

26-0927p - Detailed Summary

26-0927p - *Faith*, Steve Cain

Bible Reader: John Nousek

See the transcript: [Transcript HTML](#) - [Transcript PDF](#)

Faith

Scripture Reading

Scripture Reading (0:04 - 0:52): John Nousek

Romans 1:16-17: John opened the evening by greeting the congregation and introducing the reading from Romans chapter 1, verses 16 and 17. The text declared that Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also

Continued

to the Greek. In the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.” The reading closed with “Amen.”

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 43:41), Preacher: Steve Cain

(0:57–2:48) Introducing the Lecture and the Definition of Faith

Steve introduced the lecture by noting that the title he had given it, simply “Faith,” was broad enough to cover almost anything. He said he did have one specific point he intended to reach, but that he would arrive at it in a roundabout way. He began instead with the purpose of faith and the need for faith.

He turned to Hebrews 11, which gives a brief description of what faith is. Starting at verse 1, he read that faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see, and that this is what the ancients were commended for. He asked the congregation to keep that definition in mind. He then compared it with a dictionary definition: complete trust or confidence in someone or something. The Hebrew writer, he said, is describing exactly that kind of confidence in hoped-for things and assurance about unseen things.

(2:48–4:36) Faith in Creation and Trust in the Bible as God’s Word

Continuing in Hebrews 11, Steve read verse 3: 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. The point, he said, is that we must believe the Bible’s account of the creation of the world and accept it by faith. That requires, first of all, putting confidence in the Bible itself. The Bible is the only source that tells us where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going.

He connected this to 2 Peter, which teaches that the prophets wrote as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is therefore the author of the Bible, using the pens of the prophets to record this information. Believers must conclude that the Bible is the product of God through the Holy Spirit. We put all our trust in it as the divine Word of God, God’s mind revealed to us, showing

us what He wants us to know about life, origin, purpose, and destiny. If we accept what is found in the Bible, then the Bible itself supplies the account of the creation of the world.

(4:36–7:21) Genesis, God’s Sustaining Hand, and the Rainbow Promise

Steve referred to Genesis chapter 1 and noted that Scott had already given a very long discussion of the creation of the world. The congregation needs to put confidence in the fact that this is how the world was put together. They do not need to entertain alternative origin stories. He mentioned one he had actually heard: that some foreign alien came, had a picnic on the earth, left garbage that decayed, and that decayed garbage is where we came from. That is not the case. The Bible tells us that God created us and that He is sustaining us.

One of the things Steve said he loves about Genesis is that everything God created was designed to recreate itself. Trees, flowers, and animals all reproduce. God is sustaining us, and the earth is formed in such a way that it continues to sustain life. This is not a world God created, set in motion, and then sat back to watch. When God destroyed the world in Noah’s day and Noah came out of the ark, God gave a promise secured with a rainbow. The rainbow reminds us that we will always have seasons, that reproduction will continue, and that the ground will produce what is needed to sustain animals, fish, birds, and human beings. God has His hand on the world. He divinely intervenes in our lives, and that too is a matter of faith: we must believe that God is working in our lives.

(7:21–9:02) Enoch and the Necessity of Faith to Please God

Steve then turned to the next requirement of faith: confidence that there is a God and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Reading from Hebrews 11, he cited the account of Enoch, who by faith was taken from this life so that he did not experience death. He could not be found because God had taken him away. Before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

In this light, believers need to hold that God is sustaining the world and their lives, that He exists, and that He has a plan and purpose for them. Steve recalled that they had looked at this before in the opening chapters of Ephesians, which show why God created the heavens and the earth: He wanted people to be with Him eternally in heaven. That purpose would need particular attention as the lecture continued.

(9:02–13:40) Matthew 6 and Jesus’ Assurance Not to Worry

Steve said Jesus Himself assured us that God knows exactly what we are doing. He turned to Matthew 6, a chapter he said he loves because Jesus there assures us that we are not in this by ourselves. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches that we are not to worry about our lives. Reading from the New International Version, beginning at verse 25, Steve quoted Jesus: do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food and the body more than clothes. Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, yet the Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can anyone by worrying add a single hour to life?

Jesus is telling us to have this faith. Do not worry about how you will sustain your life or make a

living. God is divinely intervening. He will help you find a job, feed your family, and look after your own being. He knows what you need before you even ask. Steve gave personal testimony from eighty-five years of life. He had experienced times when he needed to rest on this assurance because he was without a job many times, and he had held jobs that did not pay enough to support his life and family. He had three children then; they are all grown and out of the house now, and they are looking after him. He cited the psalmist's saying that blessed is the person who has many arrows in their quiver—children. Have as many children as you can, and they will look after you. His three children are now clamoring over whether he will come and live with them, though that will not be soon. He does rely on them giving him a hundred dollars now and then, and he appreciates that.

Jesus continues in verse 28: why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin, yet not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" The pagans run after all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. This is the faith we must have.

(13:40–16:27) The Gospel of Pardon and Examples of Jesus and Paul

Steve said he loves to talk about this teaching because it excites him that he does not have to worry about these things. He has to have faith in God. God divinely looks after him and looks after everybody. There is not an individual that God is not working on, trying to get them to recognize Him and want to be reconciled to Him. God has extended the gospel to them. The gospel is the fact that He is extending Jesus's pardon. Jesus is paying the debt we have to the law, justifying us and giving us righteousness. That thought would form the invitation a little later. These are things that have to be talked about all the time.

He then asked why, when we look at the life of Jesus, we see Him always focusing on His vocation. His father Joseph was a carpenter, and Jesus surely grew up helping him. But did He rely on carpentry for His income? We do not know. Where did His support come from? Jesus believed this teaching one hundred percent: God was looking after Him, wanted to be with Him, and was sustaining Him through all the problems and tribulations He faced with the Jewish nation and community. Women supported Him, fed Him, and made sure He had a place to live.

Paul, once converted on the road to Damascus, gave up his former way of making income except for tentmaking. He relied on tentmaking to help pay bills, but he also relied on the congregations he established to help him with contributions, as seen in the Philippian letter. Paul had his problems and had to come to a point where he developed the kind of faith Jesus is talking about and the kind of faith we are asked to develop.

(16:27–20:24) Paul's Despair in Asia and Learning to Rely on God

Steve turned to 2 Corinthians chapter 1, a passage he said he refers to quite often. Beginning at verse 8, Paul did not want the brothers and sisters to be uninformed about the troubles experienced in the province of Asia. They were under great pressure, far beyond their ability to

endure, so that they despaired of life. Paul was in a situation in which he did not know where to turn. His life was in jeopardy, as were the lives of those with him. They were despairing, praying, on their knees. Steve said he has been there and knows this cry: What are we going to do? How are we going to do this?

Paul writes that they despaired of life itself and felt they had received the sentence of death. But this happened so that they might not rely on themselves but on God, who raises the dead. Steve asked whether this means God caused it to happen—divine intervention, providence. It sounds like it. God wanted to teach Paul a lesson. God tests everyone and wants to see how we will react: whether we will react the way He suggests we solve our problems, or whether we will go to the world and let the world teach us how to deal with them.

Paul grew up in the Jewish community as the type of person who said that if you cannot pull yourself up by your own bootstraps, you are in trouble. He felt he was the master of his own destiny. He had to be taught to rely on God. They felt they had received the sentence of death, but this happened so they might not rely on themselves but on God who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us again. On Him they have set their hope that He will continue to deliver them, as the churches help by their prayers, so that many will give thanks for the gracious favor granted in answer to the prayers of many.

What is being asked of us, Steve said, is to believe this: to have faith in God, faith that He is going to look after us and fulfill and sustain our lives. We have to have that faith.

(20:24–21:53) Abraham, Romans, and Paul's Catalog of Sufferings

Steve noted that we do not have to go far in the Old Testament to see that faith was required. Abraham's faith stands as an example. The examples he had been giving also come out of their study of Romans. Faith is required in Romans 3:27. Abraham is used as an example of faith in chapter 4. Justification by faith appears in chapter 5. God is extending a gospel to us.

Before turning to the real meat of what he wanted to talk about, Steve continued with Paul a little longer. In 2 Corinthians, in what he believed was the tenth or eleventh chapter, Paul gives a litany of all the things he has gone through: how he has been stoned and left for dead, how he has fought with wild animals, and how he has had to endure all of these things for the cause of Christ.

(21:53–22:37) Resurrection as Paul's Reason for Endurance

Steve continued from Paul's catalog of sufferings by turning to 1 Corinthians 15. There Paul is talking about the resurrection and asks, in effect, that if Jesus is not resurrected, why did he go through all of this. Paul endured what he endured because he believed in the resurrection and in the second life. He knew that Jesus was raised from the grave. Steve said that was not yet the point he wanted to reach. The point he wanted the congregation to recognize is that as Christians we are being assured of heaven.

(22:37–25:35) Can a Christian Know They Will Be in Heaven?

He asked whether they had heard that: as Christians we are being assured of heaven. When he was growing up and listening to the elders in the church, and to the various teachers, the congregation he attended was very similar to this one, in that preachers and Bible class teachers had to come

from within the congregation. When the subject of assurance of being in heaven came up, the common answer was not confidence.

He tied this to personal evangelism. He grew up fully wanting personal evangelism, believed in it, flooded it, and taught it. A book came out from Kennedy called what he remembered as Restoration Persuasion, that is, Evangelism Explosion. The method starts by asking a question at the door. The caller says, “Hi, I’m Stephen Cain, and I’m from the West Side Church of Christ. I was wondering, if you were to die today, do you know whether or not you would be with God eternally in heaven?” That is the question they are supposed to ask.

Even the people where he grew up, before Kennedy’s Evangelism Explosion came along, would answer, “How can you know? How can you know?” They answered that way because they believed that if you were going to die, you needed to die with a prayer on your lips, asking God to forgive you of your sins before your spirit and body gave up. Otherwise you did not know whether you were going to heaven. He said that is something. He added that some may still believe that today, because “How can you know?” remains a popular response.

(25:35–28:37) Walking in the Light and the Truck Driver Illustration

One illustration he was given appeals to 1 John 1, which says that as long as you walk in the light as He is in the light, His blood will continue to cleanse you. He pictured a semi driver hauling gasoline, going down the road, paying attention and obeying the law. Someone pulls in front of him, swerves, and forces an evasive action. The truck spins and flips. The driver is trapped in the cab, and gasoline is spilling over him. What do you think he is saying? What will his last words be? Is he going to be praying, “God, please forgive me of my sins”? That did not seem quite realistic to Steve. He thought the man might be thinking some other things. But even if he is praying that prayer, that is not the answer.

The answer is that as long as you are walking in the light, if he is in the light, His blood will continue to cleanse you. Walking here means the tenor of life. You are a Christian. You walk the walk and talk the talk. You may find yourself in a situation that challenges you. Are you going to pray “God, forgive me” just as someone lights the gasoline, it goes up in flames, and you are incinerated? The test is basically what your manner of life was. As long as you walk in the light, Jesus is going to be interceding for you. Jesus is pleading for you. He is on the right hand of God. You have become His disciple. You have been baptized into His church and into the forgiveness of sins, and He is reaching out to you. You have been lifted and taken away from the law of sin and death and put under the law of liberty, the law of freedom. You have been given grace and mercy. You are not under the law at this point.

(28:37–32:07) God’s Promise of Eternal Life

That, however, was still not the point Steve wanted to make. The point he wanted to make is that God has promised you heaven. He turned to 1 John 2, working his way to verse 25. He first read nearby material about those who are trying to lead the readers astray, about the anointing received from Him remaining in them so that they do not need anyone to teach them, and about remaining in Him. After struggling to locate the verse because his eyes were not focusing as he wanted, he read that they should see that what they have heard from the beginning remains in them. If it does, they also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what He promised them: eternal life. He promised eternal life.

Steve then pointed to Titus chapter 1, where Paul writes as a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and which now at His appointed season He has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to Paul by the command of God our Savior. God is promising Christians—those who are reconciled to Him, who want to be His disciples and His children—His heritage. If you are going to inherit heaven, it is going to be there. It is His.

(32:07–34:39) Paul's Assurance, Contentment, and Crown

Collecting his thoughts, Steve said he believed it is in Philippians that Paul talks about being definitely convinced that, regardless, he is going to heaven. He first thought of Philippians 4:19, where faith is God supporting him and supplying all his needs, then settled into the surrounding verses beginning around verse 10. Paul rejoices greatly in the Lord that the Philippians have at last renewed their concern for him. They were concerned but had no opportunity to show it. Paul is not saying this because he is in need. He has learned to be content whatever the circumstances. He knows what it is to be in need and what it is to have plenty. He has learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. He can do all things through Him who gives him strength.

Paul definitely knows that he has a crown laid up for him in Christ. He is assured of that, and he wants us to know that ourselves. Steve then said he would finish with Colossians, because he only had about fifteen minutes left. He remarked that he was giving them the whole bail, and asked whether they had heard that joke.

(34:39–38:09) Hope as the Only Way: The Houston Illustration

What, then, is the hope Paul is talking about in Hebrews 11—certain hope? You are certain of the hope. What is the hope they have? They want to go to heaven. How are they going to get there? What do they have to do in order to be assured of going to heaven? They would all love to be able to go to heaven.

Steve used an illustration he said he had made up himself and had not used in years. Suppose you need to go to Houston, Texas, where his daughter lives, and you have to be there by a certain time. You have about a month to get there, but you have a date you need to keep. What is your hope of getting to Houston in a month? It is pretty good. You have all different kinds of routes and transportation. You can drive on your own. You can get a bus ticket. You can get a train ticket—he had looked into that; it only takes you within a hundred miles of Houston, and then you find another way. You can fly. You toy with the idea of what to do, but you put off buying a ticket and establishing how you will get there.

Then time gets short. You have a week. You still have some options. You can still drive. You can still get a bus ticket and still get there in a week. But suppose you keep putting it off. How are you going to get there? Notice the word. The only hope you have of getting there is to fly. He was not using “hope” as a mere wish. He used the word to establish that the only possible way to get to Houston on time is by flying.

That is how he used the word hope. How are we going to get to heaven? The only hope you are going to have of getting to heaven is to come to Jesus and put Him on in baptism, become His

disciple, be buried with Him in baptism, rise and walk in newness of life, and have your sins washed away. That is the only hope of getting to heaven.

(38:09–40:04) Faith as Confidence in the Hope of Heaven

How did the Hebrew letter use the word hope? Steve said it is trust, and he needed to go back to that quickly, asking them not to leave Colossians because he would use it as his closing point. Faith is the confidence in what we hope for. What is our hope? Eternal life in heaven with God, having a right relationship with God. We have to have faith that God has extended to us the opportunity to have our sins forgiven, to be justified in His sight, and to be reconciled to Him. That is the only hope we have, so we must have confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. The writer goes on and talks about the various individuals who had hope. It is the only hope that we have.

People have to recognize that God's message, given through the prophets, through preaching, and through Christians trying to help them, is that the only way they are going to get to heaven is to come. That is how hope is being used. The only hope they have of being in heaven is to be a Christian. The only hope they have is taking God up on what He is offering them through the gospel.

(40:04–42:31) Colossians 1: Faith and Love Springing from Hope

Steve then turned to Colossians chapter 1, beginning at verse 3. Paul is writing to the Colossians and praising them for their faith and for the things they are doing. "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all of God's people—the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven." How is he using the word hope? He is using it of their using their faith to get them to heaven. The faith and love spring from the hope stored up for them in heaven, about which they have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to them.

Paul inserts that the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world, just as it has been doing among them since the day they heard it and truly understood God's grace. Paul is saying that people are learning about the hope you have, that you are taking it up and becoming believers in God, that you have Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and that they are attracted to that hope and are coming. They are responding to God's gospel and His invitation. People are recognizing that the only hope they have is in the church. That is it.

(42:31–43:41) Invitation to Respond to the Gospel

What faith was Steve asking them to have? Faith in God. Faith in the promise He has made when they responded to Him to become reconciled to Him. He was holding out the opportunity to be reconciled to Him, to become His children, and to share in His rest. How do we get that? The only way is to respond positively to the message of the gospel: hear, believe, repent, and confess, and be baptized for the remission of sins.

If anyone present that evening needed to respond in any way, or to ask for prayers of the congregation, they wanted to extend the opportunity. If anyone wanted to respond to God's invitation, let it be known. They were willing to assist, because the water, the garments, and everything were ready. He asked them to come, and called the congregation to stand and sing the song of encouragement together.