

February 4, 2007

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**“EMPOWERED BY OUR FAITH”**

Hebrews 11: 32-33(NKJV)

Ephesians 6: 16-19 (NKJV)

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- As a church family, we declared that 2007 would be a year to be empowered by God to do the extraordinary.
- Throughout the month of January we discussed how we are empowered by God's Name, His Word, His Presence and His Love.
- Throughout the month of February we will talk about how we are empowered not just by the attributes of God, but also by some things we do or go through.
- In the first sermon this month we examined how we, as Christians, are empowered by our faith.
- We are able to do extraordinary things through the power of our faith.
- Faith is one of the most important elements of our relationship with God.
- Hebrews 11:6 reads, “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.”
- Habakkuk the Prophet writes in Habakkuk 2: 4 “The just shall live by faith”.
- What is Faith?
- Webster's New World Dictionary defines faith as “unquestioning belief or complete trust or confidence.”
- However, Hebrews 11:1 gives us a much better definition of faith as it relates to our relationship with God.
  - KJV – “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
  - AMP – “Now faith is the assurance [the confirmation, the title deed] of things we hope for, being the proof of things we do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses].

- Dr. William Barclay, a noted theologian defines faith in such a profound and unique way. He writes, “faith means that we are certain of the things we hope for and convinced of the things we do not see”.
- Faith is an act of the mind and heart. That is, our heart and mind believe something and we have the assurance and conviction that it is true.<sup>†</sup>
- Now that we have properly defined what faith is, let us now examine how we are empowered by our faith.
- In our scriptural text, we have an awesome example of those who by their faith not only had the power to endure severe persecution and hardships, but were also empowered to overcome the evil plots of their enemy.
- In the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews we are reminded of great men and women who, according to verse 33 “through faith subdued kingdoms, walked in righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.”
- Verse 34 declares that these great faith walkers quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, and out of weakness were made strong.
- The power of faith is highlighted throughout the Bible. In fact, the term “by faith” is used some thirty-nine times in scripture.
- The book of Hebrews uses the term “by faith” seventeen times to describe the conquest of many great men and women from Able in verse 4 to Rahab in verse 31.
- Finally, Paul tells a group of believers in Ephesians 6:16 to take the shield of faith, which will empower them to be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.
- We are indeed empowered by our faith to do the extraordinary!

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<sup>†</sup> Preacher’s Commentary