

I. Introduction

a. Hebrews 11:6 (NASB77)

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

b. Faith is defined as (pistos) a firm persuasion, a conviction arising from hearing. It is used in the NT always of "faith in God, or Christ, or things spiritual". Faith as peitho; *persuasion*, i.e. *credence*; *moral conviction* (of *religious* truth, or the truthfulness of God).

c. The very focus (thinking, perspective, slant, attention) of our lives indicates if we're drawn to faith or otherwise to some inclination of our souls.

II. Faith - Where's your focus?

a. Acts 16:17-28 (NASB77)

¹⁷ Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation."

¹⁸ And she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment.

¹⁹ But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities,

²⁰ and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews,

²¹ and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans."

²² And the crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them, and proceeded to order *them* to be beaten with rods.

²³ And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely;

²⁴ and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;

²⁶ and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were unfastened.

- ²⁷ And when the jailer had been roused out of sleep and had seen the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.
- ²⁸ But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here!"
- b. Paul and Silas were being persecuted. They were experiencing adversity and suffering under horrendous conditions in a Roman prison. Could this be the proverbial "thorn in the thigh"?
 - c. Nevertheless, we find Paul and Silas worshipping and almost ignoring the tangible circumstances they were experiencing. This resulted in an encounter with God and a display of God's power in the midst of very dark, seemingly unsurmountable, conditions.
 - d. Do you find yourself in the midst of adversity? Depressing circumstances, hopeless situations and anxious thoughts are very common in our corrupt world. Are you focusing on these or are you turning to the fountain of life to change the setting of your soul and maybe even your circumstances into a miracle?
 - e. But even if a miracle doesn't manifest immediately, isn't the presence of a Kingdom reality, righteousness, peace and joy engaging a creative process that brings newness of life?
 - f. The very resources of heaven are set into motion as my heart believes in a God that is above and greater than my circumstances. The very focus of my mind, will and emotions is engaging the creative God in a faith exchange. My trust must result in a personal victory, growth into the image of Jesus Christ. Doesn't the Christ in me impact those around me? Wont' this exchange result in His Glory being manifested in my life?
 - g. Prodigals return, hope is fulfilled, healings out of joy and deliverance of captives from unforgiveness, control situations, addictions, fears, mediocrity and conformity to the corrupt world system.
 - h. **Habakkuk 2:4 (NASB77)**
⁴ "Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.
 - i. Pride is setting your focus, thoughts, your means and methods over God's. Pride must have a fall. Humility will fully embrace the God of all possibilities and His ways.

- ii. If I believe I can't, I'm focusing on me. My world will crumble as I hold unto a focus of my circumstances rather than focusing on His beauty, faithfulness, power and love.
- iii. Focusing on the latter engages a limitless realm for "with God all things are possible". All means all.
- iv. Every decision in our lives must be a faith decision. That's what walking in faith means.
- i. Where do I start?
- j. Faith is an action in the direction of God's thoughts and God's ways. **James 1:21-22 (NASB77)**
²¹ Therefore putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.
²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

Hebrews 11:1 (KJV)

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

III. Conclusion:

- a. Faith requires a complete focus in God.
- b. Faith requires a humble heart.
- c. Faith requires action.