

# THE FAITHFUL ONES



**BUT WE ARE NOT LIKE THOSE WHO TURN AWAY FROM GOD TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION.  
WE ARE THE FAITHFUL ONES, WHOSE SOULS WILL BE SAVED.**

**(HEBREWS 10:39 NLT)**

## 1. **The faithful ones** have entered God's rest.

- (Hebrews 4:1–3a ESV) Therefore, **while the promise of entering his rest still stands**, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. 2 **For good news came to us just as to them**, but the message they heard did not benefit them, **because they were not united by faith with those who listened**. 3 **For we who have believed enter that rest**.
- (Hebrews 3:18–19 LSB) **And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?** 19 So we see that **they were not able to enter because of unbelief**.
- (Hebrews 4:11 ESV) **Let us therefore strive to enter that rest**, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

## 2. **The faithful ones** are approved by God.

- (Hebrews 11:2 LSB) For by it *[true saving faith]* the men of old gained approval.

## 3. **We know the faithful ones** have true, saving faith because it would be impossible for them to be approved and to please God without such faith.

- (Hebrews 11:6 LSB) **And without faith it is impossible to please Him**, for he who draws near to God **must believe that He is** and **that He is a rewarder** of those who seek Him.

**Faith, indeed, is ...** the disposition which should be characteristic of the creature in relation to his Creator; for faith is that trustful reliance which finds expression in willing obedience and submission to the sovereign word of God, in grateful acknowledgment of the unmixed goodness of all his works, and in confident recognition of the complete trustworthiness of his promises. As the account of the fall in Genesis 3 shows, the failure of faith manifests itself in rebellion against God's authority, questioning of his goodness, and denial of the truth of his word. **To abandon faith is to behave as though God were not there.** [Hughes, P. E. (1977). *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (p. 460). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.]

We need to stop and think about this plain, simple statement—“without faith it is impossible to please Him.”

- A. Impossible means impossible ... ἀδύνατος [adunatos] ... not having power, without strength, impotent, weakly; unable to be done; not capable of occurring or being accomplished.
- B. The person without faith does not believe that God “is” and it is impossible for him to please God.
- C. To believe God that “is” is to believe not only that he exists but also that he exists as who he is revealed to be in Scripture.
- D. It is impossible for the person who does not believe that God “is” to draw near to God.
  - i. Not believing God “is” is more than merely rejecting or denying the existence of a god.
  - ii. Not believing that God “is” not only denies his existence but is an intellectual position which in effect declares that God is not there.
  - iii. Not believing that God “is” denies the character of God—his nature and identity as separate, superior and above all creation as the uncreated One who sovereignly rules over humans.
  - iv. It follows then that not believing that God “is” is ultimately a rejection of God and his authority over humans.
- E. The person without faith does not believe that God rewards those who seek him, and so it is impossible for that person to please God.
  - i. He does not see the profit in seeking a relationship with his Creator God.
  - ii. He does not see the reward in pursuing God's wisdom and direction for his life.
- F. **Summary:** If a person does not have faith in God, then it is **impossible** ... for that person to please God.

## 4. **The faithful ones** live in view of the reality of the unseen kingdom of God.

- A. The faith of the faithful is substantive and revealing.
  - (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV) Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.
- B. The faith of the faithful reveals the substance of what they believe to be true—the reality in which they live in view of what they believe to be eternally important.
- C. This substance of faithful living gives evidence as to what the person actually believes concerning God, spiritual things and the future.

For instance, the person with true saving faith believes that he has an actual, literal, eternal dwelling place—heavenly real estate—that Jesus went ahead to prepare for him.

- (John 14:2 ESV) In my Father's house are many rooms. **If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?**
- (Hebrews 10:34 ESV) For you had compassion on those in prison, **and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.**

This substantive belief in the promises of God demonstrates the validity of our faith and provides powerful external and internal witness and evidence of our trust in and reliance on God and his coming kingdom.

**D. The faithful one finds his foundation for and perspective of life in the context of the unseen world and eternity as it is revealed in the word of God.**

**E. The person with saving faith seeks and has his mind set on things above.**

- (Colossians 3:1–2 LSB) Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking the things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.**

**F. Faith is setting our minds on the things of God in contrast to “unfaith” in setting our minds on the things of humans.**

- (Matthew 16:22–23 ESV) And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” 23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. **For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.**”

**G. The mind set on the flesh is an “unfaith” mind that cannot please God and is hostile to God.**

- (Romans 8:5–8 ESV) For those who live according to the flesh **set their minds on the things of the flesh**, but those who live according to the Spirit **set their minds on the things of the Spirit.** 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 **For the mind**

**that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

**H. The mind set on earthly things is an enemy of the cross of Christ.**

- (Philippians 3:18–20 ESV) **For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.** 19 Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, **with minds set on earthly things.** 20 **But our citizenship is in heaven,** and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**I. The person with saving faith looks to the things that are unseen and eternal.**

- (2 Corinthians 4:17–18 ESV) For this light momentary affliction **is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,** 18 **as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.** For the things that are seen are transient, **but the things that are unseen are eternal.**

**TRANSITION: THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES PROVIDE MORE DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF THE FAITHFUL ONES—THOSE WHO HAVE ENTERED GOD'S REST, HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY GOD, HAVE SAVING FAITH AND HOPE IN HIS PROMISES.**

**5. The faithful ones live in view of the promise of one day living in the city God, 11:8-12.**

- (Hebrews 11:8–12 LSB) **By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed** by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and **he went out, not knowing where he was going.** 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise, 10 **for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.** 11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, **since she regarded Him faithful who had promised.** 12 Therefore there were born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many **AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.**

**THE REALITY OF THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM AND SARAH—THEY BELIEVED GOD AND LIVED IN HOPE OF HIS PROMISES.**

- A. Abraham obeyed God's call to go based on God's promise of a future inheritance.
- B. Abraham obeyed God's call and went out not knowing where he was going.
- C. During Abraham's sojourn on Earth he was looking for the city of God—his promised destination.
- D. Abraham left what he could see and what was familiar to him for the unseen, unknown promise of God.
  - (2 Corinthians 5:7 ESV) **For we walk by faith, not by sight.**
  - (Hebrews 10:38 ESV) But my righteous one **shall live by faith**, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.
  - (Romans 1:17 ESV) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, **"The righteous shall live by faith."**
- E. Application for us: Living in view of the city of God frees us to rest fully in the promises of God and trust him with our lives on earth.
- F. Abraham's obedience gives strong evidence of his genuine faith.
- G. Abraham willingly gave up wealth and position here as he look beyond earth to the heavenly city of God.
- H. Sarah received the ability to have a baby at ninety years old because she believed God and trusted him to be faithful to his promise **...since she regarded Him faithful who had promised ...**

**6. The faithful ones die in faith, 11:13-16.**

- (Hebrews 11:13–16 LSB) **All these died in faith, without receiving the promises**, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been remembering that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now, they aspire to a better country, that is, a heavenly one.

**Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He prepared a city for them.**

- A. The faithful ones are faithful to the end—they die in the Lord—believing in and trusting him for life.
  - (Revelation 14:12–13 LSB) **Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.** 13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, **'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'**" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."
- B. The faithful ones do not shrink back.
  - (Hebrews 10:39 LSB) **But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction**, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.
- C. The faithful ones joyfully welcome the promises of their future with God.
 

They died in anticipation of but not having received the fulfillment of all the promises.
- D. The faithful ones openly, freely profess their status as strangers and exiles on the earth.
- E. The faithful ones make it clear they are seeking their true home.
- F. Having their minds set on their new country, the faithful ones avoid the temptation of returning to the land they left.
- G. The old country is now a distant memory as they have their sites set on a better country—on heaven.
- H. God is proud of the faithful ones and has prepared a city for them.