

The Act of Faith

Revive

[Hebrews 11:1-6](#)

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith[d] he still speaks. V. 4

REFLECTION

The entire chapter of Hebrews 11 is devoted to helping us understand faith. Verse one provides us with a working definition of faith that anchors the chapter: *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.* The Greek word *hypostasis* is defined as *the underlying state or underlying substance and the fundamental reality that supports all else.* ***How can hypostasis help us understand faith as our invisible foundation? Like the Hebrew audience to which this book was written, in what areas of your life do you especially need encouragement to persevere?***

Faith not only provides us with an inward assurance, but also with an outward practicality. Theologian Thomas Long describes faith as an inward reality singing, "we shall overcome" and as an outward reality marching at Selma. ***How would you describe the inward assurance versus outward practicality of faith in your life? How should faith, as Frederick Buechner describes, "be better understood as a verb than a noun?"***

For us, our faith should not be measured by amount, but the object in which we place our faith. As a reformed church, we affirm that we are justified by grace alone through faith, and that we don't have to earn salvation but it is a gift from God. ***What are the object(s) in which you place the most faith? Why is it impossible to please God without faith?***

The rest of the chapter of Hebrews contains stories of many great heroes who demonstrated faith by their actions. Throughout the Bible, we see stories of faith involving God's miracles through very ordinary people. This should give us reassurance that no one is beyond the reach of God's friendship. ***Who in your life has inspired you through demonstrating their faith in tangible ways? Who can you imitate to help you grow and reflect God's love? What markers of God's presence would you be proud to leave behind?***

Heavenly Father, we are grateful for these examples of faith, ancient and recent, lived out through ordinary people. May the witness of their lives give us courage, inspire us to persevere, and lead faithful lives. Amen