

## THE FOUR PILLARS OF FAITH

### Hebrews 11:1-13

**1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

**2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.**

**3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.**

**4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.**

**5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.**

**6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**

**7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.**

**8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.**

**9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:**

**10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.**

**11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.**

**12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.**

**13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.**

Today I want to address an issue that is at the very heart of the Christian church - this is the matter of faith. The text for the message is Hebrews 11:1-13.

READ HEBREWS 11:1-13

**The central theme of the Bible has always been faith**, but this knowledge was lost for about 1500 years, as works became the most important aspect of worship. Then about 400 years ago Martin Luther discovered this truth anew and it changed the direction of the church completely and brought about a new understanding of who God is and what He is all about.

Keep in mind that the truth was hard to come by in those days. The church was completely controlled by the government and the common people didn't have access to the Bible. In fact, Martin Luther didn't have ready access to the Bible himself, for Bibles were scarce, and those, which were available, were physically chained to the lecterns in the churches. Martin Luther had to stand in the pulpit hour after hour to study and learn about the truths of the Bible.

It was perhaps one of the days when he had been standing for hours and was very tired as he was reading from the book of Romans. Realizing the abuses of the church, feeling alone and not able to do anything about it, perhaps wondering why God was letting these kinds of things continue, he came across some words in the third chapter that struck to the very core of his existence.

These words became the heart of the reformation and have echoed across the centuries to become the battle cry of all true believers in Jesus Christ. Five simple words, **MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH.**

It became perfectly clear to Martin Luther that it is faith that **makes the difference between the saved and the unsaved.** It is faith that **separates the believer from the unbeliever. It is faith and only faith that opens the doors to God's kingdom.**

How well one understands this and attempts to strengthen his/her own faith will directly affect one's relationship with God in this earthly journey. It is with this thought in mind that I would like to address the issue of faith in our personal lives, and perhaps more importantly, how we serve Him.

What is this thing called faith? Some would call it **make believe.** Others would perhaps call it **imagination.** But the Christian understands what it is and what it is all about. **It is the key that opens the door to God's kingdom** and is about **God's relationship to mankind,**

Faith to the Christian is like mortar is the brick mason. Just as the cement holds the bricks together, our faith securely holds our position in who God is and what He is about.

Faith then has to be the starting point for the Christian journey here on earth and it promises a continuance of that journey in the hereafter. Just think for a moment, that **without faith there could be no God, without faith there could be no Jesus Christ, without faith there could be no Holy Spirit, and without faith there could be hope.** With all this at stake, then faith has to be the most important issue in the life of every Christian.

I like to think of faith being kind of a platform that supports our Christian life. It is suspended, or held up by four pillars, and these pillars must be all of equal length and

strength to keep our platform of faith on an even keel, level and ready to respond in any area of challenge the secular world may impose upon us.

I see these four pillars as **THE WORD, PRAYER, WORSHIP and WITNESSING**. Our spiritual life is kind of like a ball on this platform of faith, when challenged, it will roll the shortest or weakest pillar instead of the tallest or strongest.

Let me illustrate. Imagine with me, if you will, that there is a ball on this table. This is illustrative of the life of the believer. The top being the platform of one's faith. The legs illustrates the four pillars of faith, **THE WORD, PRAYER, WORSHIP, and WITNESSING**, and if one leg is shorter than the others, the ball will roll towards that side.

One's spiritual life is like this also. When challenged, it always gravitates towards the weakest point in one's faith. Just as the condition of the legs determines the table's stability, the condition of the pillars determines the stability of our faith. It is these four pillars I want to discuss for their strength individually will determine how strong the church is collectively.

## **THE WORD OF GOD**

**The Word of God is the first pillar.** This comes to us through the **Bible** and **personal revelation**, but the two can't be separated. Often times by studying the Bible we get revelation, and sometimes we have revelation we confirm by the Bible. However we may receive revelation, it must be confirmed by God's Word or it is not from God but some other source.

**This book - the Bible - is the Word of God** and through it He speaks to mankind. It is like spiritual food. The only way we can grow as Christians is to partake of God's truths as revealed in the Bible.

I know that today in our modern society there are those who would have us believe that the Bible is just another book. But, whether one accepts or rejects it God's Word is a faith issue. For without faith the Bible has no significant meaning.

**Scientifically, there is no way to prove that Bible is the Word of God**, even though its history is verifiable. Take for example, the story of Noah. We can't prove that Noah existed as a person, even though there is evidence of a universal flood. We have to accept by faith that he existed, because God's Word says he did, and every time we see a rainbow in the sky we are reminded of the significance of God's promise not to destroy the world with water again. It is only through faith that the stories of the Bible can take on the true meaning of reality, and consequently make all of its characters come to life.

**The Word of God ... a faith issues It has always been so.** The patriarchs of old accepted God by faith. It was a distortion of this truth that created the rigid rules of the

Jewish law. It was because of this distortion that Jesus Christ came into the world to clarify the real issue. He often quoted such things as “**Your faith has made you whole.**” But yet He never separated the wholeness of faith from God’s Words, for it was faith in what God had promised through His Word that was always at the center of Jesus’ every action. This is especially evident in the temptation that is presented in Matthew, Chapter 4. Each time Jesus was confronted, He said “**it is written**” and quoted scripture to refute Satan’s attempted deception. It is so with us today, for we have no other source available to let us know the will of God. But we must know all the truths of the Bible, for distortions and half-truths will certainly shorten the pillar of the Word that supports our platform of faith.

## PRAYER

**Prayer is the second pillar.** It is the way we talk to God and undergird our faith. If a person does not have an active prayer life, his spiritual life will be lopsided. Again, one of the legs of the table will be shorter and one’s spiritual ball will roll to that corner.

There are several elements in the Pillar of Prayer, and all of them can be found in the Lord’s Prayer. Let’s look at these briefly.

We’re to pray to God.

We’re to recognize who He is.

We’re to pray for God’s kingdom.

We’re to pray for His will, not our own.

We’re to ask only for our daily needs.

We’re to ask for forgiveness only to the extent that we’re willing to forgive others.

We’re to ask God to keep us from temptation and deliver us from the evil one.

And finally, we’re to recognize His qualities as the father of all creation — the timeless one.

Why is prayer so important in having a balanced spiritual life? **It keeps us in touch with God.** It’s kind of like associating with people. Those you’ve met today are clear in your mind. You see me here in the pulpit. This is real. If you were never to see me again, perhaps a week from now some of you would recall that I’ve been here, but a year from now very few would. Ten years from now probably not one of you would know who Carl Graham is.

Dealing with God is like that. The more we associate with Him, the more real He is in our lives. If we visit with Him daily, He really becomes part of the family. If we make Him

the head of the household, He becomes the father of all we are or ever hope to be. We, like obedient children, will take our every concern to Him. We'll call on Him for our every decision.

Did you pray, and ask God's guidance, before you made that decision that affected your life and family - when you changed jobs, or perhaps bought a house? If you did and listened to His answer, you made the right decision. But if you didn't, as a Christian, you can never be sure.

When was the last time you really talked to God? I'm not referring to the congregational prayer we have here at the church. I'm talking about getting alone with God and pouring your heart out to Him. This is how to keep the spiritual self on target. This is how to build a strong pillar to help support your platform of faith. The more you talk to God, the more real He becomes in your life, and the stronger you become as a Christian.

## **WORSHIP**

**And then there is the third pillar of faith called Worship.** This is kind of a spiritual rest, both collectively and individually. We came to church today to worship God. When we really and truly experience worship, we go to our homes refreshed. But sometimes we go away without peace in our hearts. There seems to be turmoil. We can truthfully say that in those times that collective worship didn't really take place and our faith is perhaps a little weaker.

We then realize that this realm of fellowship is extremely important in supporting our faith. We have to undergird each other both spiritual and materially, for when we come together to worship collectively, we draw on each other's strengths. The present of the Holy Spirit becomes greater than the totality of our being. We become greater than ourselves. **Synergism** is the term that describes this phenomenon - the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. When this happens, the church really makes an impact on the people, both inside and outside the church. This is the importance of true collective worship

I once had a lady tell me that she didn't feel God's presence where she went to church. She said that folks there were mean, backbiters and gossipers. I asked her if she left home feeling that way. She said she did. I then told her that you can't go to church to find God, you have to take Him with you. When all that come to church to worship realize this, then collectively, God will be there to bless all that come.

So you see, collective worship is strongly dependent upon individual worship, and this not only ties back into one's prayer life, it expresses itself in one's moral life as well, for only a worshipful attitude will make Christianity attractive to the secular world.

When I address the subject of Christianity and the secular world, I'm not talking about a pious attitude towards others. What I'm really talking about is the servant attitude that Jesus Christ portrayed - riot such things as honesty, that is expected of a Christian, but

such things as the Golden Rule. **“Doing unto others as you would have then do unto you.”** Putting yourself in their place and situation ... trying to realize the circumstances in their lives that causes them to be where they are and meeting them exactly at that point in life. This is what Jesus did with **Zacheus, the Woman at the Well, and the Woman caught in Adultery.** He expects us to do exactly the same thing.

## WITNESSING

**This attitude of Worship then leads right into the fourth pillar of faith called Witnessing,** because witnessing is the ultimate expression of one’s faith. How does one witness? Do we get a Bible and knock on doors? That is one way, and some people do that, but all are not called to do all things alike. The pillar of witnessing must be fortified with the exercise of our individual gifts according to our calling. Some are called to **preach** some to **teach** while others may be called to **various other tasks.** But, all Christians are called to live a Godly life in such a way that the world can see the light of Christ in them. For Jesus said, **“You are the light of the world.”** We must shine so the unsaved can see the light of Christ in our lives. He also said, **“You are the salt of the earth.”** It is the seasoning of Christian witnessing that makes the world a tolerable place to live in. Can you imagine if the whole world was atheistic, or if Islam was the only religion? A world without the moderation of Christian thought would be unbearable. Making it a better place to live is our job. We must plant the ideas of righteousness wherever we go. This is being the salt of the earth.

Perhaps some of you are thinking, **“you don’t expect me to witness. I can’t express myself very well.** I’m not articulate enough.” Moses tried that excuse and God gave him Aaron as a spokesman. The point is to do whatever God calls you to do. He’ll provide whatever you need to do the job.

Perhaps you’ve lived your whole life without ever winning a soul to Christ, and you feel you have let Jesus down. If you’re living the Christian life, you haven’t, for witnessing comes in many forms. Look at Timothy. His Grandmother, Lois, and mother Eunice were responsible for his being raised in the Christian faith. They were both witnesses to him. This should be a lesson to all of us. God wants us to start our witnessing at home. Our first responsibility is to raise our children for Christ. All parents are called to do this. This is the starting place, and we go on from there. Part of our problem is we don’t know how to measure success in this area. Don’t be concerned about it, for we may not know the results of our influence until we get to heaven. Abraham didn’t see Israel as a nation, but by faith he accepted God’s promise.

There is a strong point to make here. **All of us are called to witness with how we live our daily lives in this secular world.** If you are only a Christian when you are at church, then your testimony won’t be effective. But, if you’re a Christian 24 hours a day, all you come in contact with will be influenced. This is how to keep this fourth pillar of faith strong. Live the life of a Christian in all you say and all you do; then you will be truly witnessing for Christ.

The closing questions today are **“What is the condition of your faith?”** **“How level does it balance your spiritual life?”** Remember that each of the four pillars must be strong and of equal length to keep your spiritual life well balanced. You must start with faith and build from there. **First comes the WORD.** You accept it or reject it. If you accept it, **then comes PRAYER** as you lift up your voice to God through Jesus Christ. **Following this comes WORSHIP,** both individually and collectively, for it is impossible to grow as a Christian without acknowledging God for who He is. And, if you are truly born again, **you’ll find that you can’t live your life without WITNESSING.** For a true born again believer will always appear different than the rest of the world around him.

I urge you to strive to support your faith well. Keep all pillars strong and of equal length. Then your spiritual life will be well balanced and you’ll be exactly what God wants you to be.

[SERMONS INDEX](#)

[HOME](#)