

By Faith Alone (A Good Report)

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[0:00] Last week we looked at Sola Scriptura, by the word of God alone. Now for Sola Fide, one of the five solas, the five statements or slogans of faith of the old time believers of old.

By faith alone. Hebrews chapter 11 tells us about faith, biblical faith, about the power of faith and about the people of faith.

By faith alone. And faith is so important, it's the central theme of the Bible. And our Lord asked in Luke 18, When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?

It's been said that faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible. Faith, it's a vital truth for our world today, for you and me.

[1:09] And the Bible says the just shall live by faith. And through Hebrews 11 we see the heroes and heroines of the faith, if you like. The life of faith demonstrated through these human lives.

Faith, living and breathing lived out in these human examples, these testimonies for us, these witnesses for us. And what can we learn from these people of faith today?

First up, let's get a definition of biblical faith. What is it? What is faith? Hebrews 11 verse 1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for.

The evidence of things not seen. Faith is a confidence of things hoped for. It's looking forward. And it's a conviction of things not seen. A conviction of unseen things, yet real. True biblical faith is faith in Christ as its object.

[2:11] It's not faith just some airy fairy faith, but it's a faith in Christ. That's the difference here. And we have a confidence in Christ. We have a confidence in his promises.

We have a confidence in his blessed hope. His second coming. And we have a sure hope. The reason within us, that blessed assurance.

The blessed hope of his coming back. The blessed assurance of that faith within. Of his saving grace known personally. We've got a conviction that's solid and sure.

We believe that God is. He is. Creator. Sustainer. Redeemer. And Saviour. And we have evidence that demands a verdict.

God's evidence. And we have a whole host of witnesses too. That line up. And back this up. Through this chapter. As we'll touch on. So we see faith shows.

[3:11] As a testimony. As a witness. As a life lived. Verse 2 of Hebrews 11. It says. For by faith. The elders obtained a good report.

Isn't that something that you always hope for when you're at school? A good report. You know. Isn't it? Isn't it something you want to have a good report? How is your report card with God?

That's what really counts isn't it? And faith. Gives us that good report. By faith. We can have a good report. A good testimony.

And I'd like to show you from this chapter. How you. Can obtain a good report. That's something important isn't it? Isn't that something we should want to have.

When all is said and done. When it's all. The closing chapter. Closes on this earthly pilgrimage. That will have a good report. To show for it all. How do we obtain that?

[4:08] How do we get that? That good report. That's spoken of here. It's by faith. By faith. Simply that. Faith is founded upon God's word.

In 2 Peter 1. Verse 4. In part it says. We're given unto us exceeding great and precious promises. It's a feature through Hebrews 11 and 2.

Promises feature through Hebrews 11. And faith. Trusts in God's promises. By faith. We can understand creation. Even creation. That mystery.

That scientists struggle and theorize with so many theories about. God says simply how it happened. And by faith. We can understand that. How and why things came to be. Why we are here. Our purpose. Why we are here. Why we are here. How can we know this? By his word. By his word. It's where his life comes from.

[5:07] It's the maker's instructions for us. Verse 3. Through faith. We understand. That the worlds were framed. By the word of God. So that things which are seen.

Were not made. Of things which do appear. So God spoke. And bang. It happened. It was that simple. God said. God spoke. And life came.

Light came. The worlds came. The heavens came. God made the world out of nothing. God died. God died. God died. God died.

God died. God died. God died died. God died died. microscopic detail of it creation is a witness to the work of our unseen God our maker our Creator our designer and he designed us he designed us with a reason and he's given us the maker's instructions so we can't mess up too badly we can get it right and we can obtain a good report so verse 1 tells us now faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen we did not see the act of creation we only can know it by faith we can know by faith we can understand and faith brings an understanding of God of creation of the reason we're here it makes sense of everything so by faith we believe what it says Genesis 1 verse 1 in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth

Psalms 33 6 and 9 it says by the word of the Lord where the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth for he spake and it was done he commanded and it stood fast faith takes God in his word faith springs from his word his word creates faith in Romans 10 17 so then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God faith comes as a result of hearing God what God says and by his word we believe we're born again by faith it's an eternal scene in 1 Peter 1 we read that this eternal scene germinates and creates God's new life within us being born again not a corruptible scene in other words seen that perishes and is faulting but of incorruptible by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever we're born again by the word of God so we can trust in God God spoke and it happened the maker of heaven and earth we can trust him personally today and by faith we can hear him and believe what he says someone has said faith is not a leap in the dark but a step into the light and so through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God he spoke and it was done so we have seen what faith is it's a conviction it is a wonderful confirmation that we can have that we can have that confidence in God where faith is where it comes from from trusting God from trusting what he says and friends you can trust God today the creator of life who cares for us and calls us simply to trust him so then let's consider this question now how can we obtain a good report how can you get a good report well consider some of these witnesses in Hebrews 11 and how they obtained a good report and we'll look at this in three aspects the righteousness of faith the reward of faith and the reproach of faith the righteousness the reward and the reproach firstly let's observe to get a good report you need the righteousness of faith we see this righteousness of faith in Abel's worship Abel bears witness and helps us answer this question what worship is acceptable verse 4 it says by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain by which he obtained witness that he was righteous God testifying of his gifts and by it he being dead yet speaketh so

[9:38] Abel and Cain both offered something in worship Abel offered a lamb Cain offered some of his produce from his land Abel believed God and did what God told him to do Abel obtained a witness as he sacrificed that first lamb of his flock that lamb of his flock Abel obtained witness from God that he was righteous how by faith he simply did what God told him to do by faith he was made righteous how does that true righteousness come from Christ from faith Abel chose to shed blood rather than man's works as Cain did Abel chose not his own effort but the shed blood his trust was in the redeeming blood as a sign looking ahead of Christ's blood that spotless blood shed for man's sin so it was a stark contrast here of man's works versus a life of faith Cain was the father of false religion Abel was the first man of faith

Abel still speaks to us today brothers and sisters he tells us how how we can have this righteousness of faith how we can be made righteous in right standing with God how we can

worship by faith in the blood we'll go on to another witness now we're still looking at the righteousness of faith Paul describes this righteousness which is of God by faith Paul had lots to claim credit for he had lots of religious credentials and standing he could have argued his way into heaven by virtue of such credentials you would think but in Philippians 3 verse 9 he says i want to be found in him not having mine own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Christ the righteousness which is of God by faith he didn't claim any righteousness of his own doing or standing but only the righteousness which is of God by faith Romans 3 22 he says even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus

Christ unto all and upon all them that believe the righteousness of God which is by faith is upon all them that believe Romans 4 verse 5 but to him that worketh not but believeth him that justifieth the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness so how do we get righteous by faith by faith it's amazing isn't it it's almost uh unbelievable that our righteousness isn't by our own working but simply trusting in walking in simple faith and friends today you can know assuredly if you trust him you're righteous you're righteous in his sight now for another witness we see enoch verse 5 we see enoch's walk by faith enoch was translated that he should not see death and was not found because god had translated him but before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased god we don't know a lot about enoch it doesn't tell us much about him in the bible but we do know this in genesis 5 21 and 24 it says that enoch walked with god enoch had this amazing testimony he was one of only two men recorded who have never died he was translated he was taken up you know we've already missed the rapture it happened back there in genesis 5 you know enoch was taken up he was caught up and we know that he walked with god enoch was a man with a testimony a man with a witness and we can learn from enoch of a good report he pleased god by faith and he lived for god in an evil world he walked with god what of our walk today what of our walk with god today on what do we place our faith what we place our faith in affects our walk enoch had this testimony that he pleased god by faith what of you do you want to please god or are you more inclined to want to please yourself or please others our first and foremost consideration should be as enoch had to please god to please god let that be your foremost consideration in everything that you do to please god so to get a good report you need righteousness the righteousness of faith romans 4 5 again it says but to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness again it's amazing isn't it to the one who worketh not so even if you do no works if you simply have faith you have the righteousness of faith today you have the righteousness of god today because the bible says the lord our righteousness he is our righteousness now that's not to discount that we ought to be serious about our faith and living it out and walking it out like enoch did but essentially the righteousness that we can know is god's gift to us secondly let's observe the reward of our faith the reward of our faith verse 6 but without faith it is impossible to please god but he that cometh to god must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him the reward of faith there's a reward promised here he's a rewarder of them that diligently seek him god's people are promised rewards and it's saying here that you cannot please god without faith you know there's many people working and working as brad referred to of religious works of many kinds of commendable character and you know they probably win the nobel peace prize for everything that they do some of these people but they'll miss heaven if they don't have faith because they don't have the righteousness that comes by faith you cannot please god without faith friends today you might be a well-meaning deeply religious person this morning yet miss heaven because you don't have faith the faith of christ you don't have faith in jesus christ to die and save your soul from sin by virtue of his blood shed for your sin here's your only hope today not any religious working or mindset of your own but entirely of believing him and his promise rewards for such there's a promise here for those who diligently seek him god will reward them but without faith it's impossible to please god our next witness noah he needed god's warning he heard the word of warning and he knew the righteousness of faith he would receive the reward of faith god's saving grace verse 7 it says by faith noah being warned of god of things not seen as yet moved with fear prepared an ark for the saving of his house by the which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith there it is again noah became an heir he had that inheritance as it were of the righteousness which is by faith so genesis 6 we see noah was warned he was warned about things not seen no one had seen a flood uh scarcely rain but noah believed god about things that he had never seen that god said would happen and he acted on it in godly fear noah rejected popular opinion you know the crowd would have laughed him to scorn the majority

opinion was against him he trusted god still to the saving of his family so noah's faith was not based on what he could see no one had built it up before noah had an unshakable faith in a society that was faithless and his faith condemned the world and it's god rejecting way so just as with abel noah placed his trust in the savior in a picture as it were as abel sacrificed the lamb it was a picture of the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world the lord jesus and just as noah took refuge in the ark it was a picture of the safety of the refuge christ is for us from god's ram and noah knew the righteousness which is by faith and so did everyone else who stepped into the ark as they stepped into the ark that represents christ and his saving grace they received the righteousness which is by faith where does our true righteousness come from does it come from our works it's to those who worketh not it's not by your works it is by christ by christ in 1 corinthians 1 verse 13 we see but of him are ye speaking to god's people even the carnal corinthians with all their woeful uh ways but of him are ye all of you at corinth in christ jesus who of god is made unto us wisdom and righteousness jesus has made unto you your righteousness it goes on sanctification redemption why that according as it is written he that glorieth let him glory in the lord you don't have anything to glory of you don't any you don't have any wisdom to glory of or righteousness to glory of or sanctification

or holiness or redemption to glory of but your glorying your praising your boasting your adoration should be of him your glorying should be in god so christ is made unto us our righteousness isn't that good news it is good news it is good news that our righteousness is not anything of our own doing but it's of his making it's of his making and we're in right standing with god because of his mercy just as noah was he found salvation from god's wrath from god's judgment by faith in the ark another witness in chapter 11 is abraham verse 8 it says by faith abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive from inheritance in other words the promised land he obeyed and he went out not knowing where he went he went out not knowing where he went now julie can tell you that sometimes when we go driving i'm a bit like that too i get behind the steering wheel and then i look in the map as i'm driving along no not really but i get julie to help me how to guide me she's a wonderful navigator but you know sometimes we can go out not knowing where we're going and abraham was like that he was not knowing where he was going but he obeyed god still he was going out stepping out into the unseen into the unknown he trusted god even though it seemed a crazy thing to do you could say here he was this lost pagan in genesis 11 living in the era of the chaldees and he was raised in a society that worshipped a moon god but god called abraham out of that pagan place and society god called him and god called him and declared him righteous righteous by faith romans 4 3 it says for what saved the scripture abraham believed god and it was counted unto him for righteousness amazing isn't it abraham just believed god and god counted him righteous and it goes on verse 9 of abraham's reward of faith in in verse 9 by faith he sojourned in other words temporarily stayed in the land of promise as in a strange country dwelling in tabernacles with isaac and jacob the he is with him of the same promise verse 10 for he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is god friends there's a wonderful reward of faith there's a wonderful reward of faith for you you that believe here today there's a wonderful reward promised to you the lord jesus says i go to prepare a place for you and he promises that place for you and by faith we can look forward to that other city to come that new community where we will live with our lord it's a part of that reward of faith the lord jesus says there's a place a place a place that he's preparing it will have location location location amen there's no better real estate than that place yet to come that place yet to come it will be near the heart of god this city of god will be a permanent eternal foundation uh this city has god himself as the city planner and developer of this city the city of the living god the heavenly jerusalem the city where god dwells where his unshakable eternal kingdom will reign from as we read in in verse chapter 12 28 there's many rewards of faith today and one is that city yet to come and we can see it as it were that unseen city we can see it by faith there's many rewards of faith today we see as the chapter goes on how sarah trusted god with faith she trusted god she considered god faithful even though it seemed laughable and she did laugh

[24:10] and god rewards faith in amazing ways it says in verse 11 through faith sarah herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age because she judged him faithful who had promised she believed the promises she believed the one who promised to her you shall bear a child and verse 12 therefore spring there even of one and him as good as dead so many as the stars of the sky in multitude

and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable faith clings to god's promises abraham and i was uh sarah clung to god's promise even when it seemed impossible sarah had faith she trusted god even at nearly 90 years of age to bear a child she trusted god even though at first she thought the idea was laughable and her faith was weak at first yet she trusted god and men and women here today you too can be like these men and women of faith ordinary at times doubting very fallible yet in this wonderful chapter of the hall of faith as it were and god can do beyond what we can do we see that verse 13 these all died in faith not having received the promises but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them so they kind of saw the promises in kind of in a uh indistinct way they could see the pictures of the lamb shed bloodshed of the lamb of the passover lamb um of the the ark as a refuge from god's judgment kind of a bit of a sketchy kind of look at the promised messiah to come but we're looking back at the cross now we can see distinctly what god's promise meant and it says of them there were strangers and pilgrims on the earth and it says verse 14 for they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country we're hearing about faith by faith there's a reward we're strangers and pilgrims in other words our citizenship here is temporary you know you might think you're you're an aussie but really that's just temporary you know and and that home that you think you're gonna live forever in is not forever you know it's going to pass away and crumble to bits and probably already is like that tends to be the way doesn't it but there's a city there's a country yet to come there's a place god's preparing and we're strangers and pilgrims we're just passing through and our true homeland our true fatherland as it were is that land that our father is preparing uh that city that he's building and so there's a better country that isn't heavenly god is preparing for god's people a city verse 16. so biblical faith is always about that wonderful work of christ that finished work uh it was in um preview as it were in the old testament and it's in um kind of retrospect for us we can look back at it god's work of redemption it's right through hebrews 11 as we see abel's sacrifice as we see noah's ark and then as we see abraham's substitutionary sacrifice for isaac verse 17 it tells us of abraham how he went to offer his own son accounting that god was able to raise him up even from the dead so abraham here he was just about to strike the heart of his son with a knife to slay his own son while fully trusting that god would either you could conceive resurrect him or provide a substitutionary sacrifice and there it was caught

in a thicket the sacrifice that would take isaac's place and so we see redemption the redeemer right through hebrews 11. and friends today the wonderful reward of faith is something that you can know there's a reward promise for you the reward of faith comes to all who will believe now when you look back to hebrews 11 they weren't all pristine um perfect characters in hebrews 11 the people listed were very ordinary those grapes of the faith were just as weak as you and me maybe weaker who knows and their frailties god still used them despite all of those things in the midst of many challenges and temptations yet he brings blessing and so we see the righteousness of faith just to quickly touch back on on what we've covered so far the righteousness which is by faith there's a promised savior to come who has come he is our righteousness as he was their righteousness and he is our redeemer as he was in abel's lamb in noah's our in isaac's substitute and all who believe are declared righteous there's a wonderful declaration that you're declared righteous by faith we see the reward of faith the reward is that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him as we receive his promise as we believe his promises we see he's promised a place and he's promised a time of being as it were strangers and pilgrims meantime and so to get a good report we need to grab a hold of the righteousness of god today take hold of his righteousness stop striving for your own righteousness you'll fall dismally short every time you know as we read all our our righteousnesses are as filthy rags even the very best that you can do even

that which you could write on your holy cv as it were hey this is what i've done for you god it's just filthy rags but you need his righteousness you need to trust him to be your righteousness this morning and there's a wonderful reward for you the reward of faith that you can have that good report when all said and done it's all about his redeeming grace and it's his promises as we look for that better country and so thirdly just quickly to see there's a reproach of faith a reproach of faith as we see the men and women of god through the pages of hebrews 11 we see that there was a cost there there was a cost factor as it was costly for moses moses made a choice he made a choice by faith moses when he was come to years refused to be called the son of pharaoh's daughter choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of god and to enjoy the places of sin for a season esteeming the reproach of christ the reproach of christ's greater riches than the treasures in egypt moses chose to suffer affliction moses chose that heavy sacrifice to miss out on the treasures of egypt why because he could see that sure reward he could see as as paul did he counted it but loss he counted it as nothing all of his own righteousness that he might win christ he counted as nothing all of his own uh ways to to know that righteousness and that christ promised him and we see that moses fixed his eyes on the author and finisher of his faith he endured it says in verse 27 as seeing him who is invisible and it says verse 28 through faith he kept the passover the sprinkling of blood and he was safe because of the blood and by faith he passed over the red sea verse 29 he trusted god even though it seemed illogical to head to the red sea you know he was in a corner as it were there was no way out humanly speaking no logical way of escape but moses trusted god he trusted god he left the sheep to go in the wilderness for 40 years with a grumbling complaining people to aim for a country he would never see yet he had faith moses himself was a flawed man there's mistakes that moses made many mistakes and frailties yet god used him and this was true of all these heroines and heroes of the faith what was the common element by faith by faith by faith that's what made the difference by faith we can see god's hand work wonders as it did for them as the walls of jericho fell in verse 13 they came crashing down by faith the people didn't draw up their own battle plans or have their own military might or strategy they simply obeyed and trusted god's plan they marched in accordance with god's plan and god acted there's a certain reproach in being a christian today you might face it in your workplace as i have in mine a reproach from following christ a certain reproach what do i mean by reproach it means a sense of shame a sense of being despised there's a certain reproach and and friends consider those who are our company on this pilgrimage of faith who does god choose 1 corinthians 1 26 you know i'll just rush through this a little not many wise not many noble god's chosen the foolish the weak the base the despised the nothings if you like that no flesh should glory in his presence and it goes on of him are ye in christ jesus who is made unto us wisdom righteousness and sanctification and redemption why that he that glorieth let him glory in the lord now god bypasses the plans and wisdom of men to show his own power even in these frail human vessels of hebrews 11. and just to draw it to a close consider the character of even this one in verse 31 verse 31 can see the marvelous grace of our loving lord the marvelous grace but who is counted as one of these heroines of the faith rahab the harlot by faith the harlot rahab perish not with them that believe not when she had received the spies with peace it's an unusual entry into the book isn't it into this list of the esteemed faithful a harlot rahab the harlot that's what she was and that's what the bible calls her it's her title yet her sins were not held against her rahab showed great trust in god and she took a great risk in hiding the spies you can read the story in joshua 2 and 6 she took great risk to hide the spies the enemy of the city where she lived she took them in and gave them safety and hid them and then she tied a red cord on her window as a token of her trust and god spared her and her house and from her line came the messiah himself and she became king david's great great grandmother this idol worshiping pagan prostitute surely she doesn't deserve to be mentioned in hebrews 11 yes she does why by faith by faith and you came too no matter what your past no matter what your present no matter what scars and wounds and hurts and miserable sins you've done god can count you a hero of the faith today by his grace you can know his saving power just as rahab did by the scarlet thread of her redemption another picture as that red cord hung down was a picture of the red crimson blood that was shed for you for me that blood that was red can wash us clean and pure again friends there's hope today and verse 32 through 37 tells us of many others it tells the sun who um wrote wonders wrote righteousness obtained promises stopped the mouths of lions we could think of the fire we could think of the fire we could think of the fire they escaped the sword out of weakness were made strong waxed valiant in fight turned to flight the armies of the aliens it says of some women they

received their dead to life again others were tortured verse 35 some of the heroes of the faith were tortured they were still heroes of the faith you know they didn't have some bed of any some some uh earthly mansion or or worldly prosperity they were tortured to death but it says they obtained a better resurrection there's something beautiful going to happen with the resurrection of these ones verse 36 others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings it talks of bonds of imprisonment people being stoned sawn asunder cut in half not a pleasant thought is it they were tempted slain with the sword they wandered about in sheepskins goat skins being destitute in other words in absolute poverty afflicted and tormented and yet of these it says of whom the world was not worthy friends these are the heroes of the faith we're not in a country like that here in this land but brothers sisters some of our brothers and sisters are even now even this very day of whom the world was not worthy friends we read in 1 peter 4 if you be reproached for the name of christ happy are ye for the spirit of glory and of god resteth on you it says on your part he is glorified the reproach of christ it's of greater riches there's much more we could say we've seen of these heroes and heroines of the faith we've seen numbers who aren't even listed yet their feats are referred to gideon who battled against the odds he depended on god though his army was reduced we see samson he had weaknesses with women he was he made a mess of things quite badly yet he was made strong and defeated the enemies of israel he gets a mention david a man after god's own heart the greatest king of israel yet an adulterer there's hope for you and me isn't there amen there's hope for you and me if hebrews 11 was still being penned today our names would be there by god's grace by god's grace as we bear the reproach of christ we might not face cruel mockings and scourgings bombs and imprisonment and shame but there is a certain reproach of being counted in the number that we're in the company of rahab the harlot the world would count her as rubbish even the world would let alone church people the harlot oh won't have a bar of her won't have anything to do with her she's she's a no-hoper it's a word people use for people in our community isn't it oh no hoppers but there is hope with god isn't there there is hope with god and we can obtain a good report just as they did there is a righteousness of faith as you trust in the lord he is your righteousness the lord our righteousness as you trust in the lord you can be declared righteous by faith there's a reward of faith as there's a place to come he's preparing as there is a better country there's a city whose maker and builder is god there's a reward for those who seek him and there's a reproach of the faith there's a reproach of the faith don't let it put you off endure as mooses did when you're tempted confess your sins and get back on your feet again don't let anything deter you from this earthly pilgrimage we're strangers and pilgrims there's a home yet better to come and we're counted amongst many fallible saints we're identified with the people of god the off scouring is one of the terms used to describe them um as as those who the lord jesus came to he said i'm not come to call the righteous you've got to be a sinner for you to come to me he says i didn't call you if you're righteous if you're righteous here he says i didn't come for you i've come to call the lost come to call the sinful and there is grace still there is grace by faith today and there's righteousness there's reward there may be reproach but press on press on regardless you can obtain a good report by faith let us pray if any of those who are not ready to sustain any of those who are not ready to sustain any of those who are not ready to