 1. It can grow - 1Thes. 1:3
 2. It can increase - Luke 17:5
 3. It can grow strong - 2Thes. 1:3

III. FAITH NEEDS CONSTANT CARE

- A. If it is taken for granted, it will leave without our noticing its departure
 1. If we ignore the warnings about losing it, we ensure that it will go away
 2. If we assume it will stay same, we will be oblivious to its change

B. How to care for your faith

1. Edify it - Col. 1:9-11
2. Enhance it - 2Peter 1:5
3. Exercise it - Luke 17:5-6
4. Examine it - 2Cor. 13:5
 - a. Do you believe what you have always believed?
 - b. Do you feel that your faith is stronger now?
 - c. Do you tolerate things more than in the past?
 - d. Are you as troubled by sin as you used to be?
 - e. Do you enjoy Bible study more or less?
 - f. Are some works harder or easier now?
 - g. Have your tastes and interests changed?

Conclusion:

A. Mark 9:23-24

B. May we, regardless of our current level of maturity and faith, with sincere humility say to the Lord, "Lord I believe; help my unbelief."