

**Living by Faith  
Pastor Steven Gaines  
Hebrews 11:1-6  
June 8, 2014**

If you'll take your Bibles and turn with me to Hebrews 11. We're going to continue on reading right after those verses that we read earlier in the service. We're going to be looking at the first six verses of Hebrews 11, this great chapter that we have in the New Testament, that commends the faith of the Old Testament believers. Hebrews 11, starting in Verse 1:

***Hebrews 11:1-6 ~ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. 4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.***

Let's pray.

*Father, I come to You now, as we open the word of God, and consider its teaching, I pray that You would meet us by Your Holy Spirit to enable me to faithfully communicate the truth of Your word. And I pray for those who have gathered here today, that as they come with many thoughts in their heads, and minds, and situations in life, that You would so work to draw their attention, not to the speaker, but to the great truth that You are calling them to this morning. And so Father, we pray that Your Spirit would come among us, and we ask this in Christ's name, Amen.*

This morning, as we consider these first verses in this famous chapter of the Bible that discusses faith, I'd like to open with an illustration that may be familiar to some of you. On June 30, 1859, a tightrope-walker named Charles Blondin, became the first person to cross Niagara Falls on a tightrope, 1,100 feet across, and he was 160 feet over the falls. Not only did he walk across it as a tightrope-walker, but he did it multiple times. He did it on stilts, he did it halfway across with a little

stove that he cooked an omelet, amazingly, and then he ultimately did it with a wheelbarrow full of potatoes, he walked across. This is an event that is well-documented, photographed, newspaper articles, that this truly happened. An amazing, amazing feat for us to consider doing that. But after having gone across with the wheelbarrow full of that sack of potatoes, and of course you've got crowds on both sides that are watching what is going on, and they are amazed and they are, "Oohing," and they are "Ahhing," at what he is doing. But after crossing with this wheelbarrow with potatoes in it, he comes back and he says to the crowd, "Do you believe that I can carry a person across in this wheelbarrow?" And of course the crowds, who have just been amazed at his abilities say, "Oh, yes. We believe that you can do this. You are the greatest tightrope-walker in the world." And then of course the logical next step for him is to point to the crowd and say, "All right, well who is it out here that wants to get in the wheelbarrow?" Well, this illustration I think helps us this morning as we consider the aspect of faith that is being considered in Hebrews 11. That there are many times where we say that we believe something, but yet we don't have enough trust, or enough confidence in that thing that we supposedly state our faith, or theoretically have faith, but we are not willing to get in the wheelbarrow itself.

This morning, as we look at the first six verses of Hebrews 11, we're going to look at a life, the title of the message, 'Living by Faith', very simple, with three very simple points. Number one, the definition of faith, looking at Verse 1. The second point will be looking at examples of faith, in Verses 2-5. And then the third point is the necessity of faith in Verse 6. This morning as we contemplate together both the meaning and examples of faith given us here in this passage of Scripture, I want to call you to examine your life, and the specific station and situations that He has called you to—the challenges, the opportunities, the blessings, the trials, and the joys, and to ask the question, *Are you demonstrating an assurance of things hoped for and a conviction of things not seen?* Or this morning, or is it more appropriate to say that you are actually walking by sight, struggling to believe in the reality of God's work in your life, in His activity in the world today? So let's consider our first point, 'The Definition of Faith'.

### 1) The Definition of Faith:

Verse 1, we read a very simple statement, balanced:

***Hebrews 11:1 ~ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.***

The book of Hebrews is really one long sermon, if you were to read through it. And if you were to read through it in one sitting, you would find that there is an alternating series of warnings and exhortations. Many have looked at this book, and studied it, tried to understand what was the background? Who was the audience? And there are different ideas, but in general, many understand that it was written to a group of Jewish Christians who were struggling to persevere in the belief that Christ was supreme, the only way to come into a right relationship with God, and that they were tempted to fall back into their old ways of belief.

So when we read Chapter 10 earlier this morning, we saw a very strong warning that there is no other way but Christ. There is no going back, and you must persevere in your faith. So now as we consider this statement in Verse 1, we do it in that context. We are provided here a very simple definition of faith that has two parts, somewhat synonymous and balanced in the way that it is presented to us. We recognize that the aspect of Scripture, or part of Scripture we look at this morning does not cover everything the Bible has to say about faith. For instance, in some cases, such as Galatians 1:23, when the term '*faith*' is used, it is actually referring to our confession of faith. That is, what we believe. Perhaps the aspect of faith, or usage of faith most common to us, is that of the instrument of our justification. For instance, in Romans 3:22, where we read that the righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. That is, calling people to come to God, and to come to Christ, not by our works, but by faith.

Now in Hebrews 11, I think that although there are connections with these understandings, the writer in Hebrews 11 is trying to focus on something, a different aspect, and that is, to quote the commentator Simon Kistemaker:

*For the author, faith is adhering to the promises of God, depending on the word of God, and remaining faithful to the Son of God. It is the initial saving faith that has led us to right standing with God, that is now worked out afterwards, day after day, year after year, week after week, month after month, until the end of our lives. That aspect of faith that perseveres, of continuing not only once believing in Christ, but every day of our lives believing in Him and continuing to trust in the word of God, and what He has told us.*

So let's look at the terms here that are used in this definition. We first see that faith is in definition, the assurance of things hoped for. The idea here being that there is something that is certain, and so there is an object there that is certain, and therefore, you can have full assurance, or confidence, or conviction in the thing

that exists. The emphasis here is on the certainty of our belief and on hope. Now you can read through the rest of Hebrews 11, and you can find how this is worked out over and over again by examples from the past in the Old Testament. This idea of the certainty or assurance of things that are hoped for, for instance, can be seen in the life of Abraham as you read further in Hebrews 11, where you can see that he was given this tremendous promise back in Genesis 12, and of these great and marvelous things that were going to happen. That there was going to be a blessing, and that there was going to be a seed, descendants that were going to be there. That there was a land that was going to be inherited. But he never got to see the end of that. He never got to see the end of that, and lived as a stranger and an alien in the land.

You can see it as well when you look further into the life of Moses, and others that are there, that there was something that God had promised them, and given them assurance of, but when they had that promise, what they had was hope, not the fulfillment of that hope. Now hope is something for us, in our common usage of course, that is not often certain. This year, when I planted my garden, I put seeds in the ground and I watered them, and you know what? I hope that they will produce the vegetables that I planted. I hope that the bugs won't get them, and I hope that they will turn out how I wanted them to, but I don't have any absolute certainty that this will take place.

But biblical hope is quite different, and it is used commonly here in the book of Hebrews, in this context, that hope is something where we have a settled state of mind, that is fixed upon something that is absolutely certain, and that is what biblical hope is. Biblical hope is not just, "I'm really rooting for the fact that this is going to take place." We are not hoping that our team will win, we are absolutely assured that what God has said will come true, and that He is faithful, and that I can look forward in the future that no matter how impossible things seem, or contrary to what others are saying, or the message of the world system around me, that I can have settled hope in my mind, a condition and state of mind, that God is going to do what He has said He is going to do.

We also see here in this definition, that in a parallel fashion, that faith is the conviction of things not seen. In many ways, the term here for conviction is used in a parallel sense, almost exactly synonymous with assurance, but the object of this conviction points to the idea of that which is unseen, most likely, that which is in the future. Consider, for instance, in some of these examples of faith, further along in Hebrews 11, where it says, referring to Abraham and some of the others, that these all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen

them, it says, and greeted them from afar. Can you see that idea there? That you actually are having a conviction of something that you can't see. God has promised something out here, and you are actually having a settled conviction about that thing that you cannot see.

Consider what it is like being a kid riding in a car on a trip with your parents, and as you ride along you get hungry, and your parents give you this message, and they say, "I'm telling you, I promise you that I'm going to give you lunch when we get to the next town." Now the issue that you have as a kid is you're hungry, but you don't see the lunch. The lunch isn't there. What you have is the parents who have fed you over, and over, and over again, and you should, if you had the ability to just reason through it basically to see that they would provide you lunch. But the lunch isn't in the car, and so it is out there, and it is not seen. But if you had a settled conviction, "Okay, it's been said, and it is there," then you would be able to rest, and to be at peace with that.

So our life of faith of course begins by first coming to faith in Christ, believing that He is the Son of God, and that He died for us, and that He shed His blood as an atoning sacrifice, and that by believing in His name, that we may have eternal life. Today, if you have not come to Christ, then the rest of the message that I have to give you, and the examples I give you, will be interesting, but you cannot experience truly the life of faith and belief. God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life, He who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Today I would call you to turn from your sin, from your own path, and to turn to God, to believe on Him, and to follow Him, trusting in Him. For those of you who believe, the path that God has called you to may involve many things—encouragements, material prosperity, the fulfillment of many of your hopes and desires, but it also may involve many disappointments—conflicts from living in a fallen world, and rejection. It is easy for us to live by faith, or to think we are living by faith, when everything is going well. When the sky is blue, and the sun is shining, like this morning, and it is warm, where financially we are secure, and we have friends, and relationships, and things are going well in the family, and everything that we put our hand to seems to prosper and go well. In those times, we can think in our minds, "You know, it's great being a Christian. It is great walking with God." But when some of those things begin to be stripped away from us, and taken away from us, and so that our walk of faith now takes on a different tone, and a different feeling, we find out the genuineness and the depth of our beliefs, and our certainty, and our conviction in Him.

I ask you today, do you have a solid faith that is firmly rooted in the assurance of things hoped for? Do you have the conviction of things unseen? If all of these props that prop you up in this life, to bring you happiness, and sometimes joy, were stripped away and you were down to nothing, would you be able to look forward to that which is unseen? Would you be able to follow in the path of Abraham, who was actually looking beyond the land that God had promised, to the city whose designer and builder was God? To have that kind of faith looking forward to a heavenly reward, and not merely that which is on earth?

## 2) Examples of Faith:

Well having looked briefly at the definition of faith, let's now turn and look at some examples of faith in Verses 2-5. In Hebrews 11, there are 21 occurrences of this phrase '*by faith*', and they are intertwined with the lives of many different Old Testament saints. This morning we are going to look at three examples of faith, two of them involve people, one of them actually involves the creative act of God, and our perception of it. In Verse 2 we read:

***Hebrews 11:2-3 ~ For by it the people of old received their commendation. 3 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.***

The first example that is given here, and if you look at Hebrews 11 and study it, you'd find that these examples of faith are presented to us in a more or less sequential order from the book of Genesis at the first part of the book, at the first part of the chapter. That you have the creation, Genesis 1. Then you have Abel, Genesis 4. And then you have Enoch in Genesis 5. Then you have Noah in Genesis 6 and following. Then you have Abraham and so we are following along as it were, if you had the book of Genesis here, step by step, walking through some of these examples. But the first example is that by faith we understand the creation of the universe, that it comes from the word of God.

Throughout history there have been many arguments that have been developed for the existence of God. Some of the common ones are the cosmological argument. In brief summary, the idea that there is motion, things move, and are in motion, and so if you can reason back there must be an unmoved mover at some point that causes all this motion that exists. You have the ontological argument, reasoning from the contemplation of a being from whom there can be no greater being. Then the teleological argument, the argument from design. This last argument is one that

has come more into the forefront in past years, is the concept of intelligent design. It has become more and more popular, not only in Christian circles but outside in its consideration. But what is emphasized here in Hebrews 11 is that even though we can look at the creation of the world, and as Scripture tells us through that God is revealing Himself in general revelation to us. That even though we look at this general revelation, and we can learn something about God's character, His divine nature, and His power, that to really understand that the universe, the worlds that we live in, are created by the word of God, is something that is revealed to us by faith, not by reason. That is an act of faith to actually believe that the universe came into existence by the word of God.

Now I'm not trying to say that we have to think that Christianity is an irrational religion, that everything is a complete, blind leap of faith. That we have the word of God that has been given to us, and passed down to us, that reveals to us the creation account, and reveals to us His truth. So I'm not saying this is some irrational approach, but what I'm saying is we can't reason our way to God, and in the same way, we ultimately can't reason our way all the way to the point that the universe that we live in was created from the word of God. Psalm 33:6 says:

***Psalm 33:6 ~ By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.***

Well, let's consider the second example that is given here of faith, in Abel. Now, back in Genesis 4, we read of after the fall of man into sin with Adam and Eve in the Garden and the serpent, we come into Chapter 4, and we find the two brothers, Abel and Cain, and I'm going to read a few verses out of Genesis 4, starting in Verse 2:

***Genesis 4:2 ~ Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. 3 In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. 6 The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."***

And if we continued on, we would see that Abel is here the first martyr for the faith, and that even Christ when He is speaking and rebuking the Pharisees, He looks back and He talks about the righteous blood of Abel there. Here he is, Genesis 4, the very martyr, one who simply did what God wanted him to do, living a life pleasing to Him, and his reward was to suffer the murder from his brother.

Now, think about the context of Abel being called to trust God. In his family, his father and his mother had both fallen into sin even though they had been born into a world that was perfect, and even though they themselves did so in a state of sinlessness, and then to have a brother who was ultimately unfaithful, and finally murderous. But we see here in Hebrews 11 that Abel is brought to our attention as an example of faith because he is one commended, because it says here that he offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, and that he was commended as righteous, God accepting his gifts. In the study of Genesis 4, there is often a discussion of the reason that Abel's sacrifice was accepted and not Cain's. That being because he brought a blood sacrifice, while Cain's was not. The focus here in Hebrews 11 is not on that discussion and on that issue, but rather it is brought to us in the fact that Abel did it by faith and that it points to a heart motive in the actions that followed from him.

Now, the third example in these verses that's given to us is that of Enoch. We read in Genesis 5 a very brief account of the life of Enoch in the midst of a genealogy. In Genesis 5, starting in Verse 21, we read:

***Genesis 5:21 ~ When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. 22 Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years.***

And then here's the distinguishing verse of his life:

***Genesis 5:24 ~ Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.***

Now, we have a lot more information about Abel, and what happened with Abel and Cain, but we don't have a lot of information about what took place in the life of Enoch. But the information that's given to us in Genesis is quite startling actually, because number one, he was the only one in that list who was given the designation that he walked with God.

Now, what would that be like to be commended among all these other Old Testament saints, that you are a person who walked with God, as simple, and short, and small as that is? But not only that, the fact that he was given in Old Testament history something that only one other man that is listed, that of Elijah, of someone who lived on this earth and the Lord took with Him and he did not experience death, that that is the commendation that he received.

Now, in looking at these few examples this morning, one of the things that we can point out is the dramatic difference between the outcomes of faith. Now, think about Abel on the one hand, by faith in his context, the place that God called him to, he did what pleased the Lord, and what he got out of it was murder, to become the first martyr. Enoch, on the other hand, he walked with God, and the outcome of his faith was that he was one who was ultimately taken up to be with the Lord.

Now, sometimes we are tempted when we look at our own lives comparing ourselves to others, examining the lives of other Christians around us and in the past, and we tend to do a kind of outcome-based analysis, that is to look at say, "Well, look at this person. They pleased God, and walked by faith, and honored Christ, and look at all that they got," whether it was fame and wealth, or riches, or whether it was notoriety and success in the service of God, "But look at this other person. Their life was cut short early. What's the difference between the two?" The point I think we can take away from that aspect of these examples is what God has called us to is to be faithful, that we are to walk in a manner where we don't look at what is seen, but we look at what is unseen, and in doing so, we trust that He is going to bring the results that He wants to bring in our lives.

He's not calling us to examine the situation and say, "You know, this might be a case where I need to stand for Christ, but it looks like if I did this, it might have some really, really tough circumstances. You know, if I stood for Christ in my place of business, and on this ethical issue I stood up and actually said something about it, I might get out of favor with those who are in charge. I might lose my position. I might make a comment that sets me at odds with other people because of the way that they're speaking or the topic of conversation, or I won't participate in what they're doing, and it may cause me to be ostracized." But the Lord isn't calling us to live that kind of life. He's calling us to live the life that says, "Lord, what will please You? And I'm going to trust the results, because ultimately what I'm looking forward to is in the future, and it's that which is unseen, and that which I can't lay my hands on right at this moment."

So I would encourage you by the power of the Spirit to follow these examples and to trust that He may commend you and lead you to a great place of service and usefulness, and other people may behold you and look at you, or He might lead you to a place where your influence is diminished, where you might have to suffer some manner of being ostracized or some other aspect. Who knows what that may be? But we can't walk by sight. Walking by sight will lead us to compromise. We must follow these examples and walk by faith.

Apart from dramatic situations, we are called to live by faith in every aspect of our life. Consider what it is to preach or speak the Gospel message to someone and how God calls us to live by faith in that. We've been told in Scripture that the natural man cannot receive the things of God, and so what we're being called to do is to speak words of truth to people who in their own understanding and their own being apart from God's enablement cannot understand them, and we have to trust that God works through that, that that is the means, the preaching of the word of God, and that faith comes by hearing. Consider exercising faith in our lives when we pray.

What is it like to actually bow your head and to pray in a place, in a room at your home, in a church, to a God who you can't see with your eyes, and to know that there are other people in this world that really mock us, because they see us as being those who use our religion as a crutch to help us, and as it were, some kind of drug to help get us along in this life? As well we must exercise faith in our personal lives, choosing not to act in a strictly rational sense where we examine all of the factors before us and in front of us, but to always be considering that which is unseen, to always be considering our actions today in light of the eternal future and the eternal existence, or the heavenly existence that we have in this present time. Well, having looked at the definition of faith and having looked at some examples of faith, let's now move and let's look at the necessity of faith, looking at Verse 6.

### 3) The Necessity of Faith:

We read in this verse:

***Hebrews 11:6 ~ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.***

Hebrews 11:6 in many ways is a very wonderful concise statement related to faith that we can learn and take around with us, a reminder that without faith it is impossible to please God. We know from other parts of Scripture that pleasing God should always be our highest aim. In 2 Corinthians 5, the apostle Paul wrote:

***2 Corinthians 5:6 ~ So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.***

Perhaps you know what it's like in this life to have a goal or an aim to please others. Maybe you started a new job at some point and you had a boss or bosses, and you really worked hard, and you wanted to please them, and you wanted to do what they wanted you to do, and you wanted to earn their favor, and you wanted to show that you could do it. In a similar way, even more importantly here we are called to make it our highest aim to please the Lord. That means that if I don't please myself, that's not my first and highest ambition. It's not even my first and highest ambition to please my wife, or my children, or my employers, or my fellow church members, that higher than all of these, up here, it has to be pleasing the Lord, and what that means is in those times where I'm pleasing Him and other people come in and say, "You're not pleasing me," and I have to make a choice between the two, I stick with the highest aim, and the highest goal of pleasing the Lord.

We see here that it is impossible to please God without faith. Let me list out for you some things that will not please God apart from faith. Number one is self-denial and asceticism. Now, many people in this world and in this life have sought to be pleasing to God simply by means of self-denial. They have tried to give up food, or water, or other necessities, or shelter, or perhaps have been like the pillar saints of old in the early church who went out and lived on pillars, and one of them started about six feet above the ground living out in the elements, and he worked his way apparently up to about 60 feet high up in the air. Another thing that doesn't please God apart from faith is growing up in a church. Having Christian parents and grandparents will not please God apart from faith. Obtaining a knowledge of the Bible—there are many people today that have a much better knowledge of the Bible than you and I do, and some of them sit as professors and doctors in theology and different seminaries and other training institutions, and they know Greek and Hebrew, and they know the Bible backwards and forwards, but they don't believe by faith what God has said, but they know the Bible.

Another thing that will not please God apart from faith is an intellectual understanding of biblical doctrines and the ability to talk about the differences between different church denominations. I've had the experiences before when I'm out working, I've met some people that when I talk to them, they can talk up a storm. They know the difference between Baptists, and Methodists, and Presbyterians, and Episcopalian, and they know different kinds of Baptists, and they know different kinds of doctrines, and they can tell me about Calvinism and Arminianism, but in my conversations with them, I just don't see that they've truly come to faith in God through Christ. They have all of this knowledge and understanding, but it's not pleasing to God. Attending religious services and even serving in the church and the community will not please God apart from faith.

This morning if you're looking to some of these things for your acceptance with God, then you need to know that they are faulty pillars and foundations for you to rest upon. The only foundation is Christ, coming to Him as in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, to cry out before Him, "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. There is nothing in my hand I bring. Simply to the cross I cling. Naked I come to Thee for dress. Help us look to Thee for grace." We are told here in this verse, Verse 6, that whoever draws near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him. I don't think that in this verse He's merely referring to theoretical belief and unbelief, but it's believing He exists in a way that demonstrates itself in your life, in your choices, and in your actions.

We see too here in Verse 6 the important aspect that if you want to please God, not only do you have to believe that He exists and that He's real, but it says here that we also have to believe that He's someone who rewards those who seek Him. I want you to ponder that for just a minute, that you actually to please God have to believe that He is a rewarder, a good God, a loving God, who is going to reward those who seek Him. I'm not trying to encourage you to some kind of ulterior motive in serving the Lord, but the Scripture shows here in this verse and in Hebrews 11, and other places, that those who served the Lord and have done great things for Him, they were looking forward to a promise and a realization of something to come.

In fact, the Old Testament believers did all of this and they did not even have the fulfillment of the promises related to the coming Messiah and Savior. They did all of this with the hope of that which was to come. Think with me for a moment about some promise or some looking forward to the future that is mentioned in other parts of Scripture.

We find three places in the New Testament that there is discussion of the concept of crowns. In 2 Timothy 4:8, Paul wrote apparently near the end of his life that:

***2 Timothy 4:8 ~ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.***

Are you looking forward as one of those who have loved His appearing, to the idea of a crown of righteousness being laid up for you, this idea of something in the future? Not better things in this life, more pleasant things in this life, more joy, less pain, but rather something that is to come. In James 1:12, we read:

***James 1:12 ~ Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.***

Are you taking hold of these great promises of God of what is to come? And then the promise in 1 Peter 5:4, as Peter is writing to under-shepherds in the church:

***1 Peter 5:4 ~ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.***

Today it is impossible to please God apart from faith, and it is impossible to please God if you don't believe that He exists in reality. And also as well, you will not be fully pleasing to Him if you are only looking to a reward in this life, looking to His help here, something better here, and not setting your hope and your affections on that life which is to come, that we need to look to the Old Testament saints who considered themselves as we read here, that they were sojourners and they were exiles in this world, that this world was not their home, and that they were passing through, and that although the Lord has called us in this life to exercise wisdom, and to engage with other people, and to serve in the church, and to live a life if you're in a family with your husband or your wife, and to be involved in your children, to go out into the world and preach the Gospel, that while we're doing all these activities that He's called us to do, never are we to set our thoughts and affections permanently here, but we're always to set before us, and perhaps we need to each day look ahead to the future and say, "Whatever comes this day, Lord, come Lord Jesus, because there is a reality and a hope of Heaven that is far greater than this life and this day regardless of what it can bring. Lord, give me the faith to believe that and to make each decision and each choice by faith in the light of these truths."

Let's close in prayer...

*Heavenly Father, we come to You today humbly acknowledging our own weakness, acknowledging that we are often overwhelmed by our lives and the myriad of details that we must give attention to, and Father, we pray as the disciples did, Lord, increase our faith. We pray that You would give us spiritual eyes to see that which is unseen and the ability to have certainty and conviction over the things that we hope for, that we may glorify You and please You, and I pray this in Christ's Name, Amen.*

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