

Hebrews 7<sup>th</sup> August

Hebrews 11:1-3+ 8-16 Luke 11:32-40

Faith and action

Have you ever wondered about faith, ..... doubted that you had it, .....wished you had more?

Few things are more misunderstood than faith.

Today and over the next few weeks we are considering the book of Hebrews with its focus on faith. We learn that there is new life through death into a new world , which spurs us on to stand firm. Says Dr Lee Gatiss (Director of Church Society)

One day, a young disciple of Christ desiring to fully receive all that God had for him .....visited the home of an old man had never lost his first love for Christ ..... over all the years.

The elderly man was sitting on the porch with his dog taking in a beautiful sunset. The young man (Slow) posed this question:

"Why is it sir ..... that so many Christians zealously chase after God during the first year or two after their conversion, ..... but then fall into a complacent ritual of church once or twice a week..... and they end up not looking any different .....than their neighbors .....who aren't even Christians?

I have heard you are not like that.

The old man smiled and replied,....."Let me tell you a story:

One day I was sitting here quietly..... in the sun with my dog.

Suddenly a large white rabbit ran across the field .....in front of us.

Well, .....my dog jumped up, .....and took off after that big white rabbit.

He chased the rabbit over the hills..... with a passion.

Soon, .....other dogs joined him, ..... attracted by his barking.

What a sight it was, .....as the pack of dogs ran barking across the creeks, .....up stony embankments .....and through thickets and thorns!

Gradually, however, one by one, the other dogs dropped out of the pursuitdiscouraged by the course and frustrated by the chase.

Only my dog continued to hotly pursue the white rabbit."

"In that story, young man, lies the answer to your question."

The young man sat in confused silence.

Finally, he said "Sir, I don't understand.

What is the connection between a rabbit chase and the quest for God?"

"You fail to understand," answered the well-seasoned old man, "because you failed to ask ..... the obvious question. (Pause)

Why didn't the other dogs continue in the chase?

And the answer to that question is they had not seen the rabbit

So I tell you that unless you see the prize, the chase is just too difficult.

You will lack the faith, the passion the determination to keep up the chase."

Today the world is full anxiety: there is a crisis in our world as a whole: we have heard and seen graphic images of bombs going off in France, Pakistan and Turkey and shootings and killings in Munich and Paris and the horrific driving of a lorry ploughing through the crowds in Nice killing over 80 people. Politically the world is seemingly more unstable with fragile relationships in the Middle East, Russia and Korea, the war in Syria causing the biggest refugee crisis the world has ever seen and of course Brexit.

Do you wonder, as I do, what is happening to our world? Even though we are an island we can't but help wonder when we might be subject to terrorist attacks. The horror and the violence violate our very way of life being in our own towns or those abroad. Where is God in all of this? Why does he allow such violence and injustice?

Faith is a common denominator.

Every one alive ..... daily expresses faith in something.

No one can live a single day ..... without exercising faith.

When you awoke and went into the bathroom this morning ..... you flipped a light switch..... and you had faith ..... that it would work.

When you enter your car..... you turn the key .....and have faith ..... that it will start.

When you mail a letter you have faith the postal system will get it to the right

address. .... At least Someday!

Every time you walk into a building you are expressing faith .... faith in in the architect and the workmen.

In each instance .... there was an action.

You see, ....faith is never something ....just to be talked about.

It is something that must be demonstrated ....in the way we live. (Pause)

Paul Harvey once said, "If you do not live it,..... you do not ....really believe it."

There is a Biblical basis for that statement.

James said, " Show me your faith apart from your works, .....and I will show you my faith .... by my works." ( James 2:18 ).

Believing is one thing ..... but do you have Faith, ..... do you have an action filled apostolic faith.

Beloved ..... Instead of Faith .....we should call it Faithing.

It is an verb, ....it requires an action.

through the Scriptures you can begin to know God.

And you can gain understanding and knowledge about him.

The Scriptures are extremely important in our lives and we are called to read and inwardly digest .... Gods Word.

You may listen to the Word of God and you may study the Scriptures, .....but only when the Holy Spirit comes and quickens, .... stirs the Scriptures to your heart dose Logos .....become Rhema.

Only then will the Scriptures..... burn into your very being. (Pause).

If you are not meditating on God's word, ..... if you never have time to wait upon the Lord, ..... then how can the Lord .....come and quicken His Word .....into your heart?

It is through action faith, .....through Faithing .....that we mature and grow. (Long Pause)

Beloved, it is not easy out there on the marathon we call Life.

When we feel like giving up we must push on.

We must continue Faithing. We must persevere.

Have you seen the rabbit?

Be of good courage.

Fight the good fight, finish the race.

It is time to walk in the Faith.

To never be satisfied ..... to continually seek .....to be transformed ....into the image of Christ.

To finish this marathon of life, ..... and to finish well.

And when we cross over to the other side of eternity; ..... to collapse into our Saviors arms knowing..... we had no more to give.