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Life of faith Hebrews 11 and 12

God's Word Gives Truth for Faith

In Life or Death

Faith chapter. You know what faith does for us? Faith opens the future to us. And I want you to know, and the Word of God substantiates this, faith establishes the past for us. It opens the future for us. It establishes the past for us. But before that can happen, there has to be one thing in place in our life. One thing operating in our life. We can only have confidence in the future and confidence in the past if we trust, if we trust the Word of God as truth. If we trust the Word of God as truth. That's the foundation. We can only do that if we believe that God has overseen the writing of this book, he's overseen the writing of it, and protected it from error. If that isn't so, then you can't have faith in what it says. Do you have this book as the established basis for truth for yourself?

Now to help us believe that the Bible is inerrant, that means without error. God has done many things. First, I'd say he's allowed the mention in it of a multitude of geographic, we could say, place names and natural formations, and of peoples and nations and historic events. He's allowed that to be salted throughout the Word of God so that we can go there and test whether these things be so. Now those who don't believe that the Bible is the Word of God say this, "Well we can't find any mention of many of the peoples and the places and events that the Bible speaks about. We can't find them in the writings that we have searched, you know, that we found from ancient civilizations. A lot of things the Bible talks about we just don't find in all the things we've discovered from the ancient peoples."

Well, what they are unwilling to admit is that as ancient records have been found and translated eventually, I remember in the 60s there was a great debate about the Ugaritic tablets, the clay tablets found at Ugarit. And of course it was an unknown language. There was nobody of course speaking Ugaritic, you know, at that time and nobody even knew it existed. So here it was, one of those languages that in fact had history, had covered up. And then they found those hundreds and hundreds of clay tablets at Ugarit and the question was, "What do they say?" And I happened to at that time be studying with one man who was one of these fellows that took up such a challenge, far be it from me to dare get into trying to decipher the language of Ugarit. But I come to find out this fellow actually knew 27 different languages, modern and ancient, and he made it his business to learn Ugarit, or Ugaritic, I'm sorry, the language of Ugarit. And

before long there he was publishing the writings of the clay tablets of Ugarit.¹ And you know as they went through those clay tablets, they found some mention of things that they had never found anywhere else that corroborated things in the Bible. You see, as ancient writings are discovered, we do find in them corroborations of things in the Word of God. What we don't find in them are contradictions. The record in the Word of God is true. And so these that say, "Well, we haven't found some things that are in the Bible, we haven't found those yet," doesn't mean that they weren't there, it doesn't mean that they're not true, they just haven't found them yet, the evidences of them.

You see, the ancient records always confirm that the Bible is true. Now to help us believe in the inerrancy of the Bible, God has seen to it that when the Bible was written, **over 60%** of it was prophetic at that time. It's an amazing statement. That much of the Bible was actually prophecy when it was written? Yes, it's prophecy. Why would God do that? He wanted us to have confidence in it, that as time went along and these things that he spoke of as futuristic, as they came to pass, that we would have greater and greater and greater confidence in the written Word of God. And so it has come about. You see, he spoke of things that had not happened yet, so that as they happened, I say, they proved to everyone that the only one who knows the future is the source for everything written in the Bible. That's God. He's the source.

Now the greatest proof of the truthfulness of the Word of God came when God the Son stepped from eternity and became a man by being born of a virgin woman. He lived a sinless life. He grew to manhood. He fulfilled over 300 prophecies in three years of his ministry. And I use that number because it is the absolute most conservative number you could use. It would be commonly said three to five hundred prophecies that he fulfilled. But listen, there's no question about three hundred. I personally believe there were closer to five hundred prophecies that he fulfilled in his life and ministry and his death and burial and resurrection.

He offered himself as king to the nation of Israel. They rejected him. He died a sacrificial death on the cross and he rose from the grave the third day after his death. He showed himself alive for 40 days among believers that they might be encouraged, they might be bold because they knew these things to be true, that he was in fact alive, and then he ascended to heaven.

¹ <https://www.logos.com/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U96CEleWIKk&t=369s>

Since these tablets were discovered in the 20's and 30's, we now have people who can translate the tablets and know the language. These two websites can give you an introduction to the tablets.

And then God went beyond that. He gave us a great body of writings that instruct those that have believed in Jesus on how, well those who believe in him as a savior and their Lord, on how to live their lives to please him. And believers can go to every statement about how to live a life of love and joy and peace and test it to see if it's true. And then they can tell whether there is an inner testimony from the Holy Spirit to what sin is and to what righteousness is and to what truth is and to what error is. They have the test by the sensitivity to the Holy Spirit within them as to whether these things be so.

Heb. 11

1'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3By 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."

Go with me back here to Hebrews chapter 11 at verse 1. I want to read it again here for you. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The substance of things hoped for. You see, what faith does, it makes things that are really futuristic, things of the future. Faith makes those things, those things that have been promised by God, those things that have been declared by God, it makes those as things we can see, as things we can trust as true by faith. Just as real as the things we can see and touch with our hands, faith makes the things of the future that real. That's the future. But faith does more than that. Faith is also the evidence of things not seen. That means the evidence of the things of the past that have happened outside our experience.

So that's what verse 2 says. "For by it the elders obtained a good testimony." That's a record, that's one little statement about all the people in the Old Testament that came to God by the one means that God required of mankind, that he might be pleased with them, and that was the way of faith. That's how they received a good report. It's the one thing that God looked for in the lives of mankind since the creation. Did they have faith in him? Did they trust him with a believing faith?

And then verse 3 says this, "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." Weren't manufactured, they were created. So that's where faith does what that second phrase is. It makes, it gives us evidence of things not seen. Faith becomes our evidence, enough evidence for us, of things that we weren't there to see happen. That's the past. You weren't there to see the worlds created. No man was. And God makes it clear that in fact we weren't,

mankind wasn't even created until the last day of his creative work, the sixth day. But by faith we know that all the events from the beginning of the creation, when light was first created and then from light all other things, that they are so.

Man's Substitute - Science & History with God

Now man has substituted something for the Bible. Man doesn't have the Bible as his foundation for what truth is, for how to know the things of the future or the things of the past. The man has substituted something else. And what has man substituted for the written Word of God? Man has substituted the written words of men. Yeah, we call it written history. Man has substituted the written words of men as the foundation for what truly has happened in the past. Then, oh, but they add something to that.

There's a second thing that man has added as their foundation. And that is the conjectures of men based on their observation and their reasoning. Conjectures of men based on their observations and reasoning. They give it a name. It's called science.² Okay, science. Number one, we have the written records of men and we have science. And those things have been placed as the foundation for what is truth. That's man's substitution for the Word of God.

Now, actually, a lot that the records of mankind give us in their writings are true. And a lot of the conjectures and reasonings of mankind in science disclose truth for us. I didn't say all. The problem, of course, is that man, having substituted these things for truth, for faith, as a way to teach what truth is, man has come up with this as an answer. This is what he has substituted for a way to replace faith. What is it? Education. See, he wants to educate children and adults in what man says is truth. They want to educate what man says happened in the past. And they want to educate us of what man says about how the universe and every living creature in it came about. And they want to educate us about what our purpose is in being here, alive. And they want to educate us about how to be happy. But there's one big problem about all of this. This wonderful education that mankind has put in the place of faith and the Word of God.

² Reeves, as believers, we are not opposed to operational science. Often it is very helpful and informative. We can learn about biology, geology, botany, and many different branches of science. I love astronomy, but what we are talking about is men centered, thinking that does not include God or his word.

For example, how many of us have gone to the doctor or some medical expert and that is helped us. But there is also the scientific mind that is opposed to God.

I love history, geography, maps, archaeological sites, period but there is a spin history, that can be man centered, and even opposed to any history in the past. But I love studying different periods of time, recognizing people just like ourselves we're living, struggling and enjoying like the best way they can.

Oh, not that it's all untrue. No, not that it's all untrue. But the problem is, there is not agreement among men on any of these things. Men do not agree about how things came about. They don't agree about what our purpose in life should be. They don't agree about how to really be happy. They don't agree about any of those things. And yet they would tell you, "Don't listen to anybody else except us. Don't dare to suggest that there is a source of truth outside of our thinking. Don't dare to suggest that there is a God and a book inerrantly written. Don't dare to suggest that. And don't pollute our system with such thoughts."

You see, when we come back to God's Word, God's Word is without contradiction. All of its prophecies have been fulfilled in just one way. Those that have been fulfilled have been fulfilled only in one way. It's very important for you to understand this. Many, many hundreds of prophecies have been fulfilled, but they've only been fulfilled one way. And that is literally, just as God said to the jot and to the tittle, just as God said to the last word and verb tense. They have been fulfilled as God said they would. Not figuratively, not in allegory, not theoretically, but literally. That's how God fulfills prophecy. And there's only one, one Savior, this book claims, Jesus Christ. There's only one way to salvation, and that's faith in him as the dying Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world in him and him alone as God's offering for mankind. There's only one source for inerrant truth, the Scriptures, the Word of God. There is no other source.

Heb. 12:5-11

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.”

7If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

You see, Scriptures are very clear. God loves you. And he has a discipline for you at times. And I hear in the book of Hebrews, I want to just take you to chapter 12 at verse 5. It says, "And you've forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as sons." Here it is. "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you're rebuked by him. For whom the Lord loves, he chastens and scourges every son whom he receives." This is really a statement of God's love. Has God chastened you? Has he even at times scourged you? Why does he do that? Because he loves you. Because he loves you. You say, "That doesn't make sense to me."

Verse 10 says this, "For indeed," speaking of our human parents, he says, "For indeed, for a few days they chastened us as seemed best to them." I know we all think we can criticize our parents for the methods they use sometimes or even the purposes they had in mind. And you have to remember, they're not perfect. And if your parents aren't with you anymore, I can say it in the past tense. They were not perfect. They did what they did as seemed best to them. Now that isn't a statement that it was best. It might have in fact have been bad for you. It might have really been injurious to you. But mankind is very self-centered and their reasons were all attuned to their values and to their thinking and to what served them.

Parent's Standard - *Do the best they can*

I have to tell you, and if I have never told you this before, I think I have. And you may not remember it though. That's what I usually say. You know, somebody says, "You know, you did this or that or you said this or that." And I think, "I haven't. I didn't say that or I didn't do that." My answer is, "Well, I don't remember that." You know, I just, and the truth is, I don't. You know, I don't remember that. And so I've learned that sometimes we can say, "Well, no, I didn't say that and no, I didn't do that." But the safer answer is, "No, I don't remember." Because you may have.

Now I only learned that in the last 20-30 years because earlier in life I thought the answer was, "No, I didn't. No, I didn't say it. No, I didn't do it." Because I have a memory. But you know, in these last several years I've learned, you know, truth is, I may believe that I didn't say it. I may believe that I didn't do it. But the truth is, I may not remember. Right?

Well, our parents, when they dealt with us, they dealt with us as seemed best to them. Now I know that some people put in there, "As seemed best to them for our good." Well, I hope, I truly hope, in your case, that was so. Because you were blessed if your parents did it for your good. But whether you realize it or not, all people are not that way. All people do not do what they do for the

good of somebody else, even if that somebody else is their own child. But they all do it according to what the scripture says, "As seemed best for them." As best to them. What standard could they have been using? "As seemed best to them to serve their purpose." Now that applies to every person on earth. "As seemed best to them for your good" may apply to maybe most of them, but not all of them. Because I've had to deal with a lot of people who have scars in their lives because of the mistreatment, the mishandling that they received from their own parents.

And I have to go, and I was about to tell you this, so I'm going to go complete it and tell you, that I was subject to that. Because there came a place in my life, came a time in my life, when I have to tell you I truly hated my father. I hated my father. And as far as I was concerned, I had every reason to hate my father. Because I could call to mind, truth now, things that he did to me that I could see no justification for. Times when he beat me and left welts on my back and my legs beyond anything that should ever have been done. Sometimes with a six-foot extension cord, sometimes with a, what we used to call a switch, a very limber end of a branch, you know, preferably from some tree like a willow tree or some green flexible tree.

And I'll bring my grandfather into this, sometimes by what you may never have seen, but it was called a razor strap. Believe me, you don't want to be hit by a razor strap. It's too tough, it's too big, it's not going to break, and it snaps and hurts. But it's wide enough to distribute the pain over a larger area than a switch or a coiled up, or not coiled up, but folded up extension cord. But it still hurts. Besides the slaps, the spankings. And here's the truth about that, I have to tell you. I mean, I can only say this because I know the Lord Jesus is my Savior, and I have to tell the truth, and the honest truth is I deserved it. Yeah, I deserved all that stuff.

I have to tell you, my father never really whipped me, except he had a good cause. I don't say I deserve what he did to me, but I did give him cause. Now in his mind, he, in my opinion, he went too far in his correction, but I did give him cause. But he did it as seemed best to him. Here's the thing, it took my surrender to the Spirit of God, my own brokenness to him, to get things in perspective, and to realize that it was far more important in the eyes of God that my father received Christ than that he have my lifelong hatred, that he have my bitterness, that he have my desire for vengeance, my hatred. And that God was calling on me to love my father. And so one day I made the decision that I would love him, not because I thought he deserved to be loved, not because of what

he did to me, brought my love from my heart, because I really had covered up all the good things he had done for me.

I couldn't even see them because I was so focused on all the bad things that he had done. But I promised God I would love him, and I would love him until I died. I tell you this, I learned to love my father. I learned to love him and to mean it from the depths of my heart. And I decided to tell him that every time I was with him, and I would tell him that at least once a week. I would say, "Dad, I love you." Now of course when I first started saying it he was just absolutely dumbfounded. He obviously, he could see my hatred. And then suddenly I'm telling him I loved him. Not that he trusted it necessarily at first, but I know it shocked him. I know that he waited over and over and over again. But I kept it up. And he started weighing my whole attitude toward him, my actions toward him. He started weighing everything I was doing with my life. He started weighing my words about my faith in Christ.

And after five years, five years, one day when I said to him, "Dad, I love you." He said to me, "I know you do." That's all he said, "I know you do." From that point on, for the next, oh my, 45 years maybe, I got the chance to live out that love. And occasionally to say to him, "Dad, you know you need the Savior." And you would think that it was an easy thing, that it came quickly, but you'd be wrong. It wasn't until maybe 45 years later, 40 some years later, I don't know, when he gave me evidence that he had read the things that I'd given him about the salvation of Christ, and that he had trusted Christ.

You see, God has only one reason for chastening us. He only has one reason. Whom the Lord loves he chastens. And verse 10, we know we've had our parents that have chastened us as they seem best, but he, God, chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. It's for our profit, that's why God does it. God never allows any chastening to come into your life except because it's for good for you. See, for whom the Lord loves he chastens.

Verse 6, for your profit, for your good, not because it seems best to him, for him. That's our human parents. That, you see, replacing, like I said earlier about mankind, replacing the Word of God with something, replacing the Word of God with man's thoughts, man's philosophies, man's ideas, man's conjectures. Our parents replaced what's best for us with what seemed best to them. It's a man-centered standard and it's not based on love, perfect love. Only God can do that.

So we come to the Word of God for truth, and truth is this, God does love you. Yes, he does chasten you, but like I said of myself, when I really was honest, I deserved it. I made it happen. I was, I gave reason for it. I gave cause

for it. My father was a human being and he went beyond what he should have maybe many times, but God does not.

When God chastens you, it is perfect. He never goes beyond what is best for you. He never allows even trials to come into your life, but beyond what you're able to bear. He's very careful with you. Everything that he allows in your life is for that purpose of being best for you, being for your good. And I mean even to the place of horrible diseases.

In death God brings us home

In sleep or in pain

We heard of Dolores' sister who's died recently, and she used to write about her often in those monthly little letters for us to pray for her sister who was getting more and more ill from her cancer, and finally she died. And you know, you say, "Well, my prayers weren't answered." Perhaps they were. Perhaps they were if we truly were seeking what God said was best for her sister. And we left it in God's hands. And if in his will it was good that she passed away last September, then I just leave it with him. I leave Brother Chuck Amel with him. His cancer in his bones now, and the pain that he's going through, I say, "What a precious brother this is." Now he was with us at our praise dinner, and Brother Dave was there, and we had a wonderful evening together, and now there he is suffering.

How could such a precious brother be allowed to suffer? Could it be the will of God for him? Listen, as David said earlier, we all have to die if Christ doesn't come before we die. We all are moving toward death. Now, how are you going to die? I don't know. You'd like to choose the way, perhaps, and I don't mean by suicide. I mean, if you had a list of ways, would you like to die quietly in your sleep, or would you like to die after two years of excruciating pain from cancer? Well, I know what I would choose. I mean, there may be somebody here who said, "Oh, I'm for the pain." Of course, I want to read this verse to you. "All men are liars." You know, we would choose the way that seems more comfortable, but God has a way for you.

He has a way for you to get old. Some of you are going to get old with arthritis. Some of you are going to get old with something else. Some of you are going to get old with back aches, corns on your feet, your teeth are going to run out of your face, your knees are going to get weak, you're going to have pain, and you know, and it's going to get worse and worse and worse and worse, and you're going to buy pills, and it won't do any good, and you, you know, and one day we have a funeral for you, and we say, "Praise the Lord, they're with the Lord," and we go on, and we wait for the next one to croak. But the Lord loves

you, and he lets these things happen because in his will he says, "It's best for those who trust in me to let me work my will in them." His word is truth. He is truth.

Our faith in him as our Savior is all that God provides, but it's everything. Mankind can't add to it. Mankind can't give us a better understanding of truth, assure us of a greater happiness. I love him. I thank God for him, and I thank God for the parents he gave me. I thank God for the witness that he brought to me about my Savior. I thank God for the trials he's allowed, and I can tell you I thank God for the death he's going to bring someday. When and how, I don't know, and I thank God for all that he gives me because he loves me.

Father, thank you for such love, such love in our Savior that brought him here to die, such love that you would give us your word, the Bible, to instruct us, to aid us, such love that you would give us the Holy Spirit to live within us, be our guide, our teacher, our corrector, to be our strength, to make you know. Thank you for all that you have planned for us, all that is ours because of your great love. Thank you, Lord Jesus, in your precious name, Amen.