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By Faith

The phrase *by faith* occurs eighteen times in Hebrews chapter 11, often referred to as the Hall of Faith. There we read the stories of the heroes of the faith—men and women who sacrificed the pleasures and comforts of this age, and often much more, for the promise of a better country, a better resurrection, and a better tomorrow. Yes, *by faith*, they waited for that city whose designer and maker is God (Hebrews 11:16).

Faith is the preeminent call in Scripture, the foundational principle that every other call of God rests on. From the beginning, as Adam and Eve stood before life and death, to the last days proclamation of the everlasting gospel (Revelation 14:6), the call of God to the heart of every person is—*believe*.

Faith, in short, is trusting God. Yes, faith is taking God at His word. And without faith, as Hebrews 11:6 states, “It is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (NASV throughout).

While the call to faith is clear, living it out is not always easy. Individually and corporately, we often fail to hold with confidence all that God says He will do. We see this struggle in the Eleven as Jesus, post-resurrection, “rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart” (Mark 16:14).

The challenge before the church is to believe all that God has promised. When we ask for wisdom, we need to believe we will receive (James 1:5). When we go out into our communities, we need to believe Jesus walks with us (Matthew 28:20). When we organize a Bible study, we need to believe God will open the hearts of those who hear (Acts 16:14). When we share the good news, we need to have faith that the Holy Spirit will work, calling and convicting the souls of those who hear (John 16:8). And when we pray—yes, when we pray—we need to believe that God is hearing and moving (Mark 11:24).

In all we do, from youth camps to Super-Sabbaths, the Church must mix her work with faith—good faith—that our God is able, faithful, and sure to empower and bless us to bear fruit for His kingdom and for His glory. This is His promise (John 15:16). *By faith*, it will be so!

—Gregory Smith
GC President