

The Atmosphere of Faith

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Epic Faith

Text: Colossians 1:11(AMP)

Life is not easy. The walk of faith has more in common with a marathon than a sprint. Those who walk by faith are those who keep on **keeping** on. Just as our body needs strength, our spirit needs to develop endurance for the long haul. In the story "The Tortoise and the Hare" we learn the saying, "the race is not to the swift or the strong...slow and steady wins the race". **Ecclesiastes 9:11** True faith stays the course and keeps on believing God even when life is discouraging.

Hebrews 10:35-39

The Israelites in the Bible are like many people today. They believed God for a while and then fell away. What kept Israel from entering the Promised Land was not the sin of idolatry, immorality or greed. These were the result of a deeper offense called **unbelief**. Today we soft-pedal unbelief as little more than a common weakness, but God does not describe it that way. He calls it **shrinking** back. He lets us know that unbelief displeases Him. **Hebrews 3:11-13** Satan knows that the righteous live by faith, so he looks to cut off our lifeline to God.

~ Jim Cymbala- *Faith is like the hand that reaches up to receive what God has freely promised if the devil can pull your hand back down to your side, then he has succeeded. All of God's intended supply will stay where it, is in heaven.*

Faith is not just **mental** assent or agreement to and with certain truths from the Bible. Even the devil can agree with certain biblical facts. Real faith is produced when our hearts draw near to God Himself and receive His promises in our inner man. It is in us that the Word is able to do a supernatural work. The moment that this kind of heart faith grows cold, we lose our capacity to receive from God. Someone said that the chronic disease that afflicts us is not a lack of works or effort, it is a lack of real faith.

We are running the **race** of faith. **2 Timothy 4:7** Those who drop out of the race along the way are people who have stopped trusting the invisible God.

Faith follows **promises**. We must never forget the unique place that God has given to faith; His grace flows along the channel of His promises not His **commands**. God's commands reveal His holy character and reveal our sinfulness but that is all. They have no ability to **empower** us to obey them. This puts us into a dilemma. Many Christians struggle with the desire to do good and what is right but they do not have the ability to carry it out.

Romans 7:18 (NKJV & NLT) The commands of God cannot impart the spiritual strength to obey them; it is the ministry of His **promises** that does that.

Romans 8:1 & 3, 1 John 1:9, Romans 4:5, 2 Peter 1:4 Without feeding on the promises of the Word of God, no life of faith would be strong. There has never been a great man or woman of faith who was not a great man or woman of the Book.

The Word must find within our hearts an atmosphere in which its divine power can be released.

❖ An atmosphere of faith is developed as we look back with **thanksgiving**. Joshua is a perfect example of this. **Joshua 23:3**

The atmosphere of faith is able to look not at just what is happening but all that God has done. It is important to **remember** what God has done and take the opportunity to honor and thank Him for His faithfulness. Faith is really good at **recall**. Take a minute and think about how good God has been to you in just the last twelve months. **James 1:17** How can we have faith for the future if we don't often look back and thank God for all He has given us in the past. If we are not thankful, it is easy to become **numb** to all the many benefits we have. Atmosphere feels, unbelief settles into numbness and complaining.

Thanksgiving ensures that we never take for granted the things of God that have become common in our everyday life because we are in fact heirs of His promises.

A lack of **gratitude** is one of the most common sins in the life of many believers. It is one of the core dampers on the atmosphere of faith. Instead of a vibrant thanksgiving for what we do have, we are preoccupied with our problems and focus on what we don't have. Remember, one of the things we can be thankful for is that, as heirs of the promise, we are children of abundance and not children of **lack**. **Psalm 34:10** When we remember, we come before God with praise for all He has done and is doing. **Psalm 100:4** Heaven is a place of incredible praise, it is good that we should begin to practice the fact we have the favor of heaven on earth.

- ❖ The atmosphere of faith looks ahead with **anticipation**. Again, Joshua gives us a great example. He had entered the Promised Land. He looked back and thanked God for His faithfulness over the forty years in the desert. He still knew that God was going to finish what He started. **Joshua 23:5** Every one of us, if we are honest, can point to things in our lives that are not yet the way God wants them to be. There is still land to be conquered. Faith anticipates two things.

Hebrews 11:1

- 1) **Future** things – what we hoped for
- 2) **Invisible** things – what we do not see

Faith is not about the present, it is about the things in the future promised by God; and faith is **certain** of them, from the promise of heaven to His abundant, continued provision. Faith is the ability of the human spirit to open up and receive impressions from God that are born of His Word and made alive by the Holy Spirit. The atmosphere of faith is not only alive with anticipation, it is ripe with **expectation** because of the certainty of God's character.

~ Andrew Murray- *Just as our senses , through which we hold communication with the natural universe, so faith is the spiritual sense or organ through which the soul comes into contact with and is affected by the spiritual world.*

In other words, just as our sense of sight and hearing lies dormant until acted upon by sight and sound, so our ability to have faith lies in dormant until we open ourselves to receive impressions from the eternal, invisible God. Then we simply **know** that something is going to happen because God's Word has been received and **activated** by faith. This is called knowing in your **knower**. This is what causes men and women of faith to step out in faith. What looks like a leap of faith to those without Christ is just really another step of faith in our walk of faith with God.

Hebrews 11:27

To walk by faith means we must see and observe by faith. How do you see the **invisible**? Not with our natural senses that require visible things but with our spirit that has the eyes of faith. Faith deals with spiritual realities and invisible things that God has clearly promised us in His Word. **2 Corinthians 4:18**

- ❖ An atmosphere of faith is directly proportional to our **obedience** to God's Word. **Joshua 23:6-8** Obedience has more to do with relationship and alliances than a list of do's and don'ts. It is an intentional separation from ungodly things that hinder our faith and sap our spiritual strength and vitality. Joshua knew what it was like to win at Jericho and to then lose at Ai because Achan had hidden sin in his tent. God's people had experienced an unexpected and embarrassing defeat, not because God had lost His power but because something had separated the people from holy relationship. **1 John 2:15-16**
- ❖ An atmosphere of faith depends on where we **focus** our attention. **Joshua 23:11, Hebrews 12:2** Satan wants us to focus on the problem not on the provider. Satan will point to the way things seem to be rather than to what God has promised to do. Faith is nurtured in prayer and in the presence of God. **Romans 10:11**