Worship On Wednesday!

July 13, 2011

Reverend Dr. Derrick Joseph Hughes

LORD, CHANGE MY ATTITUDE
WITH AN ATTITUDE OF FAITH

Memory Verse: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
Hebrews 11:1 KJV

What do you think faith is?

Faith is not an ostrich, head-in-the-sand denial of the obvious or inevitable. It’s not pretending that something is real when deep down you don’t believe it. That’s fear, not faith.

Faith is not anti-intellectual either. Faith is not a warm feeling that requires you to check your mind at the door. That’s feeling, not faith.

Faith is not a stained-glass, dreamy escapism. I cannot live at church, hiding from the real world. That’s fluff, not faith.

Faith is not a motivational seminar, with some high-powered guru calling for self-realization, telling you to picture a better future. That’s fad, not faith.

Faith is not a positive mental attitude, a you-have-to-keep-believing thing. It’s not ignoring pain by embracing optimism. That’s foolishness, not faith.
Faith is so integral to the Christian life that it can be boiled down to a practical definition: faith is believing the Word of God and acting upon it, no matter how I feel, because God promises a good result.

**What Is Faith?**

Faith is believing the Word of God. That word **believing** is not “wouldn’t it be nice if…” Believing is a lot more than just shallow hope. Believing is, “I’ve got all my eggs in one basket. I’m in 100 percent.” That’s faith. But faith is not believing in a vacuum; it’s belief based on the Word of God. That’s the key. I’m not trusting the newspaper, the television, my neighbor, or my boss. I believe in a God who wrote a trustworthy Book. “Faith” Romans 10 says, “comes by hearing the Word of God” (see v. 17) so the more I get in God’s Book, the greater will be my faith.

**Faith is acting upon it:**

This is where faith gets feet. Genuine faith always downloads into life. We say we believe in all kinds of things, but we really don’t unless it shows up in our lives. In family matters, an active faith means we will trust God to work through a wayward child or even an unbelieving spouse. In finances we will trust God to meet our daily needs while giving tithes and offerings.

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

Ask yourself, “Do I believe that ‘God is ____________ to make all grace abound to you, so that having all __________ in ____________, you may abound in every good work.’”

Maybe you’re discouraged about your life and your direction. You’re not sure where to turn, and you’re not sure what to pursue. As a follower of Jesus Christ, you can turn to Him to meet your deepest needs.

When you believe the answers to life’s deepest perplexities are found in Christ, then you are believing the Word of God and acting upon it.

What is your experience? Can you say, “The answer to my deepest life needs is found in Christ”? The answer to my financial needs is found in The answer to my __________ needs is found in
The answer to my needs is found in

_Do you have faith to believe that if you would only ask, God would show up and do His work in your heart, your home, your neighborhood, and your church?_

**No matter how I feel.** This is critical. Faith discounts how we feel and boldly acts on the Word of God. The question for us is, will I do the thing God has asked me to do and trust God to do the part that only He can do? That’s a question of faith. We must choose to obey God even during the times when we don’t feel like obeying. Do you ever have times when you don’t feel like obeying God’s Words? Unless we want to be like roller-coaster Christians for the rest of our lives, we have to get this part down.

Emotions are wonderful. In their rightful place they bring color and fulfillment to our lives. As our servants, emotions can do much good in our lives; but when they become our master and start dictating our actions, we are headed for disaster. Think of your life as a train. Emotions make a lousy engine but a wonderful caboose. Learning this truth has been a real point of victory for me. When I feel frustrated, it doesn’t matter how I feel. If I feel anxiety, it doesn’t matter how I feel. If I feel like indulging myself, or avoiding a problem, or nursing a personal slight, I must choose to ignore how I feel. I must believe the Word of God and act upon it no matter how I feel. That’s faith!

**God promises a good result.** Here’s the best part of faith: We can act on our faith no matter how we feel because God promises a good result.

Here are four questions I’ve heard from those struggling with faith:

- Why would I do what God tells me?
- Why would I wait on God to bring my spouse or child to Christ?
- Why would I give of my finances when I have so many debts?
- Why would I invest my energies in following the Lord when I feel like my life is so empty and meaningless?

The answer to each question is the same: because God promises a good result. This message of faith permeates the Bible. Every step with God is a step of faith. Every lesson learned is a lesson of faith. Every victory won is a victory by faith. That’s the prominence of faith in God’s Book.

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.

What must a person do when He comes to God?

What is the result for those who diligently seek Him?

What are you trusting God for today?

What is your view of God?

**Our View of God.** In the preface to *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A. W. Tozer wrote, “The decline of the knowledge of the holy has brought on our troubles. A rediscovery of the majesty of God will go a long way toward curing them. It is impossible to keep our moral practices sound and our inward attitudes right while our idea of God is erroneous or inadequate.”

**We are Addicted to Sight.** How can you have faith when you don’t see God doing anything? Have you ever had a time in your life when you wondered where God was? “I couldn’t see Him working. I couldn’t sense Him. I didn’t think He was doing anything.” Honestly, have you ever thought that? Everybody’s rock solid on God when He unrolls His plans in front of us. The challenge is believing and acting consistently as a believer when we’re not seeing it. If you want to grow as a faith-filled follower of Christ, here’s what you have to do. You have to break the addiction to sight.

Physically, we walk by sight. The same goes for our spiritual walk. Some of your most discouraging seasons of faith may have been when you said to God, “You say You’re this or that, but I’m just not seeing it.” God never promised that we would see Him work. God is determined that the life of His follower is a life of faith. Sometimes you’ll see His hand; sometimes you won’t.

God forgive us for the times we have said harshly, “This is way too hard. How could God be in this?” Do you think difficult circumstances prove that God isn’t working when, in fact, the Bible goes says the opposite? That difficult circumstance is not God’s pulling back from you; difficult circumstances many times are when God is drawing toward you, embracing and growing you.
Pray This Prayer
Lord, I know it’s true. You’re always working. By faith I believe You. Thank You for Your work in my life today. Thank You for Your work in my children and my marriage, even when I’m not seeing it. Thank You for Your work in my church today. Forgive me for needing chills and thrills before I acknowledge Your hand. Teach me what it means to live not by sight but by faith. Help me stand strong by faith. I want to make a covenant with You today, Lord. I want to tell You again that I am Yours; I belong to You; all that I have is Yours. You’re everything to me. Help me in these uncertain times to be filled with faith and obedience. Help me today break my addiction to sight and take hold by faith that You are at work, even when I’m not seeing it. Amen.

When we live by faith, we win; and when we live by sight, we lose. If you’re a Christian, winning means you have victory over the trials in your life. You remain strong and true to God even when it’s tough. It means you are conquering temptation and living without compromise. And it also means not always needing to see the next step before you trust God’s Word and follow Him. That’s the point I want us to look at now, and there’s no better person to study than the man, who “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness” (Gal. 3:6).

Are the choices you’re making right now characterized by faith? Are you waiting to see how things go before you step out in faith? Are excuses creeping into your plans? Are you doubting or delaying doing what you know God wants you to do? I’ll give it to you straight once again, “When you live by faith, you win; when you live by sight, you lose.” Every time.

If you love the Lord with your whole heart and are committed to His purposes, God is at work in your life and your situation. Sometimes you can see what He’s doing, and sometimes you can’t. When you can’t see His hand, trust that He is still at work because You know His character. You believe He will accomplish what He promised. Sometimes we’re aware of God’s presence, and sometimes God seems far away.

When we think He’s distant, it’s because we’re not yet full circle. A day will come when you will look back and see God’s sovereign hand at work in those situations. He is in the center of the situation that troubles your heart right now. Just because you can’t see Him doesn’t mean He isn’t there. Trust Him. He is at work. Have faith.
All things are possible in Christ. He’s promised to do so much more for us if we just believe Him. That’s what the Word of God teaches. That’s not just for another age; that’s for us today as the followers of Jesus Christ.

**What Makes Faith Stronger?**

**Get into God’s Word.** Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (NKJV). When Jesus taught on this, He said, “The wise man was the one who heard the Word of God and did it” (see Luke 11:28). Biblically speaking, hearing is hearing and doing. The biggest fool of all is the person who hears but doesn’t do.

**God’s Word gives faith.** If you’re filled with doubt, the first thing I’d ask you is, “How much time are you spending in God’s Word?” If you want faith, memorize God’s Word, meditate on God’s Word, devote yourself to reading and studying God’s Word, and you’ll have greater faith.

I love the truth that’s in the Bible. It is God’s heart for us; and when we wash our minds with it daily and continuously, it produces faith within us. When we fill our minds with the headlines, the latest worldly romance, and more television and other entertainment, no wonder we struggle with faith. We fill our days and our ears with everything but the Word of God, and so we lack the faith to obey. Roman’s 12:2 teaches that our transformation comes by the “renewing of your mind” (NIV), and that comes from immersing ourselves in God’s Word.

**Confess your faith.** Ephesians 6:19-20 says, “Also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.”

**Practice genuine prayer.** The kind of prayer I’m talking about is on-your-knees-before-God heartfelt prayer, laying hold of God by faith. You ask, “I’m not very good at that. Is there a seminar I can go to?” Yes, it’s conducted daily in your home in a private place where you can kneel down. It’s given by the Holy Spirit and available to you 24-7. The way to learn how to pray is to say, “Lord, teach me to pray.”