

FAITH AND OUR FUTURE

Tim Williams
Sunday, March 5th, 2017

Scripture Reading

I Corinthians 13:13

And now these three remain; faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Hebrews 11:1-6

1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. 4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. 5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Over the next 4 weeks, including this week, the eldership will be "checking the foundation" to ensure we as a congregation are on solid ground and strong. Then we will continue to move forward with the task at hand.

Today I want to talk to you about Faith and our future. Next week Larry will speak on hope and our future. Grant will speak on Love and our future on Sunday, March 19th, and then Paul Yoder will provide a conclusion on Sunday, March 26th by sharing a lesson on Jesus, the Christ, the center of our faith, hope, and love.

Before I begin talking about faith, I want to share some information on the current situation and the change that is thrust upon us all: Doug is no longer our evangelist. He is no longer leading our ministries, and he is no longer our preacher. This is a change no one saw coming 6 months ago! But it has happened and we will move forward.

The elders have been engaged in planning and conversing with the congregation. We spent the past month meeting and talking to as many as we could. We still welcome your input and discussion. We had this discussion without providing much information because we wanted to hear – unfettered by our thoughts, opinions, or any preconceived

assumptions – what the congregation thought about an evangelist/minister. The congregation responded admirably and gave careful thought and consideration to the subject. Then you communicated your thoughts, feelings, and suggestions to the eldership.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. It was interesting to hear everyone's input. While there are many viable options, the response was, as may be expected, resoundingly clear; the great majority want to hire a man that, first and foremost, is strong in evangelism, ministry, and service, but will also be a man with good preaching and teaching skills that is sound in the Bible.

The eldership has already begun the process of organizing an evangelist/minister search committee and there are many other steps that need to take place. We will keep the congregation up to date with announcements and meetings. You are always welcome to come talk to the eldership or any one of us.

It was the eldership's decision to have the congregation spend a month conversing about the issue and talking to each other and the eldership prior to conducting a survey. This allowed time for thoughtful consideration and the exchange of ideas before finalizing your thoughts in a survey.

It is now time for that survey. It is available in the lobby. We are asking that you choose the top 5 most important duties you want an evangelist/minister to perform, and number them in order of importance 1 through 5 with 1 being the most important. Then choose 5 attributes you think are important in a candidate and number them 1 to 5 in order of importance with 1 being the most important. There is also a place where you can put the pay range you think is appropriate for an evangelist/minister, and lastly, if you were one of the people that suggested something other than one fulltime evangelist/minister there is a place to note that. Any comments or explanations can be provided on the back of the survey. All surveys must have your full name on them and must be given to an elder by Sunday, March 19th. If you have any questions, please talk to any of the elders.

We are not waiting on the survey to begin the process and have already begun to form a committee which we want to be a diverse representation of the congregation.

Earthquake!

When an earthquake shakes your home and then subsides, the first thing you do is check the foundation to make sure it is solid, strong, and properly set. A solid and secure foundation means your house is safe to occupy. This is simple wisdom! Once the foundation has been checked and found to be secure, you can move forward with confidence to take care of the business at hand.

We are in the midst of change. Change is like an earthquake. It is unsettling, casts doubt on your security, and can cause you to question the future. It can be downright scary!

So what do we do? Caution is wise under the circumstances and we should make plans. But we should do exactly what we would do in an earthquake! Let us check the foundation!

Foundation of Faith

As our scripture reading said in I Corinthians 13:13, 3 things remain, faith, hope, and love. Remain, in this instance, means they are the most important. They are our foundation. I want to talk about the importance of our foundation of faith:

What is faith?

It is not the common definition of believing in something without proof or when logic tells you not to. The one dictionary definition I like is; “belief and trust in and loyalty to God” (Merriam-Webster).

The Bible defines faith in Hebrews 11:

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

This faith is not in a man, not in an organization, not in a plan, not even in each other as the body of Christ. This faith is, of course, in God:

Hebrews 11:3 & 6

3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

But for us it is more than just faith in God. It is faith in God through Christ.

Hebrews 1:1-3

1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

In Romans 1:9 Paul defines the gospel; *"the gospel of his (God's) son."* Then in verses 16 and 17 he talks about this gospel:

Romans 1:16-17

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

This faith in Christ & the resurrection requires full and total commitment:

Philippians 3:7-14

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Faith in God, faith in Jesus, faith in the promise of resurrection. This faith should be as solid as a rock for all of us here. It should not be shaken in the least by the change we face. We should all be able to say (or sing) Galatians 2:20:

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ and no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me!

What do we do now?

I Corinthians 15:57-58

57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

We must be unified, stand firm in Christ, and let NOTHING move us! Each person that is a part of this congregation needs to give themselves FULLY to the work of the Lord and then we can move forward. We have plenty of work to do. Don't let uncertainties, disagreements, human failings, or anything that may happen come between you and Christ and the work we have to do in His service. We need to continue to strive to do God's work and to grow in our understanding of Christ. We need to work together. We need to encourage one another . We need to pray for one another.

If you are worried or have doubts or are unsure of your faith or your future, please come to the back and talk to one of the elders. Or contact us and talk to us at any time.

Contacting the elders

We, the eldership, are available for any spiritual needs you may have. Call any of us, our cell phone numbers are in the directory. All 4 of us do texts. When you contact one of us, let us know if it is for all the elders and we will share the information with the others. Grant Deitch and Larry Mackey are not on Facebook, but you may contact Paul Yoder or myself by Facebook and we will contact the other elders. A good way to reach us is by using the elder's Gmail account: Our email address is camphillelders@gmail.com. If you send an email to this address it automatically and immediately is sent to all the elders individual email addresses!

So let us be firm and resolute and united in Christ and his work. Our foundation remains strong!

I would like to close with a prayer from Ephesians after which we will have the closing song.

Ephesians 3:14-21

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.