

Faith as a Co-Foundation

Hebrews 6:1

Nutshell: Repentance turns us *from* all self-trust. Faith is its carry-on, turning all our trust *to* God. Faith is our connection to grace and justification on the one hand and to sanctifying grace on the other.

I. Context: The Hebrews' need to move on from foundational teachings.

II. Text

Heb 6:1 Because of this, having let go of the subject ["word"] of the initial *matter* about Christ, let us be borne on to full growth, not laying down again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

A. Paul wrote an inspired book to a Jewish audience; 2 Pet 3:15-16; 1 Pet 1:1; 2 Pet 3:1. Hebrews is the only possibility.

1. The "us" of Heb 2:3 only puts the author outside the original 12
2. Peter speaks of the Apostles in the 3rd person as well, 1 Pet 1:12

B. Outline of Hebrews

Authority: God has at last spoken In Son (*Ἰερέφητ*), ← follow this font
His express image, 1:1-3a

Theme: **The SON** purified us from sin (Priest), then sat in authority (**King**), **1:3b**

I. **Supreme over** the angels, Inheritor by ordeal, 1:4-14
Therefore hear Him, 2:1-4

II. **Supreme as** man, 2:5-9

Psalm 8- Since man must inherit, 2:5-8a
but man failed, 2:8b, Christ became man, 2:9a

Theme reprise: crowned with glory and honor (**King**), **2:9b**
to taste the death of "each one" of His own (**Priest**), **2:9c**
to bond with them and help them, 2:10-18

freeing them from bondage to Satan and fear, 2:14-15

Therefore, think hard on Him, 3:1

III. A better stewardship than Moses, 3:1-6

Therefore hear Him, unhardening our hearts, (*Ἰερωφῆτης*)

Ps 95- for Moses' folk didn't inherit God's rest, 3:7-19

IV. A better Rest than Joshua, 4:1-11

♦ Therefore, fear, 4:1a, lest we also miss God's rest

Ps 95- David told his people not to miss that rest, 4:1b-3

The Promised Land was a type of God's 7th day rest,
which itself was a type of Salvation, 4:4-8

Christ's Salvation has become the final *Sabbatismos*, 4:9,
the Son resting from the work of Salvation as the
Father had rested from the work of Creation, 4:10.

We must EXERT ourselves to enter Christ's Rest, 4:11

For the Word penetrates, exposing us before God, 4:12-13

Theme reprise: Having the highest high priest (Priest), the
Son of God (King),

Let us hold to our confession of Him (*Ἰερωφῆτης*), 4:14

especially since He felt all our temptations +, 4:15

V. A better priesthood than Aaron, 4:14-10:18

Kid-speak: What kind of person makes sacrifices to take away sins? A priest. Who is the only priest who can take our sins *all* the way away *forever*? Jesus!

VI. Exhortations based on Christ's supremacies, 10:19-13:21

VII. Concluding remarks, 13:22-25

C. "Let us approach" (Προσερχώμεθα) in 4:16 and 10:22

brackets the material between them

1. The material between = proofs of the superiority of Jesus' priesthood (the bulk of the book)

2. The "let us approach" outside the brackets say that the *point* of Jesus' priesthood is for us to approach God

3. Prayerlessness, then, is a dismissal of Jesus' priesthood

D. 5:1-10, OT priests from Aaron; Christ from Melchizedek

1. The Hebrews were too babyish to learn of *Μ* ☩, 5:11-14

2. They needed to move on from foundational teachings:

a. Firstly, repentance (mental transformation) from lifeless efforts: not trusting *my* doings, even deeds given by God, to save me, 6:1

- b. Connect this to
- c. Faith toward God
 - i. Which is the OPPOSITE of presenting myself to God based on my doings
 - ii. It is this faith toward God we move on to today

Outline:

- I. Faith in Its Essence
 - A. A fundamental element of Christianity
 - B. Two Defining Verses
 - 1. Heb 11:1, Faith is invisible but substantial
 - 2. Heb 11:6, Faith attaches to God's generous nature
 - C. A looking away from me: the crux of justification too
 - D. Not mere agreement; whole-hearted seeking
- II. Faith as the Carry-On from Repentance:
 - A. From the Father and the Son
 - B. Jesus' own message
 - C. Repentance wants to find its mate, faith
- III. Faith that Saves Us: Our Connection to Grace
 - A. Our connection to Christ's blood
 - B. Justifying faith always yields sanctifying faith: James & Paul
- IV. Faith is a Large Package of Benefits from God
 - A. Faith is a separator
 - B. Faith only comes from God and is His tool to see us to the end
- E. Heb 6:1
 - 1. Since we need to move on to maturity in Biblical faith and practice, 5:11-14,
 - 2. 6:1, let's get where we can say we're finished with the fundamentals, using them from now on as the platform to build the *rest* of our faith
 - a. Let's get where we're engrained enough with the Spirit's teachings where the Spirit can carry us along
 - b. Which He can't do if we're stuck in the fundamentals
 - 3. The fundamentals are these: first, the need for a complete mental *transformation* away *from* approaching God based on my own doings (= REPENTANCE)
 - 4. Secondly, what is needed to replace those dead works: **FAITH** toward God

Kid-speak: What do you call something you start with so you can add other things to it? A fundamental. What is the fundamental we're talking about? Faith.

F. "The" faith vs. "our" faith

1. "The" faith = the whole body of Christian teachings. We're not considering that aspect here.
2. "Our" faith = our belief *in* those teachings, in God, and in Christ. That is our subject.

G. Heb 6:1, "faith toward God"

1. It is Hebrews that has probably that two most helpful verses in defining faith
 - a. Heb 11:1, "Faith is *the* ground [Bishop's Bible]/support of what is being hoped, a conviction of unseen realities"
 - i. Part of the very essence of faith is its invisibility
 - ☑ ii. NOT making it a less trustworthy guide, 2 Cor 5:7. It is what we SEE that is corrupt and perishing! Faith is the offramp from what's off, Ps 115:4-8.
 - b. Heb 11:6, "Apart from faith, pleasing God is undoable, since it is necessary for the one coming to God to believe that He is/exists, and that He is the wage-giver to the one searching Him out."

Kid-speak: What is faith? It's believing in God, even though we can't see Him. But shouldn't we trust in things we *can* see? No, because we can *see* that nothing in the world is working!

2. As we said last time, *kai* is probably meant to make "repentance" and (*kai*) "faith" a pair
 - a. The repentance is *away from* trusting our own doings
 - ★ b. Faith is therefore the correction to self-trust: turning our trust *toward* God
 - c. There is a decided *outward movement* being delineated
 - * i. That is indeed the nature of saving faith
 - ii. I cannot truly trust God until I am trusting *away from* myself. This is at the core of the definition of justification, Rom 3:28: *Christ's* righteousness accounted to me.
 - d. The "searching God out" of Heb 11:6 includes searching out His justification and His sanctification

3. Feeling-based Christianity loses track of the core: failing to look away to Christ
 - a. God only works His *inner* wonders for those who are looking to the Christ advocating for them at God’s right hand, Col 3:1
 - b. Christ’s exaltation in my soul *becomes* my soul’s lifting
4. Heb 12:2, lit., “looking away to Jesus”
5. Paul counts this as a “foundation,” 6:1. He counts the pair as a fundamental.
 - a. If this redirection of salvation (away from my lifeless efforts) isn’t determined, a new order of priesthood (Melchizedek) is extraneous
 - b. The Temple was teaching the Hebrews that salvation was *outside* of man. How? A substitute was required.
- H. “Faith toward God” ≠ mere agreement that He exists, Jms 2:19
 1. Heb 11:6 adds the crucial 2nd component: belief that God is a wage-giver for those carefully searching him out, Ps 27:13
 - a. That is, those who seek half-heartedly should expect meager returns from God
 - b. Understanding God, Christ’s words, and the true Gospel means we will certainly seek Him with our all

Kid-speak: If we say we believe in Jesus, but we don’t do what He says, do we really believe in Him? No.

2. “Faith toward” God is a fundamental that never retires. It informs everything else we learn as Christians.
 - ☞ a. And it is always feeding its counterpoint: our refusal to trust *our* doings to save us
 - b. We rejoice in God working in us that which pleases Him, but we don’t identify that working as what saves us (though it is part of our salvation)
 - c. It is reassuring that my salvation is stored away safely outside my finite grasp

Concerning the Pair
- I. Our verse is one pair of Repentance + Faith. Pair #2: Paul assigned the pair to members of the Trinity in Acts 20:21
 1. The repentance is “unto” (*eis*) God and the faith is “into” (*eis*) our Lord Jesus Christ. Presumably “God” the Father or God as a whole: Father, Son, and Spirit.
 2. Very informative concerning the Trinity

- a. Our *repentance* is oriented toward God the Father
 - b. Our *faith* is more specifically oriented toward the One whom the Father sent, our brother and representative, the God-man, Messiah
3. Notice that it was Paul's universal message. Foundational.
- J. Pair #3: "Repent and believe the Good Message" was Jesus' startup (and presumably continuing) message, Mk 1:15
- 1. The pairing is truly a standard!
 - 2. "Believe and repent" might seem like the better order:
 - a. I.e., Believe God, *then* turn from all your ungodliness
 - b. But the first thing we're repenting of is unbelief. We have to believe God *because* we had disbelieved.
 - c. We are to put away everything connected to our unbelief; then, decluttered, train our trust like a laser on Christ
- K. Pair # 4: Acts 19:4, Paul explained to John's disciples who hadn't heard of Jesus that John had a baptism of repentance + believe on Christ when He came:
- 1. They had done the repenting. They were waiting. Now Christ had come.
 - 2. Repentance wants to find its mate, faith
- Faith
- L. "Faith toward God" is our lifeline *to* God, coming *from* God
- 1. We are saved "by grace through faith," Eph 2:8. Grace is how we are saved; faith is our connection to grace. "Access by faith into this grace in which we stand," Rom 5:2.

Kid-speak: GRACE means God giving us what we don't deserve. What does God give us that's like arms reaching out to take God's gift of **grace**? FAITH.

- ✧ 2. The *quantity* of faith doesn't get us saved, only the *quality*: it is whom/ what we trust, not how much (Mustard seed)
 - a. We look to Christ's perfect obedience (imputed to us)
 - b. We look to Christ taking our sin (imputed to Him)
- 3. Our *enjoyment* of grace, though, *does* depend on our degree of faith. The purer our belief, the better we see God's illimitable bounty of mercy.
 - a. Faith can increase, and we should seek its increase, Lk 17:5. Faith = do as God says, Lk 17:10.
 - b. Faith is very practical. We always act on our belief. (Maybe we don't really believe what we say we do.)

Kid-speak: Can our faith get bigger and better? Yes! Do you want it to?

- M. Faith very specifically connects us to Christ's blood, and hence, to our forgiveness, Rom 3:25; Acts 10:43
1. Faith sprinkles our *heart* with Christ's blood, Heb 10:22w/9:21,
 2. washing our *bodies* from sins of lip and hand

Kid-speak: Have you ever wondered how Jesus' blood can come wash away our sins, since He died a long time ago in a faraway place? Faith is what brings us to Christ's blood.

- N. Faith's yield includes profitable activity, 1 Thess 1:3 (Jms)
1. Carried out in patience, Isa 28:16
 2. Faith empowers/ enables us, Rom 4:20
- O. Paul and James agree on faith and works
1. James doesn't deal specifically with justifying faith. He assumes it and alludes to it as part of the "mercy" of the "law of freedom," 2:12-13.
 - a. James concentrates on the post-justification *proof* of justification, which is sanctification, seen in "work/deeds"
 - b. Jms 2:21 quotes Gen 15:6 of Abrahams *sanctifying* faith!
 2. Many put this at odds with Paul quoting Gen 15:6 of Abraham's *justifying* faith, Rom 4:3
 - a. But Paul then quotes Gen 15:6 as James does, of sanctifying faith! 4:22 w/ 21
 - b. So there is no contradiction between them. Paul just goes deeper into *justifying* faith.
- P. Faith can be presented as a stand-alone, Acts 16:31, because *it entails everything it connects us to*
1. Faith was officially established through Abraham as the means to God, Rom 4:16
 2. All who believe in God become Abraham's children

Kid-speak: Who is the person God tells us to look at so we can have faith like he did? Abraham.

- Q. Faith in Christ is a recognition of and differentiation from the surrounding (and our previous) darkness, Jn 12:46
1. Faith unlocks us from sin's domain, Gal 3:22
 2. Faith is my detour from perishing to living, Jn 3:15

R. Faith must be given by God, Eph 2:8

1. Unbelief will not simply come to its senses, any more than a spark of life could have animated non-living tissue, Jn 10:26
2. Faith is pioneered by Christ, Heb 12:2, who then brings faith to completion
 - a. Giving us faith as a shield of preservation, 1 Pet 1:5
 - b. Faith is essentially forward-looking, Heb 11:13

Kid-speak: What did God give us that we need to get us all the way to the end? Faith!

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”)

If faith eludes you, say with the dad in Mk 4:24, “Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief!”

V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong?**

How have I lost righteousness?

Have I taken faith for granted?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”):

How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?

I will count faith the precious treasure it is, thanking God.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How do I take this on the road?**

Let us rekindle our faith day by day. Mere embers turn to dead ash.

Wrap-up: Faith is co-foundational. It carries the baton handed to it by repentance (to pass it next to Sight). If our faith is weak or lackluster, surely we have fallen back into self-trust.

Fear can do that to us. But fear is still **pride**, choosing worry/ frustration/ griping over trust in God. *I* will fix me.

Faith has to sound stupid in some contexts: “God will just have to take care of that.” Not meaning I will do nothing, but meaning that I won’t carry the burden.

Faith looks to the Cross. Then, if God will give that much, what am I doing worrying about the piddly stuff?