



WOW: Word Of the Week

Conviction

January 19, 2022

Hebrews 11:1—we often refer to this verse as a definition of faith. Many different words have been used in translating the verse. I like confidence and conviction.

Confidence concerning the promises; conviction concerning “things not seen.” God is faithful, and thus confidence concerning the promises seems to me to be the easier of the two. Being firmly convinced of things not seen—that is not easy, may be the more difficult.

Lest you think my summary is unusual, perhaps not what you have traditionally heard, I call your attention to 11:6 – “to believe that God is, and that he rewards those who diligently seek him.” There you have it again – faithful God, rewarding those who seek what is unseen.

The theme, conviction about invisible things, is easily seen in the first few verses of Hebrews 11. Read through vv. 1-8. Note that the writer reverses the order of v. 1, addressing the “unseen” before addressing the “promises.” That is a common literary technique.

We come today to think about what we have not seen. Are we willing to follow, to go out, to leave all that is familiar? Will we go when we cannot see the way? When we cannot see the end result? When one follows our Lord in this way, explaining what you are doing is impossible. First, you barely know what you are doing, and second, what you are doing will be utterly nonsensical to others. In following Christ, the truth must be spoken. Many times, we do not know where we are going, what we are doing. We know only one thing—God knows what he is doing. This is trust—the ultimate in discipleship. This is discipleship that has “arrived.” Each day, each morning, with ever-increasing conviction, this will be a day of going where I do not know and I cannot see.

This shows us why confidence and conviction belong together as partners that complete faith. Confidence in God, plus conviction about all that lies before us without worrying about what we cannot see, knowing that God supplies and provides.

Now I say one more thing as we close—are you prone to waiting to see what God is going to do? Or, as it is often said, “are you just waiting to see what the Holy Spirit will do?” God will not tell you what He is going to do. God reveals himself—believe that God is! God reveals who he is. God reveals himself for your confident faith and he will act according to your faith response. When God has spoken and revealed himself, ours is not a time of waiting. Ours is a time of going forth, going out, as Abraham.

With this understanding of faith, let this be a year in which we spend less time waiting on God and his Holy Spirit. Let us more consistently go forth in faith, knowing faithful God, believing promises, not demanding to see before we act, anticipating the beauty of life lived in the power and presence and protection and provision of God.