Faith, Hope and Abiding in God's Word, the Essence of God's Word

John 15:1-8; Heb. 11:1

Hebrews 11:1, a verse from the Bible, states that "faith is the substance of things hoped for." This might seem a bit complex, so let's break it down.

When the verse talks about "faith," it refers to a strong belief or trust. In this context, it's specifically about our trust in God. The term "substance of things hoped for" might seem a bit abstract, but it essentially means that faith gives a solid or real form to our hopes. It is faith that moves our ideas into something spiritually concrete. Something that we can visualize and trust God for. Remember, "the effort", the faith, the exercise of trusting in God belongs to us. The "outcome" the results, how any and everything turns out belongs to God.

Now, let's talk about "hope." In the context of this verse, hope isn't just about expecting something to happen. It's about embracing an idea or belief so strongly in your mind that it becomes more than just a thought – it becomes a spiritual reality. This isn't about hoping in the way we might hope for good weather, it's a deeper, more profound kind of hope that's directly connected to our faith in God. Our hope is not in our faith. Our hope and faith are in God's ability to do what the world and society thinks impossible. So, when we say that "faith is the substance of things hoped for," we're saying that faith makes our deepest hopes feel real and tangible. It's not just about trusting God, but also trusting in God's plan for us. This trust, or faith, makes our hopes feel more real in our minds, which in turn strengthens our faith even more.

So, what do I mean by "trust?" Trust refers to the firm belief that God is faithful, reliable, and true to His promises. It is the confidence that God will do what He says He will do, even when it seems impossible. When we say that "faith is the substance of things hoped for," we're saying that faith makes our deepest hopes feel real and tangible. It's not just about trusting God, but also trusting in God's plan for us. This means that we believe that God has a purpose for our lives and that He will guide us towards that purpose if we trust in Him. Trusting in God's plan requires us to surrender our own desires and plans to Him and to have faith that He will lead us in the right direction.

The Bible teaches that when we pray, we should believe that we will receive what we ask for. This is confusing because what is not said very often is this: Our prayers should be about what **God** wants for us. Our prayers should be the prayers that the **Holy Spirit** leads us to pray.

How is this done? John 15:4 says, **"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."** This verse speaks volumes to the hearer of it. The branch is us. We cannot bear any fruit; we cannot bear any blessing unless it abides in the Vine. Jesus says and neither can we. We have to be spiritually in tune with God's will not our own. Answered prayer is to and for the glory of God. John 15:8 says **"By this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit and prove that you are my disciples."** It is not only

the fruit that is produced that brings glory to God. It is that you are praying the prayer the Holy Spirit is leading you to pray. That you are asking God, for the things that He desires you to long for.

However, it is important to remember that God's will is not always the same as our own. This is why Jesus says **"If you abide in Me, and My words abide you. You can ask what you wish and it will be granted to you."** Jesus can say this because we will be praying for the will of God to manifest itself in our lives.

While we can ask for spiritual blessings and believe that we will receive them, we should also be open to the possibility that God's plan for us may be different from what we expect. Romans 8:28 says that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." This means that even when things don't go according to our plans, God is still working for our good and His glory. Our prayer should be to fulfill God's purpose for our lives, not just our desires or agendas. This requires us to trust in God's plan for us and to seek His will in all things.

Blessings,
Pastor Gool