

I chose our second lesson, Hebrews chapter 11, for today's text.

The title for today's message is: **Faith Unravels the Mysteries of Life**

The author of Hebrews said: ***Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.***

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Can you believe it? In just a few weeks many children and young adults will be heading back to school for a new year.

Look, school is a good thing because it provides our young people with the many skills they will need to survive in this sinful and broken world.

But as much as school can teach us about this world, it can't unravel all the mysteries of life.

No textbook can answer the questions of how we got here, or where we are going, at least truthfully that is.

Thankfully God's Word gives us the answer to those questions, allowing us to say that faith in God; unravels the mysteries of life.

And this letter to the Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who were being tempted to revert to Judaism because of persecution.

And in order to persuade them not to throw away their faith, the author here wanted these Christians to realize that if they walked away from Christianity they would lose their salvation.

Faith? What is it, some might ask? Is it a blind leap in the dark? Is it the disregard for all facts? Or a feeling that everything will somehow work out?

Now verse 1 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”***

For example, true faithful believes, believe that the universe was indeed created by God.

While we don't have actual proof that God created the world, we do believe it to be true because God Himself said so. Now, that's faith isn't it.

So doesn't that just go to prove what so many believe, that faith is blind? I mean what about all the physical proof?

What about the scientific proof, you know; "The Big Bang Theory" where two planets flew into each other causing a big explosion, making planet Earth.

Perhaps you were taught in school to believe that along with evolution, where we the people of the earth evolved from animals etc.

The fact is 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 away into the heavens.

The air has just the right amount of oxygen to sustain us. Migratory birds fly thousands of miles without a map, and yet they don't get lost.

Bones break, but they know how to mend themselves. So to believe that this complex, orderly world came into existence through a big explosion.

Is silliness, unbelievable to be sure. When you take a look at the world around you, and see how wonderfully it's put together you must admit that an intelligent, and powerful Creator, has been at work here.

And what a comfort it is to know that we are not cosmic accidents, but God's creation! That means we have a purpose for being here on earth.

God said through the prophet Jeremiah chapter 11: ***“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”.***

Have you been languishing in your job? Unsure of where your marriage is going? Concerned about what you’ll do when you grow up, or grow old?

Are you feeling the weight of responsibility that comes with being a parent, or looking after someone?

Don’t worry; God has great plans for you, wonderful plans. Wouldn’t it be great to know those plans here and now?

Don’t you want to know where you are headed in life? Well first let’s see what faith can teach and do for us.

Look, when God told Abraham to leave his hometown, and go to a place that he would show him, Abraham went, no questions asked.

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.

Now according to verse 10; Abraham ***was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.***

But isn’t it wishful thinking to believe that there is such a place called heaven, where all our sorrows and pains will be no more?

Isn’t that just a form of escape man has made up to flee the harsh realities of life on earth? Let me ask you this.

Does it take any more faith to believe that heaven exists, than to believe that there is such a place called; Hell?

No! It doesn't, according to verse 10; Abraham ***was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.***

But isn't it wishful thinking to believe that there is such a place called heaven, where all our sorrows and pains will be no more?

Isn't that just a form of escape man has made up to flee the harsh realities of life on earth? Let me ask you this.

Does it take any more faith to believe that heaven exists, than to believe that there is such a place called; Hell?

Have you ever been to the Hell before? Not if your alive you haven't. So how do you know it really exists?

Hell is a place where there are lakes of fire with nonbelievers screaming in pain as they burn in the lakes.

How is that any different from believing there is a heaven? Sure, we've never been there either, yet we know someone who has been there, don't we?

Jesus said in John chapter 14: ***"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"***.

While we might not have a picture of heaven, we do have many descriptions of it throughout the scriptures.

The Apostle John wrote such a description in Revelation chapter 4: ***"After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven... At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it..."***

Should it be any harder to believe that there is a place like that, called heaven, than believing that there is a place called Hell?

No, in fact it should be easier because God Himself tells us about heaven, and we know God doesn't make up stories nor does He lie.

Knowing and believing that there is a place called heaven will certainly affect the way that we live here on earth.

Faith is more than just a special knowledge; it's a homing beacon, if you will. And because of our faith we become restless knowing heaven awaits us.

Abraham demonstrated that restlessness in his life. God had promised to give him the land of Canaan but neither Abraham, his son, nor 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 them because they were looking forward to the heavenly Canaan.

In the same way when we too keep our eyes focused on heaven, it shouldn't bother us that we don't have the latest gadgets, or our dream home.

Nor should our troubles here on earth keep us down. None of those things can compare with the wonderful riches that await us in heaven.

There's a story about two men walking through the city on a cold winter's night. Snow was falling, and the wind howling.

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 walked 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.

Yes, even when tough things happen to us. Remember, we too are headed home, to heaven, where a loving God awaits us.

So leave behind whatever threatens to get in the way of your walk home, whether that's a job, friends, or even family.

Don't be afraid to throw off the security blankets this world has to offer, because God has wrapped us in His loving and caring arms, as he covers us in a heavenly blanket.

Yes, school might be starting soon, but we've already learned the most important lesson in life.

Through faith you know where you have come from, and where you are going. You know that there is more to life than just this world and its pleasures.

Therefore don't waste your time wandering around this world looking for happiness.

Set your sights on heaven, the only place you will find true happiness, and walk through life with a faithful purpose.

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.