

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
Paul Gunn, Pastor

Sermon Title: The Double Force of Faith, Hebrews 11:1

Date preached: June 28, 2015

For public use: See non-copyright comments at the end of the message

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 11:1 [I'll read it first from the King James Version, because that's how most long-term Christians know it.] *<sup>1</sup>Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

[Now listen to it is the NIV.] *<sup>1</sup>Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

“The Doubled Force of Faith” reflects two main points I want you to consider:

1. Faith is confidence in what we hope for.
2. Assurance is what we do not see.

**First, FAITH IS CONFIDENCE IN WHAT WE HOPE FOR.**

**EXPLANATION:** I did a rather simple Greek word study on this verse, and I have a few things that will make this verse explode with meaning.

The Greek word translated “substance” is *hypostasis*, which means “confidence of boasting.”

**ILLUSTRATION:** A little girl watched her mother put all the ingredients together for a cake. She stayed around the kitchen because she knew her mom would give her the mixing beaters to lick. She'd seen her mom make numerous cakes, but now that she was a little older, she paid attention.

She watched her mom put flour in a mixing bowl. “What's that for?”

Her mom said, “The flour makes the body of the cake.”

Then she saw the sugar and said, “I know what the sugar does. It makes the cake sweet.” Her mom replied, “Yes, you are right.”

“But, what do the eggs do? I thought we just had those for breakfast.”

“Honey, the eggs hold the cake together.”

The little girl continued to ask questions. “Why does the cake need oil and butter and milk?” Her mom replied, “All of this is just part of the recipe. These things will keep the cake moist and give it a rich flavor.”

And, then finally, the mom added baking powder. Anticipating the next question, she said, “This will make the batter rise while it’s in the oven. We mix all this together and then put it in the baking pans.”

Now, I’ll tell you the rest of this simple dialog in a few minutes. But, here is an illustration of *faith as the substance of things hoped for*.

**APPLICATION:** Our faith in Christ is the substance, or confidence, or in the literal Greek, “confidence of boasting of things hoped for.” Just like the mother of the girl mixed those ingredients together and was confident she knew what would happen, so we, too, in our faith can be confident in the work of Christ.

Don’t we see the mix of life in that mixing bowl? And, don’t we have the experience with God to know he’s always faithful, he’ll always provide, and he’ll always be there. And, even if it doesn’t look like he is there in the way we expect, we know he’ll be there to receive us in the end. Why? Because, we believe it by faith.

English Bible teacher Arthur Pink wrote, “Faith gives substance to something hoped for at a future period a present reality and power in the soul, as if already possessed” (Pink, 650).

The old classic writings of Matthew Henry are now public domain. It is not legal for anyone to own a copyright of his works as they are out there for everyone. Here is what he said about this verse.

“Faith is a firm persuasion and expectation that God will perform all that He has promised to us in Christ; and this persuasion is so strong that it gives the soul a kind of possession and present fruition of those things, gives them a subsistence in the soul by the first fruits and foretastes of them; so that believers in the exercise of faith are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

So, the first force of faith is the substance of things hoped for.

**Second, The second force is the ASSURANCE OF WHAT WE DO NOT SEE.**

What in the world does this mean?

**ILLUSTRATION:** Let me revisit the mom and the daughter illustration. The girl said, “Mommy, how do you know all that mush will turn into a cake?” And, then her mom said, “Because I’ve done it many times, and I am fully confident it will work this time as well.”

You see, here is an illustration of the two actions of faith. The cake batter was the substance of things hoped for. The mother’s faith in her experience was the evidence of things unseen.

**ILLUSTRATION:** When you come to faith in Christ and when you learn about his saving grace, you begin to see life differently. A man from Africa came to meet our staff and missions committee last year. He had never been in a walk-in freezer before...until I took him in ours. He had just learned how to use a microwave oven. He saw fall colors on trees for the first time and could not figure out how Americans colored the trees. But, when we talked about Jesus Christ, we immediately had common ground. He did not seem like a stranger at all. He was one of us. It is the language of faith which unites Christians around the world regardless of our various backgrounds. I had a renewed assurance in the truth of God because a man on the other side of the earth talked about God and salvation in the same way I do. I had assurance of this God I do not see.

**APPLICATION:** When we talk about *faith as the assurance of things we do not see*, we cannot even begin to explain it to others who do not understand. As you’ve

heard me say, I feel terribly sorry for people who have not experienced Jesus, because they have not experienced the things I've experienced. Sometimes we reach that point in talking with someone about the ways of the Lord where we are better off saying, "I cannot really put it into words, but I know it to be true."

**ILLSTRATION:** Picture two people in a lookout tower. One spots a fire. The other does not see it. The difference is the first man has a telescope. He has a different perspective than the man who is looking without any assistance. For the believer, faith is the telescope.

**APPLICATION:** Having the assurance of things we do not see means we have rested our case. If God said it, it **MUST** be true.

Try providing invisible evidence in a court of law. It is impossible. But, for the believer, it is a reality.

**ILLUSTRATION:** When Susan and I bought our house, we were already preapproved for a loan before we even looked at houses. On a Saturday morning, the realtor met us, and we looked at one house. We weren't satisfied, so we looked at a second house. She told us the owner had bought a new house and was desperate to sell. A few minutes after looking at the second house, I told the realtor we would take it. Of course, the realtor was thrilled because she'd spent only an hour or so with us and made a sale. But, I was able to say, "We'll take it" with confidence because I believed I had confidence in our banker, even though no money had passed through any hands. Susan and I began talking about what changes we were going to make with the house. We began talking with the full confidence of ownership even though no transaction had taken place. Now, if I can have confidence like this in a bank and a human process, then certainly I can have confidence in Jesus Christ!

Non-believers cannot understand the spiritual realm.

**SCRIPTURE:** I Corinthians 2:14 says, <sup>14</sup>*The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned* (NKJV).

The reason non-believers cannot understand the spiritual realm is because they do not have the Holy Spirit acting as their intermediary or go between. They are missing the telescope, which provides definition to something completely unintelligible by them. Believing in a being which is invisible is foolishness to those who do not believe.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I know people who work for a particular company which is horrible. Those inside the company don't know any better, and they think it is great. It's like they are caught in some type of Twilight Zone episode. It is only when people leave the company and the blinders come off, their eyes are opened to the truth of how terrible working there really was. And, those on the outside have a hard time convincing those on the inside to leave.

**APPLICATION:** When a person repents of sin and professes Jesus as Lord and Savior, the blinders come off of the person's eyes and they see things they have never seen before. It's like coming out of a colorless black and white world into a world of color. It's like coming out of world where everything is blurry to a world of sharper focus.

**EXPLANATION:** Let me explain, "*evidence of things not seen*" in an expanded version. Here it is: the evidence of things not seen is the full, unshakeable, confidence that God will do what he says because if he said he would do it, then he **MUST** do it. If he said something is true then it **MUST** be true.

So, faith is a double force. It is the confidence, or substance, of things hoped for, and faith is the evidence of things not seen.

Look at verse 2—

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 11:2-3 <sup>2</sup>*This [faith] is what the ancients were commended for.* <sup>3</sup>*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.*

**EXPLANATION:** God created the universe out of something invisible, or as Genesis says, "*out of nothing.*" How do we know he did it? We know by faith!

We believe in a God we cannot see, although we can see his handiworks. By faith, we believe everything is his handiworks.

**CONCLUSION:** Hebrews 11:1 comes late in the book of Hebrews. However, it is the fulcrum on which the rest of the book hinges.

Listen to me...the chapters in Hebrews explain things that probably many Christians and Jews of the day did not know, and the book also explains and clarifies things to us. But, the reality is, we can study and analyze and learn forever, but without faith, it's meaningless. This is why faith is inserted at this point.

Faith is necessary to become a believer, and it's necessary to grow as a believer. Without faith, works is dead. Without faith, belief is dead. Without faith, there is no salvation in Jesus Christ.

Don't you want to step out on faith and believe in someone greater than you?

Don't you want to have faith Jesus is your Savior?

You can have this today by taking the first step of faith. If you say you don't understand it all, you are right in saying that because no one here understands it all. No one has all the answers, but we trust in the One who does.

The Bible says, *"For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God;"* (Ephesians 2:8)

To preachers, teachers, students, and anyone else reading or using this message: I have posted this for all to use as you see fit. There is no need to cite me as the source. You are free to delete sections, add your own, or do whatever you want. There is no copyright. My request is that you do not copyright or sell my work. I am sharing my preaching notes in good faith with you because I know the challenges of putting together a lesson, especially when your week gets consumed with other things. Use it and enjoy!

I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

Find me at [www.thbc.com](http://www.thbc.com) Click on sermons or YouTube channel: Pastor Paul Gunn  
Thanks to Judy Andrews and Nancy Claire Smith for their editing assistance.

Sincerely, Paul Gunn  
Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
Nashville, Tennessee  
USA