

Title: Obstacles to Faith
Text: Hebrews 11: 1-6
Date: April 29, 2012
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

I want to give you a “what if” this morning. What if this gospel I have been declaring to you is true?

For you who do not believe that God is and for you who do not believe God is able to save those who entrust all to him—what if the message I have spoken to you is true?

What if you went to bed last night and woke up about 1 am this morning—thinking you were waking up in your bedroom—but you opened your eyes to find yourself standing before holy God. And God said to you that everything you heard was true of him. That you are not only responsible for what you did hear but what you could have heard. Worse off because you heard and rejected the truth.

If what I preach is true then where does that leave you? Your unbelief would not have altered God’s truth and God’s faithfulness one iota, but you would have been in outer darkness—in hell—now for about 9 hours. In the second hour, I have a message that will be of great comfort for every believer here. But in this hour, I want to speak to you who do not believe. I want to speak to you about some very basic and simple truth about believing God, about faith, and about some of the things that prevent sinners from even truly seeking God.

Title: Obstacles to Faith

Hebrews 11: 1: Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2: For by it the elders obtained a good report...6: But without faith *it is impossible to please him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

I. BE VERY AFRAID OF BEING WISE IN YOUR OWN EYES.

The person who reasons himself qualified to judge and examine God and his truth by that imperfect, depraved light that you call “your reason” will never know God or believe God by that vain reason—**faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

Whatever knowledge a sinner thinks he has, it does not endear God to you—but thinking yourself wise does create a tremendous hindrance to the man who thinks so highly of himself. We have to drop our so-called knowledge and come to Christ *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

If we come to hear the gospel or go to the scriptures, with such a high opinion of ourselves that we think we can understand what this book teaches without God the Holy Spirit teaching us then this book will remain sealed to us. We don’t even reason correctly until God gives us light.

If we come with a simple, most elementary, basic, belief that God alone is able to teach us, come totally depending upon God to teach us, with a heart like David who said, “*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*” (Psalm 119: 18) then God will teach you—but **he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**

But as long as we approach God expecting God to prove to us that **God is** or if we come thinking God owes it to us to reward us because we have sought him—then we haven’t come believing *God is* and we have not truly *sought him.*

You might say, “I have asked God”—have you asked God? Have you truly? Or have you been doing God a favor just to see if he wants to save someone as wise and prudent as you? I can assure you he does not.

Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life—no man cometh to the Father but by me. And he promised this,

Matthew 7: 7: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

Matthew 11: 28: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30: For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

If our seeking is because God has already given us light—which is the only way we will truly seek him aright—then come believing God is—and more light will be given—but if our seeking is merely the sparks we have kindled—and we are coming to God with a double mind—expecting to prove for ourselves that God is, we will not receive anything.

James 1: 5: If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6: But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7: For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8: A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

I’m not speaking right now about the necessity of the new birth—that is so. No man can come except the Father draw him. But I am simply meeting you right where you are. It is a very dangerous thing to regard ourselves wise enough to figure God out by our vain reason. If we could, God would not receive all the glory--**He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**

II. IT IS DANGEROUS TO COME TO THE WORD OF GOD EXPECTING TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND OR ACCOUNT FOR EVERYTHING--*Now faith is the evidence of things not seen.*

When I was a child my earthly father did not tell me all his business, nor now that I am grown man.

Not all God’s business is our business.

Deuteronomy 29: 29: The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

Hebrews 11: 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.

Someone will question God by asking “but what happened before that?” God tells us exactly how he created all things in the beginning of Genesis. You and I can get our puny little mind around what is revealed. Do you really think you are wise enough to understand if God told you what he did before? Maybe God is saving your mind from exploding by not showing you.

Our so-called intellect is so polluted that when we can’t answer a question like that he thinks it more wise to just say, “Well, I don’t believe God.” Have you ever really looked at how God says he made the firmament—Gen 1: 6-10; 14-18--There is more wisdom there than all the scientists so-called have ever dreamed up about creation. How do we know that is so?

Hebrews 11: 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.

Listen to the difference in heart between the haughty heart who thinks himself wise and prudent—thinks himself so high God has to prove everything to him—and the difference the simple, child-like heart of someone who believes. Here is the wisdom of the wise and prudent:

Romans 1: 20: For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22: Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23: And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

The haughty man reads about how God says he created this world then the man wise in his own eyes, says, “No God.” He’s too wise, too smart to believe God. But God our Wisdom says, **“The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*”**

Now listen to the contrite heart of faith:

Psalm 139: 6: *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.* 7: Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8: If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. 9: *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;* 10: Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11: If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12: Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee*. 13: For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. 14: I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well

Don’t question yourself out of faith expecting to be able to account for everything.

Sinners hear of God electing a people unto salvation in Christ Jesus before the world began. That’s what God did before he created creation! They begin to ask “what about all the rest of the sinners in the world?” Here is what wisdom says to you and to me, each individually about that very thing, God said, **“Make YOUR calling and election sure.”--“You strive to enter in at the straight gate”**—you are the one who has to stand before God.

Or someone will object, “That’s not fair.” It is not fair that out of a mass of fallen, unholy, ungodly, God-hating, rebels God chose to save some freely by his grace! It is not fair that God sent his only begotten Son to glorify his holy name through the cross of Christ! It is not fair that God gives such undeserving sinners all the riches of heaven and earth, eternal life with him forever!

What is the real problem? Let’s get real honest right now. God who knows the inner most thoughts of the heart has said this—he says this is the real problem with all these vain excuses...

John 3: 19: And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20: For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

There's a lot of things he'd rather left hidden under that backlight, under that cloud of incense—but the real issue is what is lurking in the depths of that heart

Romans 1: 29-32:... vile affections:...burning lusts,...unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Next time you're in the club and go to the restroom—your heads pounding—wobbly on your feet—look down the wall beside that commode, down deep in that dirty little black crevice in the floor all covered in filth, and take a long hard look at your heart before God. That's the problem! Sin is the problem! That's why the Lord Jesus said,

John 3: 3: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 2: 9: But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

What are these unseen things we believe:

- Things Done In Eternity -- The Council, Covenant And Purpose Of God.
- Things Done In Time -- Incarnation, Death And Resurrection Of Christ.
- Things Done Now -- Intercession, Providence, Work Of The Spirit.
- Things Future -- Resurrection, Judgment, Eternal Glory.

2 Corinthians 4:18: While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

God has purposely made it so that man will never be able to come to him any other way than by faith.

- God the Son was made flesh, born of a virgin
- He who knew no sin, was made sin
- Christ died, was buried and rose from the dead
- Men watched the GodMan ascend up into heavens
- He will come again, our bodies shall arise from the graves
- There will be a new heaven and a new earth
- There will be a place of outer darkness

These are things too big to fit inside a peanut brain such as ours. How do you know they are so?--“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb 11:1)

We have seen two things here. First, be very afraid of being wise in our own eyes—faith is child-like. Secondly, do not come to the word of God expecting to be able to understand everything--*faith is the evidence of things not seen.*

ONE LAST WORD

Keeping coming to hear this gospel CONSISTENTLY—KEY WORD—we will be accountable not only for what we did hear but also for what we could have heard—keep reading the word of God, keep asking the Lord Jesus Christ to open your understanding—

Proverbs 1: 23: Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

Isaiah 44:3: For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground:

REMEMBER THE FOUR LEPROUS MEN? They were starving in a famine. They had leprosy. The enemy Syrians had taken Samaria. They said,

2 Kings 7: 4: If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.

They went found no enemy instead they found food and gold and silver all they wanted. Sinner, if you stay where you are you will die. Come to the Light. Those who come believing do not find an enemy but we find the Bread of Life, Gold of his Blood and we Live forever!

Amen!