



**Ambitious Faith-Part 1**  
**Cultivating the Core Ingredient of the Christian Life**  
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This week, as we get into the 11th chapter of Hebrews, which is a nice segmented chunk of the Book of Hebrews we're entering into what is naturally a topical series, a series that will help us tie together all these verses in Hebrews 11 into a nice cohesive whole. It is a chapter which is for many people the richest and one of the most favorite chapters in all of the Book of Hebrews, for some it's the most favorite chapter in all of the Bible, Hebrews Chapter 11. And rightfully so, it is filled with rich and challenging information as we review some of the heroes, if you will, of the Old Testament. It's not only of the favorite chapter for a lot of people, I want to express to you as we begin this 13 week series in Hebrews 11, that it really is one of the most important and urgent chapters for us to ingest. It is desperately needed in today's Church, more so in the 21st-century American Church, than I think any other chapter that I can think of that we've covered so far in our series in Hebrews.

And to set that tone for you, I want to turn before we can get Hebrews 11, to Revelation chapter 3. So open up your Bibles if you would, to Revelation chapter 3. And if you know the Book of Revelation, if you know the Bible you know that the second and third chapter of Revelation records the seven postcards, I like to call them, of Christ to the seven churches of Asia Minor. And those Churches, as I understand them, aren't some sequential overflow of church history, they really are reflecting several kinds of churches that exist today. I mean they were historical Churches, obviously and he was writing them for historical circumstances in those churches, but all of us at one time or another in the churches we been to, or maybe our own church, we experience different things that correspond to the things that Jesus was concerned about.

But if you drop down to verse number 14 in Revelation chapter 3, you'll see the post card that I'd like us to look at from Christ is to the Church of Laodicea. And even that word if you're a Sunday school graduate, should bring a little bit of grief to your heart because you know that Jesus wasn't all too happy with the Church at Laodicea. As a matter-of-fact, it is a really one of the most stinging indictments of the churches that are listed here in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. The Church of Laodicea. In verse 15 he says, "I know you guys, I know your deeds", this is Revelation 3:15, "I know that you were neither cold nor hot", he starts to paint this picture of extremes, and it is "you're not over here, you're not hot and your not cold, I wish you were one or the other". Which is a surprising statement, I mean you would think God would say, "If hot is good and cold is bad, I'd like you to be hot". And yet Jesus says, "get on one side or the other", "go one direction or the other", "I just want you here or there". Which is interesting for him to say because the center, for him, is so repulsive, as we will find out. He says in verse 16, "so because you are lukewarm", that's the stinging descriptive indictment for the Church at Laodicea, they are not hot or cold, they are just lukewarm, they are in the middle, they are just status quo. He says, "I'm about to spit you out of my mouth".

And if you've heard me preach on this before, or if you know what this really says, or if you have your Greek New Testament on your lap this morning, you know that "spit" is really not the word. That's a nice euphemistic translation of the word, the word is really "vomit" right? Or "barf" or I don't know what you use at your house, "blow chunks". Whatever it is, it's a gross kind of "bleah.." you know. He says, "I just can't...it makes me nauseous", Jesus is saying. Because you're not here, and you're not here, you're just here. I mean you're not on fire, you're not going, you're



not turning away from me. You're in church, but your hearts aren't there. I mean you are not thriving and you're not moving ahead and you're not making full progress, but you know you still come church. You're sitting there waving your ticket to heaven saying, I believe in God, and I come to church, but you're not on fire. And he said, "because you're lukewarm, it makes me nauseous", "I just want to spit you guys out", verse 17. And here's why, because you say in your heart, "I'm rich, I've acquired wealth", "I don't need a thing". This church is sitting back, they're content, they're spiritually fat and lazy, they sit back and say, "we got it".

Now I don't think that's just descriptive of their economic status although historically we see that Laodicea was a rich church. A lot like the American Church today, compared to the Church in Turkey, or the Church in China, or a lot of places in Africa. We are a comfortable Church. We have freedom to practice our Christian religion, if you will, in America we have the freedom to buy Christian books and Bibles and Christian software. We've got what we need and we're economically prosperous, for the most part and comparatively with the rest of the world. And, he says, unfortunately that kind of leaves you guys going, "well I'm o.k.". And certainly because I'm a Christian, I'm spiritually ok, I've got my ticket to Heaven. And he says, the problem is as I look down from heaven, he says, I realize and you need to realize you don't realize what I realize, and that is that you're wretched, look at this descriptive in the bottom of verse 17, and pitiful, poor blind and naked. That's not a real glowing report.

Verse 18, so Jesus says, I counsel you to buy from me gold, real gold, refined in the fire. So that you can become rich, really rich, and truly prosperous. And this is not economic, that's not his concern, that you're spiritually rich, and I want to get some white clothes for me to wear so that you can cover your shameful nakedness, you're Christian life is not complete. And I want some salve in your eyes, and I want to rub it in your eyes so you can really see, 'cause you can't see. These people weren't biologically blind, but they were just spiritually not there. And then he says this, "those whom I love, I rebuke and I discipline. So be earnest and repent. Now that's an amazing statement as Jesus writes a letter to a church, who sits around feeling spiritually fat and content, and they're waving their ticket to Heaven. "I believe in God, and I go to church". And he says, you need to repent. Now look at that, they are not cold, if you will. They are not saying church, God, don't need it. No, they're there, they are singing their songs, but they are not on fire. They're not moving ahead, they're not moving out of the status quo. And Jesus says, because you are here, you need to repent.

Do you see what that implies? That being status quo was sin. That not being on fire for God is sin. And today, unfortunately, people think, well if I'm in the middle I'm o.k. No, you're really not. And here I often say this, you've heard me say it before, radical Christianity, ambitious faith, as we are going to see in Hebrews 11, that's normative. It is normative Christianity. Unfortunately, what we consider to be normative Christianity especially in the 21st century Church in America is to Christ, repulsive. He doesn't like it, it makes him nauseous. He'd rather we be out the door and playing golf this morning, than to be here and be like, oh, just pat me on the head, and tell me what I already believe, and just wave our ticket to Heaven, hey, we all trust in Christ. If that's where you are at, Jesus says, I'm not happy with that. As a matter of fact, its sin in my eyes and you need to repent.

The most amazing statement in the seven post cards, here it comes, verse 20. Here I am, Christ said, here I am. I stand at the door and I knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, man I'd come in and I'd eat with that person and he with me, it would be great. And the picture is what? The picture is a church that is meeting together feeling well-off spiritually well-off, fat and

rich and everything's cool, and Jesus is outside knocking on the door. I'd love to come into that church, but you know what? I'm not here. I'm not there; I'm not in with you guys. I'm not in with you guys because you guys are comfortable and satisfied with the status quo. "We've got salvation, that's all we need". And Jesus said, "I'm not even going to come to worship with those folks". This is a scary passage, isn't it? You want to go to a church where Christ says, "I'm not coming"? "I'll wait for you in the parking lot, but I'm not coming in". I don't want to be part of a church like that. He says you need to listen up. As a matter of fact, that's how this post card ends. Verse 22, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches".

Can you recognize just at least have it in your mind that maybe we are in danger of being status quo church, or worse yet, that you are in danger of being status quo Christian? And the Bible says that makes God sick. Let's not live there...we need to move on we need to move up if we're going to be average Christians and an average church in God's mind he says, "well I can't have that". As a matter-of-fact, radical Christianity, ambitious faith, that's normative stuff. It is a growth, a pattern, a progress of sanctification as Paul said, "from one level of glory to the next level of glory to the next level of glory". It is a conformity, an increasing conformity, to the image of Christ. It's an increasing investment in eternity. It's moving onward and upward, and if we're saying, "hey.. I got saved, let's go sing a few more song about it, and maybe I'll get a few nuggets, and maybe the preacher can entertain me for..." If that's our Christian life, I don't want it, Christ doesn't want it for us. I don't want Compass Bible Church to be a status quo church, and God doesn't want you to be a status quo Christian.

Got a lot of visitors last week, heard a lot of feedback from a lot of visitors. Some feedback I got was good and some feedback I got, not so good. I heard from a visitor through an intermediary who said they'd brought some friends to church. I said, "great how did they like it"? They said "well, they liked the music"... It's never good when it starts with that...And, of course, I'm waiting, and they said, "yeah, they didn't like the preaching, they didn't like the sermon". I said, "well, o.k., why"? And are you ready for this? "The preacher made us turn in our Bibles to look at a passage. And here was the response, I'm quoting it for you, "he expects us to know where those books are in the Bible. Now if you're thinking this is some person we pulled off of some... I don't know, some pagan ranch or something, right? You'd say well o.k., I understand that.. the guy is talking Christian code he expects everyone to know... This was not that, this was a regular active attendee in another church who wants their church experience at the new church that they're visiting to be like their old church, which is.. nobody's going to make me open up my Bible. No one's going to make me turn in a passage. They're not going to expect that I know where the book of Ephesians is. I mean 'come on, what do you want from me? And here was the final word, I'm never going to go back there again. That was the response.

Those are always uplifting reports to hear. Oh that's fantastic. And here's the issue, if you come into a church, and maybe this is what it was for that person... and you get, you're feeling like the preacher, or the service, or the programs are pulling you out from where you're at to a next level, which for them was to get them to learn the books of the Bible. Which your first-graders, by the way, down the hall were learning this morning... Wow, Ph.D. in Christianity there! But if you're feeling the draw in the church to move you to another level of understanding of the only book God ever wrote. This book that you claim you're basing your life on, I'm basing eternity on it but I don't want to go to church and have to open it, I mean, come 'on, what do they want from me? I'm not going back there again. I'm just saying, if you're feeling that draw, you've got two choices, you can



either say, no man, give me a church that spoon feeds me and I want recliners... I don't know what kind of church they go to... I do unfortunately, I do know what church they go to, but, don't start me on that. Or here's the other option, the other option is maybe I should grow, hmmm, maybe I should go home and learn the books of the Bible, and maybe I should try to move forward a little bit, and that's all I'm telling you. Is that God would want you to embrace that. Not just to get you where you're at, but to get you beyond where you're at, and move you forward. God forbid that we are status quo church, God forbid that you are a status quo person. If you say, status quo is okay, I just read for you Revelation 3, status quo is not okay. It's not okay with God and I hope and I pray to God is okay with you, and its not okay with me. God wants us to have a different kind of faith, an ambitious faith, to make a difference in this world for Chris. To do more than wave our ticket around every Sunday and hope the pastor pats us on the head and affirms us for stuff we already know. Hey, I'm going to Heaven, look at my ticket to the spiritual Disneyland in the sky, I'm going. I'm o.k.! You know what? That's just the start. Trusting Christ for salvation is just the start. God wants us to move forward, that's what Hebrews 11 is all about.

So let's open our Bibles to Hebrews chapter 11. Matter of fact, if you have a Bible show me that you have one, show it to me. And there's one right there in front of you. I love, this, an old black-and-white picture of Moody Church circa like 1922, and in it everybody's raising up their Bibles. And I just love that shot. And I think there's not too many churches today that people are holding up their Bibles. And you know what? I've gone to guest speak at places and I watch the people walking in, and it just depresses me, that only maybe one out of every five people have a Bible and are bringing it into church. Bring your Bible. But I don't have a Bible. Now you do, the one right in front of you there under the seat, just reach up, grab it, open it up, just take a marker, a sharpie, a crayon, just mark in it, my Bible, that's your Bible. You want a better one with a leather cover like mine, you can come and get it afterwards I'll give it to you, I've got another one. Or you want to buy one? Go to the bookstore and buy one. But you need a Bible, and then you know let's do what our kids are doing, let's learn the order of books, that will be an assignment. Just, let's learn the books, sit around at dinner and just learn the books of the Bible. And let's study the Bible together, I don't think that's super advanced Christianity, o.k.? And then let's get into Hebrews Chapter 11 for the next 13 weeks we're going to spend in Hebrews 11 trying to move our faith from wherever it's at to the next level. God forbid if you're in the status quo, to move you from status quo, to progress in the Christian life.

Hebrews Chapter 11, with the Bible that you're gripping there in your hands, open it up to Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews Chapter 11, first three words Hebrews Chapter 11:1, "now faith is..." Now what we're going to find is Hebrews chapter 11 is all about faith, all about people exercising faith, they possess it and they exercise some kind of faith that God is commending as great, and he is saying "thumbs-up", Laodicea, "thumbs down". Why? Because you are status quo. Hebrews 11, "thumbs-up", you guys are it. He commends these people because they are exercising a kind of faith. Now when you see "faith is", we think are about to get a definition; really what we're seeing is a descriptive of faith. We've already tried to deal with what biblical faith is back in chapter 6, and so just by way of review, could you go with me before we look at the definition in Hebrews 11, go back a few chapters to chapter 6.

Hebrews chapter 6, we covered this a few months back, I think, I don't know, years ago. Hebrews 6, and we looked at this verse in verse number 1. This is important to know, o.k.? What were getting too in Hebrews 11, it is ambitious faith, but lets just talk about what is basic faith. What

is that? Verse number 1, Hebrews 6:1, therefore let us leave, now this is an important phrase, the elementary teachings about Christ. So what is this? Advanced high school college grads will know this is elementary teachings about Christ, and go on to maturity. Now, he's going to define some of the elementary teachings. Not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death and of faith in God. And if you're a Sunday School grad, those two words jump off the page at you. Repentance and faith, I mean those are just basics, that's the real punch line of the Gospel. When we raise our hands like in Peter's sermons in Acts, what do we do? The concept is we are repenting of our sins. And as he elaborates in chapter 3, we are putting our trust in Christ. We repent and put faith in Christ. Now, those are the two concepts, and if you've been around a Compass, you know there's two vernacular synonyms we like to use for repentance and faith.

Those are good words; we want to understand the definitions of them. But we often take the words repentance and faith and turn them into two words that start with "T", turning and trusting. Repentance is turning, and faith is trusting, and you can see that described even in the phrases here in verse number 1. Not laying again the foundation of turning when you have the word turn, you usually need to describe what I'm turning from, at least, to what I'm turning to. And sure enough that's what we find. Repentance from acts that lead to death. And in other passages you see there is clearly a directive as to what we're turning to. We're turning to God, turning to serving God, but we're turning from sin. That's repentance. Now, the next one is faith in God. Now there is the word we defined as trust, and the reason we use the word trust instead of belief is because belief in our culture, at least in 21st century English, is a word that sometimes has a very thin and simplistic definition tied to it. To believe something in modern English is often just to assent to some facts. To believe something is to say yeah, I would check true on a test. I believe that to be in keeping with the facts, with reality, it's true. It is a mental activity and that's not what we mean when we use the word pistis in faith, or pistuo, the verb. It's better to translate it faith, or even as I would prefer, if we translate the New Testament, to translate it, trust. Because trust has the sense that usually will call for a preposition after it as we see here, faith in. And when you use the word faith, or even belief, and you put proposition like that after it, faith in, now it changes the feeling. From mental assent, to a transfer of trust. And there's usually three Greek prepositions and they all rotate, that follow the work pistis or pistuo. And it's "in" "into" or "upon". We trust in the something, or we to put our faith into something, or we believe on something. Those words, in, into, or on or upon, I guess you can translate the same as one Greek preposition but, two different ways. Those three Greek prepositions right there, help us to know it's more than a mental assent. Now James said it, the demons believe, but shudder, they don't have a faith in God. What we're looking for, if we are going to define the concept of faith, is a transfer of trust.

And I described that a million different ways, we've done it a million different ways, but here's one. How many of you out there have a pilots license? Show your hands. Pilot, Pilot, is this the pilotless section right here? OK, all you guys pilots, and gals, any gals? I had a gal in the first service, right up here in the front. Now, I can say either I believe you or it don't believe you. By looking at you, I can make a decision, do I believe you have a pilot's license, or do I not believe it. And I can say, ok, yes or no, true or false, and he says yes, and this lady in the front, interesting. I don't know. And this elderly lady, I have to make a decision. Do I believe you? Or are you just pulling my leg, put your hand up, I don't know. I have to make a decision as to whether I'm going to assent to her descriptive or proclamation about whether or not she has a pilot's license or not. Now that's totally different than saying something like I am going to put my trust in you as it relates to your

confession. Which would mean maybe you got a little Cessna parked out there at the Orange County airport, that I would come to the airport, and I would have maybe my family, my kids. And I would say to you, I now trust in you to be the pilot for the day. I'm going to put my trust in you, and that means that I'm going to sit myself and my family in this cockpit in this plane, and I'm going to let you put that little headphone on, and your going to actually taxi us down, I'm ready, get us going 100 miles an hour, lets lift off over the Pacific Ocean. That is a different kind of belief. Same word though, in Greek it's the same concept. I believe you, that's not biblical faith. I trust in you, see?

That's biblical faith. It starts with that. So really Hebrews 11 is going to even move to another level, but biblical faith at a basic elementary teaching level is knowing we're not talking about is nodding at facts. I believe you. No, no, it's I believe in the something. I believe in you, as it relates to Christ. I believe in Christ. That doesn't mean I believe he existed, its much more than that. It's I'm willing to put my trust in you. So lets just start with that basic idea.

If you have your worksheet with you, let's fill out a few things here. The first thing is we need to understand biblical faith. The world looks at faith, and they go, oh yeah that's you guys believing in leprechauns and things and all that crazy stuff. No, it's really not, it is ultimately not about facts and mental ascent, I mean it requires that, but it's about something deeper. And we get the Hebrews Chapter 11, let's not define it on Hebrews 6, lets define it on Hebrews 11, I want you to look at the parallelism given to us in the first verse. Look at Hebrews chapter 11 verse 1. Now faith is, now here's two phrases in the Hebrew language they love this kind of logical poetry, there's two phrases and we should in our mind, stack them one on top of the other. And here's how it's described. Description number one, it is being sure of what we hope for and, parallel concept, it is being certain, which is like being sure, of what we do not see, and that parallels hope for. Let me tell you why. Because everything you hoped for is in the future. Right? You hope for something in the future. And everything in the future, guess what, unless you're clairvoyant, you don't see it. So, here's logical parallelism. Faith is, and the kind of faith we're going to look at in Hebrews 11, is being sure of what we hope for, it is being certain of what we do not see. Let's take the words sure and certain and give it a synonym and summary word. Let's call it a confidence. And then, let's just take hope and do not see and summarize it with this. Put it down, letter A: if were going define what we're going to be looking at in Hebrews 11, it is a confidence in something not seen. It is a confidence in something not seen.

Everybody, as we examine it in the book of Hebrews Chapter 11, everybody we look at is going to be demonstrating that they have a confidence in something they can't physically see or haven't physically experienced. Which is not craziness, by the way. It's everything that you're hoping for even in the temporal experience of life, forget in spiritual things, is stuff that you don't see. As a matter of fact, a lot of the past, you don't see and didn't see and you still put your trust in it, and still believed in it. A lot of things about your own history you didn't see, right? Tell me when you were born, tell me where you were born, all of that you didn't see that. A lot of this exercise of some level of faith, in a lot of things that we do. But in the Biblical realm, in Hebrews 11, it is a certainty or a confidence, or an assurance of things that we don't see.

Biblical Christianity begins by a confidence in the death of Christ, and none of us were there to see that. But we're putting our confidence in the transaction, for instance, in heaven or my resume was expunged of all sin. I'm banking on that, I'm counting on that, I'm assured of that. And that's certainly a part of Biblical faith. And in Hebrews 11, they're doing amazing things based on being sure and certain or confident of things that they haven't seen. So, if we just think through that

basic idea, we start to realize that that is something that requires something quite, quite big. And when the stakes are high, it puts the focus and the importance even more on that thing, that virtue, of being able to trust. As a matter of fact, go back to Hebrews chapter 6 for just a second. When it comes to that, it becomes such an internal virtue and strength that you've got to be able to get to the place where your saying things like this about biblical confidence, biblical faith, or trust.

Look at Hebrews 6:17: God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose, which is all future for us, very clear to the heirs of what was promised, that's about where were headed. And he's elaborating on the Abrahamic covenant, in Hebrews 6 as you might remember. He confirmed it with an oath, he promised it in Genesis 12, he starts confirming it in Genesis 14, 15, 17, 22, and you remember, hopefully remember, some of that from that sermon. So he takes, he gives, he promises something to Abraham and his descendents, he confirms it with an oath. I swear to you he says to Abraham, verse 18. God did that so by two unchangeable things, what are the two unchangeable things? Well, one is the promise, and one is the oath. If he promises, that doesn't change, and if he gives you an oath, that doesn't change. And that was like totally unnecessary. Why? Because it's impossible for God to lie. I mean throw that layer on top of the cake the icing on the on the surety of the promise of God is he can't lie to start with. He promised it, he swore to it, and he's going to do it. And then it says this, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. Now notice this, verse 19. We have this hope, this surety, this confidence, as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure, it enters into the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, and get the tape, this is an important discussion about how Christ is gone in for us or Jesus, who went before us has entered on our behalf. Verse 20, he's become a High Priest forever in the order Melchizedek, and that's worth getting the CD for, to untangle all that. The bottom line is we're putting our trust in the fact that God has promised us benefits if we focus our trust on Christ. And the Bible says that that creates some kind of internal fortitude or strength that God says, that's the essence of biblical faith. And it grows, and it becomes something that is strong and it prompts certain kinds of action, and prompts you to certain kinds of risks, and those are the kinds of things that we will see highlighted with the "heroes of faith" in Hebrews Chapter 11. We're looking at people that are confident about things that are, for instance, based on a promise, based on a covenant of God, based on the historic redemption of Christ, on the Cross. They're doing amazing, that they have a confidence, and we want that to grow. We don't want your confidence just to be enough to secure salvation. You want your confidence in the things that God has said in his Word and promise to us to be prompting you to do some incredibly extraordinary ambitious kinds of things. That's what Hebrews 11 is all about.

Now some people are going to hear the CD or listen on the radio, or maybe they're here today and say, yup, that's just what I thought, those Christians believing in and all kinds of things they can't see, goblins and ghosts, and leprechauns and who knows what all they believe in. Let's govern this for just a second with another statement that we're going to have to go outside of Hebrews 11 to affirm this to you. But jot it down, and then I will try to show it to you this in scripture. The confidence we're talking about that we're going to see on great display in Hebrews Chapter 11, is a reasonable confidence. Letter B, it is a reasonable confidence. Here's the thing about God, he doesn't want us to have confidence in things that are true. He doesn't want us to have confidence in things that aren't real. He wants us to have confidence in things that are actual, things that are, as we studied when we looked at that Da Vinci code thing, as Francis Shaefer said, is true truth. That's the only kind of truth the Bible is interested in, is true truth.

What does that mean? Truth that corresponds with reality. If there is no heaven, if there is no kingdom, if Christ never died on a cross, if he didn't rise from the dead, the Bible and God and the apostles are trying to say then that's not what God wants you to put any hope in. Don't hope in false things, hope in truth things, true things are by definition reasonable things. Even when they seem to occasionally blow our minds by being beyond our experience. And I say that because I know people say, well if its reasonable, then where you guys believing in things like the resurrection of Christ from the dead? That doesn't happen; I haven't seen dead people come back to life. O.K.? Here's the deal, we're going to start with this next week and I don't want to steal my own thunder and preach too much of next week's sermon. But, we're going to find that even the natural laws themselves, nature, creation, they logically and reasonably beg for at some point a breaking of the natural laws that we observe. In other words, if there is a created order that we can study and observe, the very nature of that study is going to prove to us that necessitates some kind outside or extra natural prompting. And we're going to look at this. And therefore, let's just put it in the vernacular, if God created the world, if God is a God who created the natural order, we should expect that he can break the rules that he made.

I preached a sermon once that was entitled "When God breaks the rules that he made". And maybe you remember that sermon, it was the end of a 1 Corinthians 14 study and we came to the conclusion that God has only really in scripture, this was my count, and I did it from beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, has only suspended the natural laws that he's made. At least recorded in the Bible, 86 times. At that means from the beginning of Genesis to the end, and I'm not counting creation because we're going to look at that next week, but besides creation, there were 86 breaking of natural laws. Once God set up the laws, that was all there was, 86 times that he suspended natural law. And, as a matter of fact, you might say that there's only 86 miracles in the Bible? Well, that's not what I said, because we saw "miracles" when God intervenes in time and space, happens most often within the realm of natural law. God does it. What makes it a God thing or a miracle is that God is doing it with providential timing. But the times when he actually says, O.K., laws of buoyancy people aren't supposed to walk on water, but, I'm going to break that, that's one, that's one of the 86 times. And God shows that he can break natural law. Now, all that means is and what we did said is there's GT 1's and GT 2's. Remember that? God Thing 1, GT 1, was when God suspends natural law, and God Thing 2, GT 2, when he does something in time and space, but doesn't suspend natural law. And the point is this, God doesn't do this very often, matter of fact; we saw those 86 breaking of natural laws clustered in three periods. And again, I once said this to someone, and they said, well that's not true. And it is true, and my response was I counted them. I've done this. You need to sit down with the Bible from beginning to end, and count the times God suspends natural law, look at get every time that he does this, and you'll see most of them clustered around Moses and Joshua, the Exodus. You'll see them then clustered again around Elisha and Elisha, the prophetic period, in the middle. And then you'll see them clustered again around Jesus and the apostles. Three times, only 86 in all, where God is breaking or suspending natural law.

What's my point? God does that rarely, and when he does, it's based and predicated on the logical understanding that if the natural laws themselves so beg for a supernatural start, then it makes sense that there is a personal God, he can do that. And he has done that, very few times in human history. All that to say, it's a reasonable confidence. Let me show you from the Bible, how the purveyors of this message are constantly saying that.

Turn with me to Acts chapter 26. Acts chapter 26, let me be so bold as to actually turn you

to Acts chapter 26 without you being offended please. Acts chapter 26, sorry I'm going to get a lot of mileage out of that. Acts 26, I hope they didn't have a change of heart and you're not here today. Who knows, right? Yeah, I said that, but I changed my mind. She did say I'm never going back to that church again. Counting on you being true to your word. I mean, I'd like you to come back, but... Alright, Acts 26, Paul arrested, is in prison in the city of Caesarea, on the Mediterranean Sea, he's called out to give a defense to King Agrippa, o.k.? And Herod's tetrarchy broken up and if you know Roman history, Festus here is there as a political sidekick, if you will, to Agrippa. And Paul is called out to give a defense. He says, middle of verse 22, Acts 26:22, as he's trying to explain what he's been talking about why he was imprisoned. He says, so I stand here and I testify to both small and great alike. Many people, I am sure, had come out to see the King come out, to listen to this, this preacher, Paul. And so he says, I don't care who you are, if you're the King, or you are just somebody peaking around the corner of the coliseum here, I'm telling you, I am here to testify to you. And I'm saying nothing, I need to tell you, I saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen.

Which is another interesting thing about the nature of Scripture itself, one of the things that authenticate scripture is being God's word, is that it has this ability and it has throughout time, foretold the future. And in this case, the prophets and Moses said this would happen. That Christ would suffer, and as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people, Israel, and to the Gentiles. Now that was promised. Now, there was a rising from the dead part, and that's where Festus interrupted, in Paul's defense, and said, you're out of your mind. Which is where most people are today.

Soon as you mention something that you're telling me to hope in that falls outside of naturalism, they're anti-supernaturalists or they're naturalists. They don't believe that God can, or if there is a God, that he would ever intervene into natural law. They say, you're crazy. And then he goes on to say this, middle of verse 24, your great learning is driving you insane. Which, by the way, is revealing a little more than I think he wanted to. And that is for us a recognition that Paul's reputation was, you're a really smart guy, you're really well learned, your Mr. Ph.D. And he was on his way to be this leader of Isreal and the Sanhedrin, and he had his baccalaureates in hand, he was a smart and logical guy. And he says, but you must have been studying so hard you blew a fuse, and now you're believing in something crazy. And Paul's response verse 25, I am not insane most excellent excellent Festus, Paul replied. What I am saying, underline this phrase, is true, and, here is the important part, reasonable. Because if it is true, if its true truth, as Francis Shaefer said, if it corresponds with reality, then it should be reasonable. Even if occasionally, some 86 times, God chooses to suspend natural law, and one was very important, the rising of Christ from the dead, for very important theological reasons. Because that is our problem that needs to be fixed.

Then he says, verse 26, the king is familiar with these things. can speak to him freely, right? I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because, and I love this, it was not done in a corner. This is not some thing where a secret huddled few come out and say you'll just have to take our word for it. 1 Corinthians 15, that we quoted last week, though we did not quote these verses, testifies that Jesus after his resurrection, even at one time was out there preaching and revealed himself to 500 people at one time. It's not mass hallucinations, Christ has gone out there to prove this, in an objective tangible way. He's not in the corner, this is not some secret society that came up with this. King Agrippa, then I love this, what a good preacher, right to King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I love this, I know you do, I know you do, you believe the Bible, I know

you do. You've read it, you believe it. Then Agrippa said, I love this, typical non-Christian, throw up your defenses response, you think you are going to in such a short time persuade me to become a Christian? Ha ha, I don't know about that.

And Paul said, verse 29, well, short time or long time I just pray that not only you, but all who were listening to me today may become what I am. One who affirms the truth of the gospel, one who puts their trust in Christ, a Christian. Except, here's a little pitch to get out of jail, you know I'd like to not be in these chains. I don't want you to be in chains either, so lets get the chainsaw, o.k.? I mean, that's the last line there. I pray that everyone would be as I'm. Affirming the truth of the resurrection, the truth of the gospel.

My point in all that is never, and we saw this last week too, 1 Corinthians 15, is God calling you to believe in something that doesn't fit reality. Something that doesn't reasonably add up. Occasionally, C.S. Lewis wrote a whole book on this, occasionally the breaking of natural law is the most reasonable explanation for things, and we need to come to the realization that anti-supernaturalism, naturalism, as we'll see next week, doesn't really make sense. And so we, as Christians, aren't just saying, well our mind is wide open and if you want to say leprechauns exist next, or UFO's or whatever, we'll just believe whatever, because that's what faith is. No, faith is reasonable faith, its convictions, and confidence that are based on reason and fact. Alright, understand Biblical faith, its confidence in something not seen.

That leaves us open for criticism, so lets clarify. It's a reasonable confidence.

Number three, back to Hebrews chapter 11. What we'll find in Hebrews 11, and I don't even think you need to scan your eyes through this to know, although if you start, you'll see Abel verse 4, Enoch verse 5, you'll see Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob you'll see Moses, you'll see the exodus, you'll see... all these people are being praised and commended as verse 2 says, not just for some internal virtue, but for something that that virtue inside have led to. It is always something that is prompting them to do something they don't sit around and say, you know in the depths of Moses' heart, man he sure had a great and wonderful trust in God. That's not what's praised. What's praised is how the faith prompts them to action.

So the kind of faith that were looking at throughout Hebrews 11, let's put it down this way. Letter C: is a confidence that leads to action. It is not enough to say, I want to build my faith in my heart, great, let's build our faith in our spirit and our minds. But, that faith, if it's going to be commendable or praiseworthy, the kind of ambitious faith we're talking about, it must prompt to action. If it doesn't prompt to action, as James chapter 2 verses 14-22 tell us. If it doesn't prompt us to action its not the kind of faith the Bible is interested in. Matter-of-fact, and you can finish this verse, it says, faith without works is dead. Which means, its not real useful faith. It's not biblical faith. Biblical faith is always faith that does something it works, there's an action that comes from it. It prompts us to action.

So like a lot of people that say they believe in a lot of things, "I really believe in saving money, and I believe in saving money for kids, my kids college, boy its expensive, I believe in that. O.k., show me your bank accounts, are you saving for your kids, are you saving for... Well, no, I have reasons, I have, we been busy, vacation last year and things have come up, and no haven't done it. Don't tell me you believe in something if it doesn't result in action. That's not the kind of belief the Bible is ever interested in. As a matter-of fact, the Bible calls that hypocrisy. When you say you believe in something and it never affects your behavior, we're not talking about that, we're talking about a conviction of confidence and assurance, a certainty, that then will motivate you to do something. In

Hebrews 11, it's a real exciting risk-oriented doing. It's a kind of, I'm willing to do something that the world may think is crazy, but I'm going to do it, because I have confidence in God. And that's the kind of faith we're going to be looking at for the next 13 weeks. That was James chapter 2, and the heart of it really is 17 through 19. Faith has got to be active, o.k.?

Hebrews 11, are you still there? Verse 2, this is what the ancients were commended for. The ancients were commended for this. And then we start, we talk about creation, verse 3, Abel verse 4, Enoch verse 5, and then he kicks out of Enoch in verse 6, and he describes something that only applies to Enoch, it really applies to the entire chapter. And that is, an exploded view, if you will, an explanation of the commendation of God in verse 2. This is what the ancients, we're talking about the Old Testament people, were commended for, not condemned for. It's not the condemnation, it's the commendation.

The commendation of God is explained to us in verse 6. That's why we're going through 1, 2 and 6. So let's look at verse 6, to try and understand the commendation of God, and why God said, wow, look at that guy, that's biblical faith that's exciting faith that's ambitious faith. And he starts with a negative statement, verse 6, without faith it's impossible to please God. Invert the negative into a positive statement, what can you say about faith? Faith pleases God. Alright, when you have faith that is a well pleasing thing, that's what commending someone means. The guys got something, thumbs up, I'm going to commend you for that. Faith is the key. Now it says this, anyone who comes to him must, and here's first level, believe and ascent to facts, like believing that he exists. And, more than that, he believes that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Earnestly seeking, and we can start to tie this web together, you're not going to do that unless your faith is genuine, and real and prompts you to action.

But that pursuit of God is always according to this, something that God rewards, and that's part of what motivates people to be ambitious with their faith. That God is a God who rewards faith. So let's jot this down. Number 2 in your outlines, we need to remember that Biblical faith has its perks, and that's not just an indicative statement, that should be a motivating statement. God always is a God who rewards ambitious Biblical faith. He rewards it. He rewards it even at level 1. Let's jot this down. Letter A: level 1 biblical faith, and that is the first step we take with biblical faith. He frees us, or releases us, from sins penalty, we call that salvation. That's the first thing that happens.

And that's not really the point of Hebrews 11, but before we talk about ambitious faith, as it relates to all these exploits of these heroes in the Old Testament, let's at least say, hey you know what they all had a kind of faith in God that released them from their penalty of sin. And I'm talking to people in 21st century, I don't know what your background is, but let me at least say to you, let's not have ambitious faith to do great things for God in the world, unless you're sure you have saving faith in Jesus Christ, so that you're not going to hell. That would be a good thing. But you need to realize it fits in the category of commendation and reward. You can put it this way, God ultimately is rewarding faith, first of all, by not sending you to hell. He rewards you in that biblical faith by removing from your account the sin that should toss you away from his presence. And that's grace. But it is faith that God is saying is activating that grace, and of course, it all comes from God. Don't give me letters from the theologians in the group; I realize God is the source of this. But the point is that biblical faith humanly speaking, is responded to by the best perk of all, you and I don't go to the lake of fire. And that is the gift of God. And so, though that's not the point of Hebrews 11, let's just at least for a minute, underscore the fact that faith is the key. It is a transfer of trust that gets us out of hell.

Let me give you one passage on this. Lets turn to the Romans chapter 3, for just a minute. Romans Chapter 3, you still with me? Have your coffee this morning, good to go, some caffeine? I don't drink caffeine, great you awake? Take your little vitamins today? Allright. Turning in your Bibles still, passage number 6. You know, we've turned 6 times. You expect us to be awake in church. Sorry, I've got to meet this lady. Romans 3: fundamental stuff, its background, it's everything in Hebrews 11, assumes a saving faith. But lets just at least start there by putting a little highlight on it. Verse 21, Romans 3:21, now a righteousness from God, and that's the real problem, is that we're sinners and we're not righteous, and therefore we've got to pay the penalty of our sin. But the good news is that there is a righteousness, that comes from God, and that's what I need, I need righteousness if I'm not going to go to hell. Apart from the law, that means I'm keeping the rules, it's not based on keeping the rules, has been made known, and it wasn't a surprise, it was to which the law and the prophets testified in the Old Testament, they knew it was coming, this righteousness from God comes through, here it comes, faith. Assenting to facts? No, more the transfer of trust, a confidence in, through faith. And what do I put my confidence in, if I don't want to go to hell? Here comes, in Jesus Christ and that's available to all who put their trust there. A righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, by the way, and one reason is, on the sin side, there's no difference, for all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God. And there's no difference or any kind of special treatment to anybody in Israel, are outside of Israel, Greek gentile, doesn't matter, in the side of justification. You're also freely justified by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as an atonement, atoning sacrifice. Or sacrifice of atonement. And that comes to my credit through what? Here's the word, through faith, in his blood.

Now again, you didn't see his blood, right? We can put up cross' all day long, and nail things to it and have all kinds of pictures, and Mel can make his movies and all that, but you didn't see it. And we have to trust not only that it happened, but we transfer our trust to say that payment of his life was the freedom from my sin. I am trusting in that. Because the sin that I committed, that I deserve to be punished for, as Colossians said, was nailed to his cross. And his righteous life was applied to me. That's the fundamental perk of biblical faith. And if you trust in his death, trust in his blood, trust in his life, then the Bible says, hey, atoning sacrifice. He did this, by the way, why did he have to do that? To demonstrate his justice, because God is not good if he's not just. But he is good, and that means he has to be just, so we have to demonstrate his justice. Because in the past, in his forbearance he left sins committed before him, unpunished. Right? Abraham's enjoying a nice comfortable place after he died in experiencing his spirit before he gets his body back in his spirit he was experiencing good things. After he says how come? Shouldn't he be in hell? Yeah, his sins hadn't been paid for, but God was showing forbearance, until the sin was paid for. And it was paid for in space and time by Christ dying on the cross. He did this to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have, here's the benefit, a justification for those who have what? Faith in Jesus. I transferred my trust to him, not my resume, not my law keeping, not my rule keeping, but in him. Verse 27. Where then is the boasting, can anybody do this? Oh, look how great I am, I'm a Christian, I'm in heaven. No, you really can't boast about it, it's excluded on what principal? Observing the law? No, I guess you could boast, if you got there by observing the law. But none of us get there by observing law. All the boasting is excluded on the principle of faith because we all trusted and then God gave it to us. Verse 28. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. Immediate and instantaneous

forgiveness based on faith, the very first benefit.

That though is not the focus of Hebrews 11, we must assume that you have in place in your life if you're ever going to move beyond that into real hot and on fire ambitious faith for God is making sure that your trust is not in your rule keeping, its in Christ. His life, his death, his resurrection. We have to put our trust there. And then, we move onto exploits for God. There's a lot of people get this turned around, they're in churches this morning hearing a preacher talk about being virtuous people, maybe even having ambitious faith. And they think well, if I do more things for God, then God will accept me. You've got to start with this; your resume will not cut it with a holy God. See, and if you're going, he says that all the time, I've heard this a million times. Great, your neighbors haven't heard it, they don't get it. Right? They go off to Easter and they sit in churches and they think it's all about doing good things so that they can get to heaven. And the Bible says the best and most important perk, the advantage of faith, is when you put your faith in the death of Christ. You get forgiveness instantaneously and immediately you get the perk of eternal life, you get to not go to hell. And that's where we should all start, and then let's move on to ambitious faith.

What are some of the perks of ambitious faith? If God's going to commend it, if he's going to reward those were acting on this kind of thing. Back to Hebrews 11. What is the reward? Well, all you can do really, right now, is start glancing down from 3 to 5 and 7, all the way to the end. All you can do is really glance your eyes through. We're going to be covering all kinds of rewards. All kinds of rewards. God is doing amazing things in response to people's ambitious faith. And we can divide it into two categories. O.k., we have the first one already. What are the last ones? Letters B&C, if you will.

There's two ways that God rewards ambitious faith. The first one is, and I'll state it in a negative, because it's really not about houses, or boats, or yachts, or big houses on a hill, or whatever. It is really about something that we don't experience much like salvation from sin's penalty, is a great thing because what we don't go and experience. And so is the second one, when it comes to the temporal reward of being ambitious with our faith, moving beyond the status quo, one of the greatest things is the more we move forward in ambitious faith, the more were moving away from something called sin. Right? Ambitious faith is all about sanctification, and the more I move away from sin, the less I bear the penalties and consequences of sin. Now here's a big biblical word that's used a lot as it relates to sin. Its called corruption. And the more I move away from sin, the more I move away from sin's corruption. So let's jot it down this way, letter B. The other perk that we get with ambitious faith, biblical faith, is freedom from sin's corruption. And the more you're ambitious about your faith, to take the path less traveled, to take the high road, the narrow road, the narrow gate. And to say I am going to live with ambitious faith. The world, they don't have it but I got it. I want it in increasing measure, I want confidence in God that leads the godly actions. When you do more of that, you get less corruption in your life, less.

Let me turn you to a passage, Ephesians Chapter 4. Ephesians Chapter 4, I just want to show you this, we could go to a lot of passages, matter-of-fact, if you have your Bible software program, when you get home look at the word corrupt, corruption, or corrupts, plural. A lot of great statements about sin's corruption. It corrupts our lives, sometimes we see this even physically. Don't you see this in people physically sometimes? I know I'm no physical specimen, okay I get it. But sometimes I meet people who are my age that have lived really sinful lives, and I look at those bodies, even in those faces, and I can't help but in my heart going, yuck, rough living. Right? Hard

living. You ever do that? Right? You can't help it, you think look at the effects of sin on your face alone, I mean, wow. I know my face and all but wow, you're forty? You're kidding me, right? You don't say it out loud, but you've thought it.

Now that's nothing, the physical thing is really nothing. Can you imagine what the person's spirit looks like? After all those years of corrupted sin, all their indulgence in the sinful desires of the flesh? I was at a baseball game, watching a baseball game, my kids little league team, and there was this little controversy. There is no little controversy in little league. There was a big controversy about some stupid thing, I have no idea. But I kept moving further and further away from this crowd on the bleachers who were just erupting with nuts, craziness, right? "Bleep, string up the ump", then all this profanity. I mean we're at a little league game, and all this profanity comes out of their mouth. And every time I hear people, some Orange County housewife, and she's just cursing like a sailor, right? Now, I can look at her face and say okay, I see the effects of sin there, but when you talk like that, man do I see the effects of sin on your spirit. Jesus once said, the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. And every time I hear somebody curse like that, I think, yuck, ugly heart.

When God changes your heart, when you move forward with ambitious faith, when you become more and more sanctified because you're living the high road, you're doing things that God wants you to do, your moving out of the norm, you're not status quo any more, you're freed from that kind of corruption. And it's all over the place in the Bible. Take a look at Ephesians Chapter 4 verse 21. Ephesians 4:21. Paul's talking about God, and he says, surely you heard of him and you were taught in him, in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus, you know about God. Verse 22, Ephesians 4:22: you were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by it's deceitful desires. Go back to the garden with that statement, right? Oh this will be great, have this piece of fruit, oh you'll love it, it will be wonderful, well it will be so good for you. And she goes, "chomp". And then all the sudden, look at me, I'm naked, and there's problems and corruption. Corruption enters the garden and she is lured into it by deceitful desires. Those deceitful desires weighed a terrible penalty on her life, and of the more you engage in those deceitful desires, "hey, this is fun, do what you want to do, have fun cut loose, do your thing". All it does is corrupt your life, and the more we have ambitious faith and go a higher road, a higher plane, move higher in doing the kinds of things Hebrews 11 people did, the more we're going to see less of that corruption in our lives. The more you're going to see your heart, your soul, perhaps even your body is going to experience a little bit more wholesomeness, a little bit more freedom from that. And you going to say, wow, feels better not doing that any more. There might be some residual effects obviously, but you know what? I'm not living in that pit anymore. I'm not living with those practices any more, those habits that that kind of stuff I would pour into my mind, or my thoughts, its gone. And you will sit back and count that negative deprivation of corruption as a very big positive. Isn't it great when I'm not living like that anymore? Some of you can attest to that. I could open up the mic right now, and you could say, I remember living that old life, and the less that I live that way, man, just the better life gets for me. Now, are there still hard times? Absolutely. This whole chapter 11 is not about how to get your yacht, or get a bigger house, it's not about that. But it's about experiencing some of the freedom from the corruption of sin.

Another passage to jot down, I won't make you turn there, is 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 4. 2 Peter 1:4. This is a good text. It says, these great and precious promises are there, so that through them we may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world that is



caused by evil desires. You know, it lures us, right? We see the world, we watch the commercials, we see the people. Oh this is fun, cut loose, live like us. And we realize, you live that way and there's so much corruption attached to that. As our Mom's used to say, you know what? You reap what you sow. Mom, she didn't come up with that, that's Galatians 6:7, right? No, don't be fooled, God is not mocked; a man reaps whatever he sows. And you want to live that way, you want to sow to the flesh, you will reap from the flesh, same Greek word, corruption. That's what you'll get. So don't live that way. Isn't that why we cry out to our kids, our teens, we watch them on the precipice of sin. Just don't do that, I know you think it's fun, your friends think it's fun, but that leads to so much damage in your life. And God, your heavenly father, is saying the same thing to you. Don't live like everyone else, don't chase that corporate thing, it's not really about that. Life is not there. Don't just try to chase all the garbage here, stop being allured by the world's values. Can you start working towards heaven's values? And the more you do, the more you'll see that freedom from the corruption that's in the world, that's caused by all these stupid priorities. Let's hold the world's things a whole lot more loosely. It is not about chasing the Orange County dream. It is about living for the kingdom of God. And some of the present advantages, letter "B", are that we escape sins corruption.

Thirdly and lastly, there's another advantage which is really the bulk of the advantage in Hebrews 11, and that is that there are several eternal bonuses. Letter "C", several eternal bonuses. And I know you've heard it before in the series through Hebrews, last 45 messages, we've talked a lot about eternal rewards. But don't sit there and write me off, going, oh I've heard that, he's going to talk about storing up treasures in heaven and not on earth and all that. You know there is not one day in the eternal kingdom, one day you're going to look at me, and see me there, and go, you know what? I'm really, really frustrated that you spent so much time talking about eternity. I wish you hadn't. You are going to say, why didn't we talk about that more? Why did we waste our time on sermons that didn't deal with investing in eternity? Because all you're going to care about 100 years from now, or 10,000 years from now, is how much you invested in that place. There are so many eternal bonuses. In this text, we're going to see 17 different examples, and those are going to be many of them showing us how God is storing up for people treasure in the eternal kingdom. And again, if it's real, if he's wanting us to put our hope in something true and real, it will be something that should resonate not only with our hearts, but one day our eyes will see it. The New Jerusalem we will live in it. And all you did to take the high road and live with ambitious faith and move out from the pack and go from luke-warm to hot, everything will be rewarded in the eternal kingdom. Just remember that. Jesus said it to us as because he's begging for us to get it. Please would you please store up for yourselves treasure in heaven. Stop chasing the foolishness down here. Oh what do we do? Quit our jobs, be roving creature? I'm not saying that. Fine, put food on the table, I'm all for that. But can we stop thinking that's what life is all about? The Bible says it's not. Your life does not consist of the abundance of your possessions. That's just temporal goose bumps, man. It has nothing to do with where you live, or how you'll live in eternity.

One last passage. Promise you this, last passage for today. Luke chapter 19, this is one of several, and again, we've used several of the parables of Christ to drive this home as we been studying in the book of Hebrews, but here's just one more. Luke chapter 19, and when you read this passage with me here as we wrap this up, just understand it's no different than your desire for your kids. Probably you want them to avoid sins corruption, but don't you want them, even in the

temporal experience of life, don't you want your children to experience some good because of their investment through the hard times, like in their education? When your kid comes home with his geometry homework, you know, and he's like, "I don't want to do this". Don't you in your heart want your kid to see the big picture, you know? I know it's hard, but if you do well here, and in your mind as a parent you're seeing it, and it's if it's not an ungodly desire. I'd like him to get a good job. I'd like that investment here to have some temporal benefit. I mean don't you want your kid's to have a decent job that pays well, but has some benefits. Maybe even that he serves in some position of importance. Don't you want he or she to do something significant with their life, even here and now? Isn't that what you want them to do their homework, right? You want them to come home and you don't want them to blow that off, because you've got a view for something bigger. And if they're sitting there, "I don't really want to...", you have concern about that. And God, your heavenly father, same way. We're sitting here trying to rearrange our chairs in geometry class. Really, think about it. "I want to sit by the door", "aww, I don't like the door, it's drafty over here". And God's going, "what are you guys worried about"? "Get to work". Get to work and you will see internal benefits from your life. And you guys are so worried about where you are sitting in class. It's not about that. This is class, this is preparation for eternity. And Jesus said it this way, verse 11: while many were listening to him, he went on to tell them a parable because, this is important, he was near Jerusalem and the people thought, underline it, that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. See? Now that wasn't going to happen. Facets of it, phases of it. O.k., he's the King in my heart. But the King is not sitting in Jerusalem ruling in a new un-cursed society, that's coming. That's what the Bible promises, our hope is in that. But in the meantime, we're going to have to live in this world system for while, and wait for his return. So he tells a story, verse 12, a man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then return. Isn't that what's about to happen? Jesus is about to go, return to his father, be crowned with glory and honor, being given name above every name, of which name of Jesus, every knee should bow all of that, you know those passages. He's going back to the Father to be crowned the King, and one day he'll come back to get his subjects. But in the meantime, that's what the parable is all about, he gives this example. He called 10 of his servants together, and he gave them 10 minas, a mina is a three-month wage, so depending on your income, and a minor worker, or a major, the middle worker, whatever. 15, let's just put it in today's ... let's just say 15 to 20 thousand bucks. Decent job, 20 thousand bucks, three months wage. He gives them 10, right? He gives them 10 minas, so you've got \$200,000 and that in today's terms. And he says, take this \$200,000 and put it to work until I come back. Basically, do your homework, you're going to work, you're going to invest right now. But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say we don't want this man to be our king. But he was made King, however, and he returned home. Now it's time for some accounting. Then he sent for the servants whom he'd given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. And the first one said, Sir your mina has earned 10 more. So here's a guy with \$200,000 in today's terms and he now says hey, I got \$40,000 now. I worked at this. I invested what you entrusted to me and I doubled it. Here's \$400,000 from \$200,000 to \$400,000, o.k.? Now this repeats itself, we'll just look at the first example. After he said that, verse 17, here's what the master said, "well done my good servant". Stop right there, we hear that all the time, well done good and faithful servant, and you kind of picture Jesus patting you on the top of your head. "Good Boy, good son, that was really good". That's really not the point of the parable. That's just the commendation, and it starts with that. Commendation leads to reward, and that's the part that should impress us, that's the impression of



the passage. Look at how it finishes verse 17. Because you've been trustworthy in a very small matter, you've turned 200,000 into 400,000, he says, take charge of ten cities. What do you think cities are worth? You don't even have to think of New York, or Chicago, or L.A., I mean go to Barstow. Fine, ten Barstow's, Blythe, I don't care, throw that in. That's a lot of money, I'd take Blythe, if he said, I'm going to give you Blythe, I'd take Blythe. I maybe wouldn't want to live there, but I'd take it. Because there's a lot of resources, there's land, there's property, I mean there's municipalities, think of the wealth. I mean to be in really control of that, that's a lot. I mean you can't buy Blythe for \$400,000, right? Let alone Glendale or Arcadia, think about it, that's a big, whatever that is that's a big stewardship there. And Jesus is telling this parable to convince people that if they are invested things from God. God expects them to take that investment and turn it. And to their amazement on judgment day, God will say, "great job". That was such a small thing you know doing your geometry homework was a small thing. Here, here's your corner office, here's your giant expense account, here's your responsibility. And they, because of their investment in a geometry class, will for them earn an eternal weight of glory, the apostle Paul says. They will be experiencing the benefits of this forever. And if you think, Mike's just harping on us to sign up for the nursery, or this must be an Awana...they need helpers or somebody to paint the church. It's not about that. It's about you and I getting for ourselves because it glorifies God. I mean if you really want to be super spiritual, it brings glory to God to invest more of our lives in the eternal kingdom. And really, if there's nothing else that comes from Hebrews 11, I trust it will be an inspiration for us to put more of our heart into this thing called the Christian faith so that we might see our lives reflect more of the advantages of these people in Hebrews 11. These are our heroes and one of the reasons is they are kicking back with God's blessing and commendation and reward in a way that I would like to have a little part of. Wouldn't you like to have a little part of that? Don't be status quo, man. We don't need to be status quo persons, and God forbid, Compass would be a status quo church. Let's go after it with ambitious faith.