

As I visited a member of my congregation at the hospital, the member said to me, "I don't know how people can do life without faith, without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." Faith. But now what exactly is faith? Is it a blind leap in the dark? Is it the disregard for all fact? A fuzzy feeling that everything will somehow work out? Verse one of our text defines faith like this: "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see"(Hebrews 11:1).

Faith is a solid trust in things we can't prove. This does not mean that faith is blind, however, faith sees God's promises and bases its trust on that. For example faith believes that the universe was created by God's command (Hebrews 11:3). While we do not have a videotape proving that God created the world in this manner, we believe it to be true because God said that's the way it happened. That's faith.

But now doesn't that just go to prove that faith is blind? I mean what about all the facts that point to how the world was created from a big explosion? Perhaps you have been taught to believe in school that evolution and the "big bang" theory are the proper explanations for the way the world and all life was brought into being. To tell you the truth it takes more faith to believe that than what the Bible teaches. Let's examine the facts so you can see what I mean.

The world we live in is one of order. Gravity keeps us from flying across the room. The air has just the right amount of oxygen to sustain us but not too much less it go up in flame every time someone lit a match. Migratory birds fly thousands of miles without a map and don't get lost. Bones break but know how to mend themselves once they are set. To believe that this complex, yet orderly world could come into existence through a huge explosion is like saying that if you dumped a bag of Scrabble game-pieces on the floor that the letters would somehow arrange themselves into a poem! Besides that if we really descended from apes, and birds from dinosaurs the world should be filled with the fossils of animals that were in the middle of evolving from dinosaur to bird, or ape to human. Scientists around the world have been looking for these "missing links" for close to 150 years now and they have yet to find one. Why? Because they don't exist and never did!

When Darwin formulated his theory in the mid-1800s, he admitted that there was no evidence among the fossils of ancient animals to support his idea that one species gradually changed into another. In other words, Darwin recognized that if that kind of gradual change had really happened, there would be plenty of fossils of the so-called "transitional links," or fossils of ancient animals that filled in the gaps between the different kinds of animals. For instance, if fish became amphibians, there would logically be fossils of transitional animals that were part fish and part amphibian.

Now fast-forward your minds to modern times. In late 1990's, Dr. Stephen Jay Gould, a leading evolutionist and professor of biology and geology at Harvard University, as he talks about what said used to be a "trade secret" among scientists:"One hundred and twenty years of

fossil research (after Darwin), it has become abundantly clear that the fossil record will not confirm this part of Darwin's predictions.... A species does not arise gradually by the gradual transformation of its ancestors."

You don't have to take his word for it, either. You can check it out yourself. You can pick up any standard textbook on paleontology, which is the study of fossils, and see the gaps in their charts. It's amazing, for instance, that evolutionists believe it took 100 million years for animals without backbones to develop into animals with backbones, but there is not a single transitional fossil that has been found despite that tremendous lapse of time.

I remember once in Bay City, Michigan, meeting up with Dr. Kevin Peil who worked at Dow Chemical in Bay City, Michigan. He once told me that another scientist had told him that evolution was scientific and Christianity was just a faith based system. Dr. Peil responded, please don't call evolution science. It too is a faith based system. You have to have faith in how you say everything started. You say, "In the beginning hydrogen." Where did the hydrogen come from?" He went on to say, that his faith is rooted in a real God, who speaks the truth and has recorded the information in a textbook that has been around for thousands of years. But we can learn not just from Dr. Peil about faith. But also from Abraham.

The patriarch Abraham can teach us a lot about faith and where we are headed. When God told Abraham to leave his hometown and go to a place that he would show him Abraham went. Although he didn't have any idea where God was taking him, he knew that in the long run God would lead him to his home in heaven far away from the pain and sorrows of this life. Verse 10 our text says, "[Abraham] was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). In the same way we may not know where God is going to take us here on earth but we do know that he is leading us to a home in heaven.

But isn't it wishful thinking to believe that there is such a place called heaven where all our sorrows and pains will be taken away? Isn't that just a form of escape man has made up to flee the harsh realities of life? Let me ask you this. Does it take any more faith to believe that heaven exists than to believe that there is such place called the Amazon? Have you ever been to the Amazon before? No? How do you know that it really exists? Oh, you've seen pictures of it and know of people who have been there before. How do you know those pictures you saw were really taken at a place called the Amazon? How do you know your friends really took a trip there and weren't just pulling your leg when they told you about it? You don't know do you? You have to take it on faith that there is a place called the Amazon where there are rain forests, tribes of indigenous people, and all sorts of creepy crawly things.

How is that any different than believing that there is a heaven? Sure, we've never been there but we know someone who has. Jesus once said, "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). While we might not have a photographic picture of heaven we do have a few descriptions of it.

The Apostle John writes, “After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven...² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. ³ And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.

Should it be any harder to believe that there is a place called heaven than believing that there is a place called the Amazon? No, in fact it should be easier because God himself tells us about heaven and we know that our God does not lie. God definitely has plans for you. He has prepared heaven for you by sending his Son to die on the cross for your sins. Learn about Jesus. Believe in him so that you can live in that wonderful place God has prepared for you.

Knowing and believing that there is a place called heaven will affect the way that we live here on earth. Faith is more than just a special knowledge; it’s a homing beacon. Faith makes us restless to be here because we know we have heaven to look forward to. Abraham demonstrated that restlessness in his life. God had promised to give him the land of Canaan but neither Abraham nor his son, or grandson saw the fulfillment of that promise. They ended up living in tents as nomads without land to call their own. This minor inconvenience didn’t bother the patriarchs because they were looking forward to the heavenly Canaan anyway.

In the same way when we too keep our eyes focused on heaven it won’t bother us that we troubles, illness, and the aches and pains of getting older. None of those things can compare with the wonderful riches that await us in heaven. The story is told about two men walking through the city on a cold winter’s night. Snow was falling and the wind howling. The one man wandered aimlessly here and there; poking around to find whatever shelter there might be from the weather. He was homeless and had no place to go. The other man was walking in the same storm but he hummed a tune and strode with a purpose for in the distance he saw the lights of his home. There would be warmth, a hot meal, and a loving family to welcome him. So we too can stride through life with a purpose even when tough things happen to us, for we are headed home to heaven where a loving God awaits us.

Although we know it’s to our benefit to stay focused on heaven we so easily become distracted don’t we? Eyes that should be raised heavenward remain riveted on earthly pleasures. Feet that should be marching towards the shores of heaven are mired in earth’s swamps. Hands that should be reaching for eternal treasures are wrapped around the gaudy marbles of this world. Backs that should be straining in kingdom effort are bent in valueless pursuits. Friends, don’t let that happen. Put God first in everything. Leave behind whatever threatens to get in the way of your walk home. Don’t be afraid to throw off the security blankets this world has to offer because God has already wrapped you in a heavenly one. Through faith you know where you have come from and where you are going. Set your sights on heaven and walk through life with a purpose. Amen.