

Faith Always Works

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 September 2026

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[illegible]

In Hebrews, chapter 10, we're continuing in our summer series called Good Intention. Really, really great feedback from this series, which I thank you for.

You know, anytime you kind of go into a new series, like, you don't ever know, right? And so I thought this series was going to be an interesting one. I wasn't sure how it would go, but really grateful for the things that you've expressed, how different weeks have brought various areas of conviction.

If you're new with us, what this series has been about is kind of pursuing a healthy, balanced spiritual life. Just as it's important to have balance in life, the same is true spiritually.

So we've looked at topics like balancing time with people, which is important, but also time with God. We've talked about prayer, but also obedience, fasting and feasting.

[1:54] Last week, we looked at work and rest. One of the things you may have noticed is that some weeks I'm kind of emphasizing one of the two so-called extremes more than the other.

The reason why I'm doing that on some weeks is because there may be an area that I think we're likely more imbalanced in. Or it could be something that, hey, like for example, last week with work and rest, I've actually given several messages on the importance of rest, but not that many on the significance of work.

And so that's why I kind of spent more time on that. So anyways, that's what this series has been about. And tonight, we're going to look at another, two things that we tend to see as opposites or extremes, but are actually meant biblically to be held in tension, to be seen as something that actually goes together, and that's faith and works.

Faith and works. And of course, a lot has been debated about these two things and how they relate to one another. So let's look at the faith chapter, if you will, of Hebrews, beginning in Hebrews 10 and reading into chapter 11.

If you're able to stand, please do so as we read God's Word. Hebrews 10, I'm going to start reading at verse 35, and I'll read down through verse 3 of chapter 11.

[3:19] Therefore, do not throw away your what? Your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised.

For yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay, but my righteous one shall live by faith. And if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but those who have what? Faith. And preserve their souls.

Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old receive their commendation.

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of the things that are visible. Let's pray together.

[4:20] Father, we thank you for this time together, and pray that you'd help us understand how to have good intention when it comes to faith and works, to hold these two things in proper balance.

And so we pray that through your Word, you'd come and talk to us now. We pray in Jesus' name and God's people said, Amen. Amen. You can be seated. On August the 13th, 2008, Michael Phelps stood at the starting block at the Beijing Olympics, preparing to swim the 200-meter butterfly.

Now, he'd actually already won, by this point, three gold medals at the Beijing Olympics, and everybody expected that he would win the 200-meter as well. After all, he had not lost the 200-meter butterfly in like six years.

So by all accounts, this was his race to win, and everybody assumed he would. But about 25 meters into the race, something went terribly wrong.

What went terribly wrong was water started actually pouring into his goggles. Now, at first, this was like just an annoyance, but by the time he reached the halfway point with about 100 meters left to go, Phelps couldn't see anything at all.

[5:43] He couldn't see the wall. He couldn't see the lanes. He couldn't see the other swimmers. He couldn't even see the finish line. By his own words, and I quote, I could see nothing.

Now, imagine swimming as fast as you possibly can at Olympic-level speeds. In the Olympic final, everybody around the world is watching you, and you can't see anything.

You can't see what's in front of you. Well, does anybody know what Michael Phelps did? Did he rip off his goggles and just quit? Did he panic in the moment?

Did he slow down and just accept, there's no way I'm going to be able to win this race? No, that's not what Phelps did. What he did was he kept swimming. Now, you might ask, like, how?

How in the world do you keep moving forward when you cannot see what's in front of you? I mean, wouldn't that be an appropriate question? Like, how do you keep swimming when you can't see?

[6:47] One word. Experience. Experience. You see, Phelps had actually practiced this exact situation before.

What he learned to do through practicing this was count his strokes. In fact, his coach, Bob Bowman, deliberately trained Phelps in how to swim when you can't see.

So when the unexpected happened, in all places, the Olympic final, Phelps didn't have to see in order to keep swimming.

And by the way, Phelps not only finished the race, his time was one minute and 52 seconds, breaking his own world record and winning the gold medal.

Phelps won, listen to this, he won not simply because he was a talented swimmer, though he clearly is that. He won, listen to what I'm saying, he won because his experience gave him confidence to keep swimming.

[8:07] His experience gave him confidence to keep swimming. And everybody in this room knows exactly what that's like, don't you? And I don't mean like swimming in the Olympics, I don't think any of you have ever done that before.

But what I know that all of you have experienced before is this, you know that experience brings, say it, confidence. Experience brings confidence.

You know this. How many of you remember when you were the first time driver? Some of you got to go back a few years for that. Do you remember when it was your first time behind the wheel? And you were like nervous and you were looking out every window and you actually had two hands on the wheel.

That's not actually how you drive now. You drive with like your knee, texting somebody and eating a sub sandwich, which I'm pretty sure is illegal and I don't recommend it.

My point is you're far more confident as a driver. Or for some of you, think back when it was the very first time you gave a public speech or you spoke in front of people.

[9:15] You were so nervous, weren't you? Like you wanted to throw up. But after you did it a while, you gained confidence. Or think back like maybe when you started a brand new job and you were very anxious because there were all these unknowns and you're like, I got to learn all these

new things and what is it going to be like to work with all these new people?

But after time, you eventually settled into that job. Are you with me? For some of you, it was flying. Do you remember the first few times that some of you are like, maybe I'm still this way, right? But you went flying and it would hit like a bump of turbulence and you would freak out. Oh my gosh, I'm going to die. We're going to crash. And now if you're like me, you hit a bump and you don't even look up.

It's just like, yeah, it's turbulence. Why? Because your experience in life has brought confidence in those areas. If everybody's with me, say yes.

We know this to be true. Now, experience doesn't mean you know exactly what will happen, just that you're going to get through it. It means that you have been through enough in life that when you cannot see what's ahead, you can still keep swimming forward.

[10:38] Everybody right here. That's Christian faith. That's Christian faith. Or let me say it a different way, and this is meant as a pun.

That's how faith works. That's how faith works. Because listen, when we tend to think about faith, we think about often knowledge, or belief in something, or logic, or reason.

Imagine I were to make this statement for you tonight. What if I said, I have faith in the Vikings this year? However unfounded that might be, if I stood before you and I said, I knew that would get a reaction one way or the other, if I said, I have faith in the Vikings, how would most people interpret what I'm saying?

I believe in them. I believe in them. Right? And so that tends to be the way we think about faith. And unfortunately, what that has created is this false dichotomy in Scripture between faith and works.

Is everybody tracking with me? And the dichotomy that's been created, the extremes, if you will, is this. Well, faith, yeah, that's what I believe. And works, yeah, that's what I do.

[12:00] The problem is, the Bible will not let you think that way. It's not that those statements are not true, they're just not complete. The Bible actually sees faith and works as things that are to be held in tension.

Like two sides of the same coin. Two things that actually work work together. Look at verse 1 of Hebrews 11. Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Now, most of you probably know this verse. You probably do have this one on a coffee mug or something like that. It is one of the most familiar verses in the New Testament, and it's by far one of the most explicit definitions of faith in all the Bible.

So let's unpack it for a little bit, and I'm going to spend a decent portion of my time just on this verse trying to get you to understand what I think the author has in mind here.

I'm going to teach you a little bit of Greek, which you'll forget by the time the sermon's over, but that's okay, right? Anybody want to nerd out with me for just a moment? I think we need to understand this verse.

[13:14] So here's the verse. In Greek would be faith is the hypostasius, the hypostasius of things hoped for, and the elencos, the elencos of things not seen.

The hypostasius of things hoped for, and the elencos of things not seen. Now let's break that down. First, hypostasius. Hypostasius. This is a very, very difficult word in Greek, and oftentimes there are difficult words in a particular language that becomes challenging to translate in another.

Are you with me? Say yes. Now the very literal meaning of this word would be like under, hypo, the standing or a foundation. So like getting to the very core or something like that.

Now that is why some of your translations, including the ESV, which I'm reading from, will translate it assurance. Okay? Everybody look at your Bible or your Bible app.

Hopefully you do have that open or maybe you're just lazy and depend on the screen. Right? But when we read it earlier, what did it say? Assurance. Some of your translations will say that.

[14:25] And it's trying to kind of almost get the idea of like this firm foundation. And I actually think that's true, but I don't really think it gets the idea across that the author is trying to, in other words, it's almost a byproduct of what the real idea is.

And so, a better translation, and some of your translations will have this. You might look at your translation now. Does it have the word substance? Or have you ever heard that translation?

That faith is the substance of things hoped for. Well, this translation is getting to the real existence of something, the essence of something, the substance of a thing.

Are you with me? Are you with me? Now, the reason why I think this is a better translation, if you think, for example, the hypostatic union, and now I'm getting really Bible nerd on you, which is dealing with the very substance and essence of Jesus, that He's fully God and fully man.

It's dealing with the very essence of who Jesus is and what His nature is. Now, why am I nerding out here and spending all the time on this because this is the question you have to answer?

[15:40] Does the author mean that faith is the assurance of what I hope for or that faith is the experience, the very essence and substance of the thing that I hope for?

Do you see how that's different? And I think, and what I'm going to try to prove to you is it's the latter, is that faith is the experience, the very substance and essence of the thing that we're hoping for.

Second word, *helencost*. *Helencost*. This word, it's kind of like a legal term. It's the idea of evidence. Now, the ESV says conviction, but it really is the idea of evidence, which again is something that we experience.

Like substance. It's something that we look at, we behold, we experience in a real way. So, I take all that and let me kind of land the plane on this point.

If you've zoned out, what are you doing? Zoned out, because this is really big. This is really big.

What the writer, I believe, what I believe, that the author is trying to communicate here is that faith is more than an internal mental affirmation.

[16:59] That is, it's more than a belief. It is that, but it's more than that. It's more than an assurance. It is that, but it's more than that.

But faith is actually experiencing the substance or evidence of the very thing you're hoping for.

Now, just think. Okay? Think on that. Let me say it again. That what faith really is, it's experiencing the essence, the substance of the thing I'm hoping for.

Now, listen. And that experience not only strengthens my belief, but it produces a behavior. It does both.

It strengthens a belief, and it produces a behavior. Is everybody, I'm actually going slow on purpose. not because I think you're slow, but because I really want you to understand what the author is saying.

[18:01] Faith is experiencing the substance of the very thing that you hope for, and experiencing that very substance produces a belief and produces a behavior.

I think maybe the best way to explain this is to illustrate it. Maybe this will be helpful. Now, for those of us that have lived in Minnesota for very long, what tends to, sometimes earlier, but what tends to happen by at least Thanksgiving or early December, we have usually experienced our first what?

Snow. Our first snow. There it is. Nobody wants to talk about this right now, right? It's August. Can we at least just get through August without thinking about snow? But that usually, now sometimes it'll be earlier, but usually by Thanksgiving or early December, we've had our first snow, and it hangs around until, sometimes it'll hang around until about February.

I'm speaking generally. It's not uncommon for it to hang around until February, is it? No, it's not. But what tends to happen in March?

Generally speaking, what tends to happen in March is that, have you experienced this? We get a string of like 47, maybe 50, maybe 52 degree days, and what happens to the snow?

[19:26] It melts. Are you with me? You can actually respond. You do live here, right? Okay, so you have experienced this. And have you noticed that during that stretch of warm weather, the very odd behavior that happens to Minnesotans, not all of them, but some of them, what do they do?

They put on shorts and they wear t-shirts outside. Like the snow's not even gone. And you're like, you do realize it's still 47 degrees outside, right?

Like, listen, listen, what are they doing? They are dressing and acting like summer. They're dressing and acting like summer.

And by the way, people are not the only ones that respond this way. Creation does as well. Does anybody know what flower this is?

It's the crocus flower. The crocus flower. Really? I'm surprised I'm teaching you this, right? I figured you would know this. This is the crocus flower. And it will come out.

[20:42] And it will stay the rest of the time. It's one of the very first flowers that will bloom. Now, here's my question. Are you still with me? Is it summer yet?

No. Has the thing that you're hoping to arrive arrived yet? No, it has not.

Then why are people acting like it's summer? Why is creation starting to bloom? Because what do we know is likely going to happen again in March?

It happens very frequently. It's going to snow again, isn't it? Right? Summer is clearly not here yet. So, so, so what, what's happening? What's happening?

Here's the point. even though the thing that we hope for, summer, isn't here yet, people, along with creation, start acting like it's summer because they experienced the substance and evidence of it.

[21 : 52] Are you with me? does anyone actually believe when that happens in March that summer's not coming? You may question it.

Like, I know you true Minnesotans, you're like, yeah, summer's never going to get, but do you actually believe it's never coming? know. No, you know it's coming. And how do you know it's coming?

You have proof. You have proof. You have evidence. You have the substance of summer that's already here, and there's two things that are acting together in this experience is that your belief that summer is coming is strengthened and you acting like it's summer is produced as well.

That's why you put on shorts and short sleeves. That's faith. That's faith. That's what I think the author is trying to communicate here.

That faith is experiencing the very substance of what we hope for, and that experience, that evidence of it, not only produces further belief in it, but we act on that faith.

[23 : 22] We work. And in that moment, faith works every time. Now, what is it that we as Christians hope for? What are these future things that we set our hope on?

Is it a new car? Anybody here hoping that maybe there might be a new car in your driveway when you wake up tomorrow? Or maybe it's money, like I'm hoping I win the lottery and then I'm taken care of for the rest of my life.

Or maybe you're hoping to get married someday. Or maybe you're hoping to get a home and move into your own place, whatever it is. Are these the things that Christians are hoping for?

Well, some of them, but it's not what the author of Hebrews is telling you you're hoping for. The author has actually already told these readers what it is they're hoping for in the future.

Go back to Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 13. Now, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, surely I'll bless you and multiply you.

[24 : 29] And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. What was Abraham waiting on? The promise. A future promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves and in their disputes an oath is made for confirmation.

So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath.

So that two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

And now look in chapter 10. Therefore, don't throw away your confidence, which is a great reward. Why? Why should you not throw away your confidence? For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised.

So, what are the things that you hope for? the things that you hope for are the promises that God has given to you about your future.

[25 : 38] The promises that God has given, have you experienced the full promise of what God has given you concerning your future, Christian?

No, you have not. You have not experienced, have you experienced full and total glorification? If you have, why are you here, right? I mean, you're not there yet, sweetheart.

You're not there yet. You're going to be there, but you're not there. You have not experienced the fullness of everything God has promised. That's the thing that you're hoping for, right?

Things like, I could spend the rest of my time giving you promises about your future. Here are just a few things. Look at Philippians chapter 1, verse 6. I'm sure of this, that he that began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

One of the promises is that the work that has started in you will be brought to completion, praise God. Now, how do you know that it will be brought to completion?

[26 : 44] Because it started. You've actually already tasted of the very substance and evidence of that final completion because a work has begun in you.

Do you see that? Or take, for example, John chapter 6 verse 40. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day.

One of the future promises that we have is the resurrection. The resurrection. Now, how do you know of that thing that you hope for? Jesus walked out of a grave.

Right? Like, you already have the very substance. I'm glad three of you are excited about this. You have the very substance and evidence of the thing that you hope for.

One more. 1 John chapter 3 verse 2, Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we will know that when He appears, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is.

[27 : 53] How do we know that Jesus will return? That He will appear? That we will see Him?

Answer, He has already come. He's already appeared. In human history, in time and space, we already have in the birth of Jesus, in the incarnation, the very substance and evidence that Jesus comes.

So what is the basis of my hope in this thing that's been promised about my future? Faith is the substance, the evidence of the thing I hope for now.

Does everybody see that? So Christian faith is experiencing the substance or evidence of things we hope for which gives us confidence to keep swimming now even when we cannot see what's ahead.

That is exactly what the author intends. If you understand the context of this book, knowing that these Christians who had water in their goggles were thinking about going back to Judaism, the author is saying, how could you do that?

You have faith. You've experienced the very substance promise of God. Keep swimming.

[29 : 15] Keep swimming. Because you have the guarantee both in belief and in behavior of God's promises to you.

So, now he's going to give us a few examples of this to further prove the point. I'm not going to take as long on these next 15 points, these next few points as I did on that one.

But is everybody with me? Does everybody understand faith? Faith. Okay. We'll talk about why that's important in just a moment. He's now going to give some examples. Look at verse 11 in chapter 11.

Verse 11 says, By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive even when she was past the age since she considered him faithful who had promise.

Now, I'm about to give you, actually, the author is, about to give you examples proving verse 1. Are you with me? I'm going to give you some examples that prove the very thing I just talked about regarding Christian faith.

[30 : 21] The first example here is Sarah. You know the story? Sarah is well past childbearing age. She receives a future promise. What was that future promise?

You're going to have a son. You're going to have a baby. You're going to have Isaac. This promised son. And of course, Sarah initially laughs. And why does Sarah laugh?

Because she has water in her goggles. What do I mean by that? Sarah cannot see a scenario in which that's even remotely possible.

Sarah is old. My womb is dead. I'm old. Like there's water in my gut. There's no way I could possibly see that future.

This thing I'm supposed to hope for in the future, I can't see it. There is no conceivable way that this could happen.

[31 : 22] Are you with me? Then what does Sarah do? According to the author of Hebrews, Sarah does some spiritual math. Some spiritual math. And here are the things that she begins to think about.

What do I know about the one who made the promise? What I know about God is he's completely trustworthy. Amen?

What I know about God is he's completely trustworthy. And how do I know that he's completely trustworthy? Because as I look back over my life for decades God has provided for us.

He has brought us wealth, abundance, protection, peace. In other words, listen, come here, come here, come here. What did Sarah have? A crocus flower.

She had a crocus flower. Come on. She had an experience with the very substance of what is hoped for.

[32 : 28] She had experienced God's faithfulness before, which allowed her to believe in God's faithfulness in the future.

Are you with me? And so what does she do? What does Sarah do in response to this crocus flower? What she does is she puts on shorts in March.

like I mean that. I'm meaning this metaphorical, right? She puts on shorts in March. What I mean is that she trusts summer's coming.

So good. I hope you're listening. What do I mean by summer? Isaac. I believe a baby is in my future because of faith.

What is faith? The experiencing the substance of what I hope for and the evidence of the things I do not see. Did she know how it would happen?

[33 : 29] No. She just knows he will. And as a result she keeps swimming. She keeps walking by faith.

One more example. Abraham chapter 11 verse 17. By faith Abraham when he was tested offered up Isaac. He had received the promises in the act of offering up his only son.

Of whom it was said through Isaac shall your offspring be named. Now this is the pinnacle story in Abraham's life. The entire promise that was given to Abraham and Sarah was the promise of this son.

And now what has God asked Abraham to do? To offer up the very son that he promised through whom the nations would be blessed. Does that make any sense to you?

Why would I offer up the very one you're saying is going to be to whom the blessings flow? And yet God is asking me to do this. So what does Abraham do?

[34 : 32] Verse 19. Look at it. He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead from which figuratively speaking he did receive him back.

In other words what did Abraham do? Abraham did spiritual math. Have you zoned out? Please don't right? Like hear this. I want you to hear this.

This is what I think the author is telling you is going on in Abraham's mind. The entire reason I have Isaac in the first place is God does miraculous things.

He brought life out of a dead womb. So why would it be any less to believe that God could raise Isaac from the dead?

He essentially brought him from the dead. And so if he did that he can raise him from the dead. What did Abraham have?

[35 : 42] A crocus flower. And what did that enable Abraham to do? Put on shorts in March knowing that somehow some way summer would come.

Summer would come. Namely that Isaac would be saved and God would fulfill his promise. That's faith. That's faith.

Did Abraham know how? No he did not. In fact Abraham got it wrong because Isaac didn't actually die. You know the story. But he doesn't know how it's going to happen.

What he knows is he will. He will. And God did. Because faith is the substance of things hoped for and the very real evidence of what is not seen.

Now a couple of quick implications and I have one quick point and we're done. Are we good? It's Saturday night. We've got nowhere else to go. We've got no other service. Come on. Real quick.

[36 : 45] Real quick. Number one. One implication of this is that Christian faith is based on facts. It's based on facts. Often when we think about faith we think of this idea of blind belief.

some kind of leap of faith. It's very much like the scene in Miracle on 34th Street when the mom tries to tell the little girl what faith is.

You must believe in Mr. Kringle and keep right on doing it. You must have faith in him. But he didn't get me that that doesn't make sense mommy. Faith is believing in things when common sense tells you not to.

Faith is believing in things when common sense tells you not to. Huh? Huh? Huh? That's exactly right. Huh? Faith is believing when common sense tells you not.

That's not faith. That's stupidity. That's stupid to believe in what common sense tells you not to. Are you with me?

[37:51] That is not Christian faith. Faith is not believing when common sense tells you not to. It's actually experiencing a real substance and evidence of that which is real.

And so it's based on fact. Listen, we are not gathered here this evening staking our life on Jesus with blind optimism. We are gathered here this evening because Jesus was a man that lived in actual history 2,000 years ago and had hundreds and hundreds of testimonies of people regarding his life, his death, and his resurrection.

There were literally hundreds of people that saw Jesus resurrected from the dead. That is not blind faith. And tonight is not a course in apologetics.

I will not go through all the reasons. My point is that faith is not believing when common sense tells you not to. Faith is believing because you've experienced the very substance of what is real.

Second, is that faith is not confidence in what God didn't promise. Faith is not confidence in what God didn't promise.

[39:10] I'm just going to mention this briefly because I think it is very important. And that is, why have some people walked away from the faith or become very bitter with God?

And the answer is you put words in His mouth. You made God say and promise things God never said or promised. Like, I know my spouse is not going to die.

Or, I just know this disease is going to be healed. God never promises that. He promises you resurrection.

He promises you life even in death. But you know people, and some of you are people, that have made God say something He never said.

And you actually made a promise that God never promised. So it's very important that when you rest on the promises of God, you make sure they're actual promises of God.

[40:17] Amen? Because faith is not confidence in what God didn't promise. Thirdly, and finally, a third implication of understanding faith this way really gets to the idea of being good intention, that is that faith works.

Faith keeps swimming. Faith doesn't stand still. Faith keeps moving forward. Look at chapter 11, verse 8, we'll end with this. By faith Abraham did what?

Obedied. When he was called to go to a place that he'd receive as an inheritance, and he went out not knowing where he was going, can I translate that? He had water in his goggles. He had no idea where he was swimming.

He couldn't see the wall, couldn't see the lanes, had no idea where the finish line was, but he kept swimming. By faith he went to live in a land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob errs with him of the same promise.

For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations whose designer and builder is God. So, I'm going to end with this. How do you know Abraham had faith?

[41:27] I thought, like, was it just Abraham sitting around saying, God, I believe you? Just like you believe in the Vikings this season, right?

I believe that you are. is that it? No. How do you know he had faith? He obeyed. He obeyed.

Faith is not a bunch of people sitting around thinking, contemplating, and reading theology books.

You know Abraham had faith because he left when he didn't know where he was going.

he was prepared to offer up Isaac when he had no idea how God would ultimately get Isaac out of that. And Hebrews 11, we don't have time to go through it all.

Hebrews 11 is full of people whose faith worked. Their faith acted. Noah built an ark when nobody had even seen it rain.

[42:35] Moses left Egypt not fearing the anger of the king. Israel kept walking around Jericho believing that it would come down. Gideon took an army into battle outnumbered 400 to 1.

Hebrews 11 is full of examples of people that put their shorts on in March. They acted, they obeyed, and they kept swimming with foggy goggles.

Because they had experienced the substance and evidence of the God who made promises about their future.

And I assure you, read it, they did crazier things than wear shorts and 50 degrees. Way crazier. The point is, faith and obedience are two sides of the same coin.

They must be held in tension. Faith is not something in your head and works or what you do with your feet. No. Faith is action.

[43:47] And it may begin with thinking through whether the one that's calling me to action is trustworthy. But if he is, I act.

I believe. I have faith. faith. Now, I probably don't have time to do that. I don't even want to look at what time it is. Right? So, I can already feel this took longer than I wanted to.

But hey, you get the full version. Right? Sunday morning gets the leftover. Right? So, I would like just, and of course you can always leave and I'll just make fun of you as you do.

But I think it would be important because I know what some of you are thinking, but okay, if faith includes works, then how do we understand like Paul when he seems to talk about faith as completely separate from works?

And then there's James who talks about faith as a part of, like how do we understand these apostles that seem to have a very different view of faith and works?

[44:55] No, they do not. They do not. And I'm not going to have a lot of time to unpack this, but I'm going to give you the overview and then we are done. So, notice what James says. James is actually addressing the very thing that Hebrews 11 is about.

Look at it. Now, someone's going to say, I have faith, or you have faith, and I have works. Do you see the distinction? Right? Oh, sure, you're the faith person.

Good for you. I'm the works person. But show me your faith apart from works. And I'll show you my faith by my works. Do you see that?

You believe that God is one. Will you do well? Even the demons believe and shudder. Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

And what example does he use? Hebrews 11, Abraham. Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?

[45:55] You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works, and the scripture was fulfilled that says Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness, and he was called a friend of God.

Do you see that? It's like almost identical to Hebrews chapter 11. Faith works. That they experienced the very evidence and substance of something, and they obeyed.

they lived out their faith. So then how do we understand the apostle Paul when he says something like this? Romans 4.

What then shall we say was gained by... Everybody's using Abraham, right? What was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?

If Abraham was justified by... He has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say?

[46:55] That Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness. So in other words, Paul is clear that you cannot be saved by works.

It's very, very clear here in Romans. Even in Galatians. In Galatians, Paul will talk about this as well. Now, the question we should ask is, what does Paul mean by works?

Are you still with me? Because what you're going to discover is that James is using works in a different way than Paul is. So you should ask, what does Paul mean by works?

We'll just keep reading in chapter 4 verse 13. The promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be the heir of the world did not come through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. And then in Galatians 2 he says this, we know that a person is not justified by works. What kind of works? Works of the law.

[48:08] but through faith in Jesus Christ. So we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works.

What do you mean not by works? Works of the law. Because the works of the law, no one will be justified.

This is big. And I really could do a whole sermon on this, but I'm making it quick. James is talking about, listen, works that naturally come from faith.

Paul is talking about works that come from the law. With regards to the works related to faith, Paul actually entirely agrees with James.

Look at Ephesians chapter 2 verse 8. For by grace you've been saved through, this is not of your own doing, it's a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

[49:17] Watch, we leave out verse 10. For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk walk in them.

Here's the summary, we're done. Paul and James are addressing two completely different situations. James is addressing those that think faith is merely intellectual, it's all knowing, and no doing, and James says that's not faith.

Faith is not having some mental belief, but never acting on it. Even the demons believe, but they don't obey.

Paul, on the other hand, is addressing those that have added the works of the law to faith as a way of trying to earn your salvation, and that's impossible, for we are not saved by works of the law. It is not our works that gain our righteous status before God. That could never be. It is only the very righteousness of Jesus Christ received by faith.

[50:41] Amen? Therefore, both actually agree that faith and works are inseparable. So when we say that we are not saved by works, what we mean, at least I hope what we mean, is that we're not talking about works that come naturally from faith.

We're talking about works that are meant to achieve faith. And there is no work you can do to achieve salvation.

But I tell you this much, Lazarus, when you taste of the very substance of new life, you will walk out of your grave.

Because faith works. Faith works. Well, I'm skipping a whole section of the message to land the plane.

Here's what I'm going to say to you tonight, Faith Family, as I move to the conclusion here. You should, and I hope you do tonight, have lots of confidence because you're surrounded by lots of evidence.

[51:57] You should have lots of confidence as a Christian because you're surrounded by lots of evidence. You're surrounded by promises that God has fulfilled that one day you had never seen.

You had never seen. And so it will be with your future. Faith family, if you're a Christian tonight, you have the ultimate crocus flower. The ultimate crocus flower.

You've already experienced the very substance and evidence of the thing you hope for. The evidence that summer is eventually coming.

Amen? And what does that mean for you today? What it means is that if the goggles of your life are full of water, and it is very hard to see where you're going, look to the very substance and evidence of your salvation in Jesus Christ, and Jesus will give you all the confidence you need to keep swimming.

And all God's people said, Amen. may may