

## SERMON & PRAYER NOTES

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We don't care where you've been....  
We only care about where you're going...

*Holy Spirit Community Church*  
'Seeking God's will, Sharing God's love'  
**DID YOU KNOW THIS IS OUR MISSION STATEMENT?**

*Sunday September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2024*



**A very strong faith**

*MARK 2:1-12*

*Pastor Charlie Hansen*

Faith resides at the core of Christianity and the Christian life. While the Bible has much to say about it, faith is a challenging concept to define. A biblical definition of faith reaches beyond mere belief—the simple acknowledgment that God exists—into the realm of trust. Genuine faith involves abandoning all human reliance on self-efforts and placing total dependence upon God’s character, His actions, and His promises, as revealed in His Word.

Faith has many dimensions. One crucial facet of faith is defined in Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Biblical faith takes present-day possession of things not yet seen with our eyes but hoped for in the future. What God has revealed in His Word becomes our inner reality today. Rather than looking at life with our earthly eyes, faith sees through the lens of God’s promises.

The apostle Paul said, “We walk by faith and not sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith does not put trust in bank account balances, headline news, or the doctor’s report. “We don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever” (2 Corinthians 4:18, NLT). When the world seems to be falling apart, our faith stands secure on the rock-solid, trustworthy promises of God and His Word.

Faith begins with God. It is His gift, not the result of any human effort or achievement. God initiates the relationship between Himself and humans by revealing Himself to them (Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 1:19–20) and lovingly persuading them to come to Him (Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Isaiah 30:18), just as Jesus called the disciples to follow Him (Matthew 4:18–22). But then God expects us to respond to Him in faith: “And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him” (Hebrews 11:6, NLT). Failure to trust God was at the heart of the first sin (Genesis 3:1–7). Ever since the fall of man, God has been calling people back to faith—to a place of trust and obedience to Him.

Faith is and always has been the only means of salvation. In the Old Testament, the covenantal bond was the believer’s expression of faith. God initiated the covenant, and believers responded in faith, actively obeying His Word and trusting in the Lord to fulfill His promises. In Genesis 15:6, Abraham “believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith” (NLT; see also Romans 4:22; Galatians 3:6). The prophet states, “Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God” (Habakkuk 2:4, NLT).

In the New Testament, it is by faith that people receive God’s grace in Jesus Christ and, through Him, the gift of salvation (Ephesians 2:8–9). Paul emphasized the centrality of faith in the believer’s life: “For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, ‘It is through faith that a righteous person has life’” (Romans 1:16–17, NLT; see also Romans 3:27–28; 10:9–10).

Faith results in numerous blessings and benefits. At the top of the list are the gifts of salvation, justification, and peace with God (Romans 5:1–2; Galatians 2:15–16; 1 Peter 1:8–9). Jesus makes His home in our hearts through faith (Ephesians 3:17). We receive forgiveness of sin (Acts 10:43; Luke 7:48–50), adoption into God’s family (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26), God’s protection and power (1 Peter 1:5; Matthew 17:20; Luke 8:43–48), freedom to draw near to God with a clean conscience (Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 10:22), reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18), sanctification (Acts 26:17–18), and a new life in Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:20), all through faith. Moreover, we are granted victory over death and eternal life (John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47; 11:25–27).

The Bible plainly teaches that faith is not just a mental attitude. James explains that saving faith is revealed in a person’s actions. He writes, “What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?” (James 2:14, NLT). James is not saying that we are saved *by* works, but that faith and good deeds go together: “Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works” (James 2:26, NLT). Good works are proof that our faith is alive.

A biblical concept of faith includes believing that God exists and that He is wholly trustworthy, so much so that we base our lives on Him and His Word, doing what it says, no matter what our physical eyes tell us. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we obtain “the victory that has overcome the world” (1 John 5:4–5).