

Jubilee Message

Hebrews 11:1-2

Rev. Jeff Chapman ~ January 12, 2020 ~ Faith Presbyterian Church

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¹Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ²Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. (Hebrews 11:1-2, NRSV)

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Faith is worth nothing unless the object of its focus is faithful. As I've said before, great faith in thin ice will not get you across the frozen lake. Weak faith in thick ice, however, when acted upon, will get you safely to the other side. If you put your faith in anything in this world – your own goodness, your career, your marriage or children, your health, your money or possessions, your performance, your religion – hoping that these things will, in the end, save you, justify you, give you a lasting identity, you will have put your faith in thin ice. However, as we put our faith in Jesus Christ, the one who is eternally faithful, we will never be disappointed. This is more than wishful thinking. This is the conviction of things not yet seen.

We have spent this weekend looking backwards and remembering how God has been faithful year in and year out for fifty years. The stories of God's faithfulness in and through this congregation are far too many for us to recount. For that reason, as we now look forward we can do so as people of faith, trusting that God will continue to do what God has said he will do.

People in our community will continue to pass away. We lost one quite dear to us just this week. We will lose others this year. Do we have faith that these brothers and sisters are not lost to us but only separated from us by a time which, in retrospect, will seem to us the blink of an eye?

God will continue to call us to accept responsibilities for which we feel completely inadequate. Do we have faith that God will equip those he calls to do that which he calls them to do?¹

God will continue to bring people into this church who are different than us. Do we have faith that Jesus, as he leads others to us who also trust him, will unite us all in ways that are deep enough to bridge all the differences

that otherwise might divide us, that in Christ there really is no distinction one to the other?²

God will continue to provide the resources – the money, the people, the skills, the open doors – to do whatever God calls us to do. Do we have faith that God is a God of abundance, not scarcity?

God will continue to call us beyond ourselves and our places of comfort and safety, to show compassion in tangible ways to those in this world who are on the margins, and to share good news with those, whoever they are, who do not yet know how much they are loved and forgiven. Do we have faith enough to follow God in these ways even if and when our faith results in great self-sacrifice?

God does not need us to do his work. By grace, he chooses to use us. Christ invites us into a partnership – not a partnership of equals by any means, but a partnership nonetheless where we get to share in seeing his Kingdom come, in Sacramento as it is in heaven.

“Faith” is the name of our community. In the Bible God names people and places according to their calling. By God's grace, may we live up to our calling.

Amen.

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The Next Step

A resource for Life Groups and/or personal application

1. What was a highlight for you of this past weekend's Jubilee celebration?
2. Read Hebrews 10:32-11:2 again. What stands out to you here from this passage?
3. The claim here is that faith is “the assurance of things hoped for” and “the conviction of things not seen.” What does that mean to you? What are we hoping for? What have we not yet seen?

¹ Hebrews 13:21

² Galatians 3:28

4. Share a specific example of how you have seen God's faithfulness at work in and through our congregation over the years that you have been here?
5. Is "Faith" a good name for our congregation? How has it been fitting? How could we better live into it?
6. Can you name one way you believe God may be leading us in the days to come which will require faith on our part to follow?
7. How can we specifically pray for our congregation as we seek to be faithful to Christ these next 50 years?

Table to Table Question

A question for kids and adults to answer together

What is one way you have seen God alive and at work here in our church at Faith Presbyterian?

Suggested Scriptures for the Week, as we offer God 1% of our day (15 minutes or more) focused on His Word.

Monday:	Romans 13:1-14/Psalm 70
Tuesday:	Romans 14:1-12/Psalm 71
Wednesday:	Romans 14:13-23/Psalm 72
Thursday:	Romans 15:1-13/Psalm 73
Friday:	Romans 15:14-33/Psalm 74
Saturday:	Romans 16:1-16/Psalm 75
Sunday:	Romans 16:17-27/Psalm 76