

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

August 11, 2019

The future this faith sees evaporates the fog of worry and doubt.

- What do you worry about? What tempts you to worry?
 - ♦ Our worries may vary, but what's common to all worry?
 - ♦ Things in the past? We only worry they'll catch up to us in the future.
- What if I offered you something that removes all worry?
 - ♦ Replacing all worry with hope - joyful expectation
 - ♦ That's what our Triune God offers. You have it. Faith.
 - ♦ Hebrews 11 - what God works in human lives with his gift of faith
- ❖ What is the special variety of faith? It's object is **real**.
 - ***Faith is being sure about what we hope for, being convinced about things we do not see.***
 - ♦ Not a definition. It's its character. Hebrews 11 provides examples.
 - ♦ Faith is *trust* or *reliance* on the Living God thus *trust* his word.
 - We don't see all that God is doing for us (angels and so much more)
 - We don't see what he's prepared for us - heaven & the resurrection,
 - How can this faith be **sure** about what it cannot see?
 - ♦ The Living God entered time/history - demonstrating he's real. He lives.
 - The unseen God manifested himself to Adam & Eve, Noah, the Patriarchs, Moses, all of Israel for 40 years, Elijah, at Mt. Carmel...
 - Most clearly in the Incarnation of the Son - Jesus
 - 3 years of miracles - prophecies and promises kept
 - St. Thomas Church - Strasbourg: Thomas sees the Risen Christ
 - This One is **real**. He exists - independent of what anyone thinks.
 - The Greek words translated *sure* and *convinced* ⇒ something real
 - *Convinced* not by choice, but led to by argument/discussion
 - ♦ God's history of never lying and always keeping his promises
 - Confidence begins with his **reality** and continues with his faithfulness.
 - Faith is more than the conviction that *God exists*. That's not faith!
 - The Patriarchs' faith: confidence that Yahweh keeps his promises
 - God's promises spoke about the future: 25 years - Isaac; 440 years the Promised land; the *better land* - *heavenly one* at death.
 - Things in the future by definition are unseen. Promised by the Living God they too are **real** and faith sees their **reality**.
 - *Blessed are those who have not seen, yet have believed.* John 20:29

- What a contrast to what so many today call *faith* - *I believe*
 - ♦ *Convinced* because I want it to be so. My opinion.
 - ♦ *Convinced* that if I wish (believe) enough it will become real/true.
 - ♦ Find identity in gods of myth, legend, tradition, heritage...
 - ♦ *Faith* = personal opinion, reliance on a world view of my choosing.
- ❖ For those who confess Jesus is the Christ, their faith is living and active.
 - Luther wrote: ***faith is God's work in us, that changes us and gives new birth from God. ...It changes our hearts, our spirits, our thoughts and all our powers. It brings the Holy Spirit with it. Yes, it is a living, creative, active and powerful thing, this faith. ...Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace makes you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures.*** Introduction to Romans in the German Bible.
 - Faith goes beyond ideas or merely my *religion*.
 - It's the chief characteristic of our New Self. The eye of our New Me.
 - Faith clings to forgiveness in Christ - casting off guilt's doubts.
 - Faith knows the Father's faithful loving care - worry turns to dust
 - Faith sees this world through Scripture, knows the dangers and threats, while knowing the final victory and ones in between belong to Jesus.
- ❖ ***Faith is being sure about what we hope for***
 - Hope is faith's confidence in things of the future
 - People without hope, devastating - give up, die, self-destructive
 - ♦ With this need, people seek and create hope - dreams/vapors
 - such hopes, even if realized, turn to vapor at death
 - ♦ Hope of your own making gives you a lot to worry about.
 - What a relief to know our hopes depend exclusively on God.
 - ♦ People who rely on God and his promises - follow his direction
 - ♦ The obedience of faith is willing, yes eager and filled with anticipation.
 - ♦ Such confidence is liberating. It fills us with life, joy, peace, hope.

Do you want a life without worry, all with a guaranteed inheritance that is out of this world and eternal? Feed the faith God has given - seeing God's character, history, and promises.

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