

**July 28**

**Scriptures:** Read Hebrews 11

**Key Verse:** “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”  
(Hebrews 11:1)

## **Overview**

If we were to poll your local church and its members for definitions of faith, we might get as many definitions as people giving them. We’d hear everything from, “faith is religion” to “faith is a feeling”. Or we might hear something like a young boy’s definition in Sunday School one day, “faith is believing something you know isn’t true!” What is faith?

Look at the writer’s definition — faith is something: the substance and the evidence of something we hope for. That hope (as yet “unseen”) is that God “exists and... rewards those who earnestly seek Him” (v.6). And the hope is more than wishful thinking — it is rooted in “two unchangeable things”, His promise and His oath, that make it “an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (6:13-20).

So faith is something substantial and evidential, based on something unseen but at the same time “firm and secure”. Still a bit fuzzy? We need a good illustration. The writer gives us several. First of all, he refers to Noah who, on the basis of “things not yet seen” (in this case, a promise from God that there would be a flood), “built an ark”. It seems pretty silly to be building a huge boat and to take scores of years to do so when you haven’t even seen a drop of rain! But, on the basis of hope, Noah acted differently than his neighbours. The ark was the substance, or evidence, of something he hadn’t seen as yet. In a very real sense, Noah’s ark was his faith.

The writer then goes on to cite many other examples of people who acted on the basis of hope. In each case, they did something because of what they believed. Their hope spurred an action which became the cause of change. Faith always causes change.

Soren Kierkegaard captured this truth well when he said, “Mere mental assent to a doctrine is not enough. Where there is not transformation there is no Christianity”. We’ve got to be more than “hearers of the word” — we’ve got to be “doers”.

## **Prayer**

Father, we acknowledge our lack of faith and inability in ourselves to believe that all things are possible. Help our unbelief! Lord we believe!