**The “*Power”* Points is a teaching summary**

**from the classes of Grace Bible Church of PA**

**Taught by Pastor/Teacher Ed Rish**

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**Four Levels of Abraham’s Faith**

Our current series is in Hebrews where the theme is superiority and the central focus is CHRIST. In the first chapter division the writer brought out the superiority of the person of CHRIST to the prophets who wrote the Old Testament, to angels who ordained the law, and to Moses who received the law. The second chapter division the writer emphasized the superiority of the priesthood of CHRIST, who offered the superior sacrifice. A key phrase he used reads*, apart from blood there is no forgiveness.* It was the blood of CHRIST offered once, that opened the door of righteousness to all who believe. Isaiah writes in ***Isaiah 53:11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.*** His tribulation brought about the believer’s justification. The third chapter division deals with the superiority of the power of faith in CHRIST. The point he makes to his readers is that man is saved by faith, sanctified positionally by faith, made righteous by faith and justified by faith. If follows then, that believers live by faith.

This marks the distinction between what was happening in the 1st century, and what should have been happening according to GOD’s will and plan. Instead of living the life of faith, many Jews stuck to the law. Even a large number of Jews who made the choice to believe in Jesus for salvation stayed under the works of the law. In 67 A.D. the recipients of this letter were feeling the weight of persecution because of their faith. As a result, they were in danger of going back to the law. So the writer used the words of their own prophets to warn them by quoting from ***Habakkuk 2:3-4*** in ***Hebrews 10:37-38*** ***For yet in a very little while, he who is coming will come, and will not delay. But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.*** But he went on to say, we’re not of those who shrink back, we are of those who experience the full benefits of salvation by faith.

This brings us to chapter 11 of Hebrews where the writer begins with a short description of faith. Faith is an assurance. There are three systems of perception: rationalism, empiricism, and faith. Only one is an assurance because only one comes from GOD. Rationalism and empiricism are human systems of perception, and because they’re human systems, they’re not always reliable. And they are definitely unreliable when it comes to spiritual matters. Human perception sees only that which is seeable. Human perception cannot see the things not seen. Faith on the other hand, comes from GOD and faith sees that which is unseen. Therefore faith is an assurance. Following that thinking, faith is power. It’s the power to face persecution in confidence, all the while focusing on that which is eternal. The writer goes on to use Old Testament saints as examples of this faith. The names he uses were chosen throughout all of human history. That proves that it’s always been by faith. There never was a time in human history when man could approach GOD any other way than by faith. And faith comes by hearing the Word of GOD. The first was Abel. Abel was the son of Adam and the woman. He offered a better offering than his brother Cain, because his offering foreshadowed the one and only efficacious sacrifice that would take place at the cross, but he did so by faith. He heard the Word of GOD, he believed, and he responded to it based on faith. His faith was a testimony to his righteousness. There is a connection between faith and obedience. Both brothers heard the Word of GOD, but only one was obedient to it. Abel’s faith in GOD’s Word was demonstrated by his obedience.

Another Old Testament hero who lived by faith was a man by the name of Enoch. Enoch lived 365 years and he walked with GOD for 300 of those years. Enoch’s faith was demonstrated by his walk and as a result he didn’t experience death. He was taken up into heaven apart from dying. In our main passage it says that Enoch was pleasing to GOD. GOD rewarded his faith. There are only three examples of men being taken up to heaven apart from death (Elijah, Enoch and JESUS CHRIST). Abraham believed GOD for salvation and his faith was credited to him as righteousness. But his faith went well beyond that. Here we’ll note four situations Abraham faced that called for faith and each one called for a greater degree of faith and obedience than the previous one. And Abraham responded in faith each time. 1st Abraham was called to leave his home, his family, and a whole way of life in order to execute a plan GOD prepared for him. ***Gen. 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you.*** Canaan was the place which GOD promised to the people of Israel. This relocation involved a step of faith, and Abraham obeyed NOT KNOWING where he was going. Another situation where Abraham applied his faith was in becoming a foreigner in a strange land. GOD promised this land as an inheritance but Abraham was a foreigner there. He and his family had to live in tents; however he had a confident expectation that GOD would provide what He promised. Like Abraham, every church-age believer is a citizen, but not of this world. ***Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*** The 3rd situation that called for faith involved a ritual. At the age of 99, Abraham had become spiritually mature so when GOD gave him the ritual of circumcision he obeyed. This obedience had two results, the Jewish race began, and Abraham received back the ability to procreate after being sexually dead. Abraham was fully assured that GOD would come through. (See Romans 4:18-21). The last situation of faith we’ll note involves an offering. Abraham was commanded to take his son Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering on Mt. Moriah. Abraham obeyed and when Isaac asked about the lamb for the burnt offering he replied, *GOD will provide the lamb*. He considered that since GOD promised, He was faithful to deliver. These four tests were Abraham’s path to confidence and the same principle applies to us as well. Come to know GOD, take into account His character, and arrive at a logical conclusion. Then by faith, focus on the unseen. You can apply this to any problem.