

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In Hebrews 11:1, the Bible gives an objective definition of faith as “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
 1. This is a beautifully and simply stated definition of an essential word for our salvation.
 2. Following this definition, the Bible gives example after example of persons who acted by faith to illustrate faith’s meaning in real life.
- B. This objective definition can be modified to become a subjective definition so that we can correctly say that *your* faith is *your* assurance of things *you* hope for and *your* conviction of things *you* have not seen.
 1. This means that if you want to have hope for eternity and a conviction of the unseen things of heaven, then you must own your own faith. It has to be *your* faith.
 2. Like those many examples from Hebrews 11, *your* faith must come alive by *your* own action (Jas. 2:14-26) so that it has meaning in real life.
- C. Presently, let us consider what it means to own your own faith and why this is so important.
 1. We will see that faith in Christ cannot be borrowed, assumed, or inherited. It must be gotten honestly, for “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17).
 2. This lesson is for all Christians, but it has a special emphasis for young people.

II. OUR FAITH IS SHARED, BUT...

- A. There is one faith that is to be common to all Christians.
 1. In Ephesians 4:4-6, among the “seven ones” that demonstrate the unity of the Spirit is the “one faith.” This is the one system of belief that every Christian has received by the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).
 2. Likewise in Jude 3, Christians are said to have a “common salvation” and are directed to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” There were not many faiths handed down at many times, but there is only “the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.”
 3. In 2Peter 1:1, Peter addressed his letter to “those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours.” Indeed, our common faith today is the same faith possessed by those first Christians centuries ago.
- B. This shared faith in Christ is the basis of our fellowship with one another.
 1. Notice 1John 1:6-7:

⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
 2. Because we share in common the practice of truth and the walk in the light, we are in fellowship with one another.
 3. From the beginning of the gospel era, Christians’ common faith has bound them together (Acts 2:42). Even the Jews and Gentiles were made equal in fellowship through faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8-22).
 4. When there is no such common faith, there can be no fellowship (2Cor. 6:14-18).

III. YOU HAVE TO OWN YOUR OWN FAITH

- A. The “one faith” that is common to all Christians has to be yours personally.
 1. In Romans 14:22, the Scripture says, “The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God.”
 - a. In the context, this passage is speaking about matters of opinion as personal faith. We are told not to judge one another on such matters, but to keep them as our own convictions before God.
 - b. A broader application can be made about our faith in Christ. Each of us must hold our own faith in Jesus as a personal conviction before God.
 2. In order for your faith to save you, it must be “the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3).
 - a. Your faith cannot be just any faith. It must be the “one faith” common to all Christians (Eph. 4:5).
 - b. You must obtain the faith by your own hearing of the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).

- B. No one else can believe for you.
1. You cannot believe through your parents, your spouse, your fellow Christians, or anyone else. You must believe for yourself.
 - a. Your association with believers is not enough for your salvation. Jesus said, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16). You yourself must believe to be saved.
 - b. It is certainly good to be around believers because they can influence you to believe for yourself. However, they cannot believe for you.
 2. Especially for young people, you need to understand the meaning of the saying, “God has no grandchildren.”
 - a. No matter how faithful your parents are, their faith will not save you. You cannot inherit their faith genetically. You have to be faithful yourself.
 - b. The time will come when you will leave your father and mother (Gen. 2:24). Will you be faithful to God when you are on your own?
- C. You must be ready to defend your faith to others and to give an account of yourself to the Lord.
1. You will face many challenges to your faith in your lifetime. Will you be able to withstand them, or will your faith falter?
 - a. In 1Peter 3:15, you are told to “sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” Can you give an answer for your faith?
 - b. Even if no one else will stand with you, you must believe in the Lord. “Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar” (Rom. 3:4).
 - c. You must stand up to the challenges just as 1Corinthians 15:58 says:
Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.
 2. In the end, you will stand by yourself before Christ for judgment. Will you be ready to give a good account of yourself and your faith?
 - a. Notice 2Corinthians 5:10:
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
 - b. When you are called to judgment, no one can go with you. You will not be able to make a claim to anyone else’s faith or deeds. You can only be “saved by grace through faith” (Eph. 2:8). God has supplied the grace; have you supplied the faith?
- D. If you do not own your faith, then you will fall.
1. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). If you don’t own your own faith, then you can never please Him.
 2. If you hold your faith loosely with little conviction and ownership, then you will likely be like the one Jesus described in Matthew 13:20-21:
²⁰“The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.”
 3. In Luke 8:13, Jesus also said that such a person will fall away in time of temptation.
 4. Sadly, statistics show that as much as 85 percent of young people coming from families professing Christianity do not hold a biblical worldview, and they leave church at the age of eighteen, never to return (ref. Nehemiah Institute PEERS test, Southern Baptist Convention on Family Life, George Barna, James Dobson, Josh McDowell).
 5. Young people, will you be a part of the 85 percent who have no faith or the 15 percent who own their faith in Christ?

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. The point of this lesson is simple: Own your faith! Take possession of it! Believe for yourself, and know why you hold your beliefs. Live faithfully, and give your faith life by what you do every day.
- B. Your faith in Christ must be your own. You should share your faith with others, but never give up your faith, and never let anyone take your faith from you.