

UNDERSTANDING FAITH SERIES

LIMITATIONS OF FAITH

Heb.11: 1 *Now faith is the assurance (substance) of things hoped for, the conviction (evidence) of things not seen.* We have seen last week as we translate the word substance is a participle and it should have been translated “now faith is a substantiation of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen”. This morning we are going to continue to see how faith operates how it works. Last week we talked about the different levels of faith. That faith is a position. Faith is a substance in the spirit realm. But faith is also a position that your body and your soul hold to. It is not moved by what you see it is moved only by the Word of God. Say, “I am not moved by what I see but I am moved only by the Word of God.” That is a faith stand. Smith Wigglesworth was famous for popularizing that phrase. Faith in God can do many things. Paul talks about how faith can move mountains. In Heb. 11 you have a list of men who exercised faith in God. And in the new covenant we also can exercise the same measure of faith and a greater realm of faith. We are going to see the difference between faith being exercised in the old covenant and faith in the new covenant. There is an intricate difference between the old and the new.

But first of all we want to see what faith cannot do. There are some areas that faith cannot move into. Some people call it faith but its not faith. Faith has certain limitations in certain realms. No. 1 you cannot exercise faith in an area where the Word of God does not cover. No matter how much human confidence you put in, if God did not give His Word there will be no faith. It would be mere human rashness and confidence. The bible gives a word for that. It calls that presumption. Presumptuous sins are acts that are made without God’s Word or instruction. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. That is in Rom. 10:17. The type of hearing that will produce faith is the hearing of the Word of God. In that

particular instance it speaks about rhema. Both logos and rhema produce faith in our life. They work faith into our life. For example if you have the written Word of God and the written Word of God promises some thing, then the written Word of God will bring faith as you meditate upon it. Rom. 10:17 says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the rhema of God. Translating literally the word rhema means the spoken word of God. Faith can come from the logos of God, which includes the written Word of God. Except that it comes in the written Word of God in a longer process.

Lets define rhema and logos first. Rhema is a specific word of God for a specific incident and a specific time, to a specific person for a specific task in a specific time. For example when God told Moses to cross the Red Sea it was a specific word – cross the Red Sea. Then it was for a specific person - it was to Moses. And it was a specific incident - the miracle of the Red Sea being parted. And it was for a specific time. After they crossed over, the Red Sea cover the path back and they couldn't cross back even if they wanted. You cannot repeat it unless God gives another specific word. So faith comes from rhema. And in the bible the written Word of God says faith comes by the rhema of God the spoken Word of God. Faith must always come by the rhema of God. The rhema of God will always be in line with the logos of God, the written Word of God.

There are times when God speaks of some things that the Word does not cover. It does guide us in the general principles but the Word does not cover. For example, how do you know whether God wants you to be an architect or a lawyer? You say God is not interested in that sort of thing. He is. He is interested in your profession. He has a specific will for you. He has a rhema for you. How do you know whether God wants you to work for this company or that company? You have to pray until you receive rhema from God. That is another area where we discern the voice of God. Learn to be led by the Holy Spirit the inward witness of God.

The logos of God which is the written word of God is like a general word that God gives to us. The logos needs to be converted into rhema in your life before it is applicable. So it's a step before rhema. The logos needs to be converted into rhema before it can produce faith. For faith comes by rhema. What people do is they take this understanding and they pull it apart. They go further than this. They don't stop

here. They go further to the extreme and say that even if the bible promises something it is still not for you. How is that so?

Let me define logos and rhema first before we launch into that answer. The sun represents the logos. The sun produces food and life. The sunlight comes and reaches the earth and it comes in beams of light. The rays of light that reach us represent a rhema. The rhema is part of the sun. It came from the sun and it is the sun. Yet it is the specific part of the sun that reaches you. There is a relationship between rhema and logos. All of the sunlight that came from the sun put together is the sun. And all of the rhema that is spoken by God put together is the logos. So all rhema came from logos. And the collection of all the rhema will be the logos. This bible that you have in your hand contains rhema that God has spoken to people in those days. The bible that you have now that people call the logos is the total record of rhema that God has spoken to the people in the bible times. God told Noah to build an ark. God spoke to Adam. God spoke to Abraham. They were specific rhema. God spoke to the prophets. God spoke to Jesus. God spoke to the apostles. All that we have here was once upon a time a rhema. And the bible that you hold that people call logos was once upon a time rhema. When Noah heard the word of God it was rhema to him. Today when we read about it in Genesis 6 onwards, to us we read it as logos. But it was a rhema to him. The logos is the compilation of rhema.

Let me give a bit more illustration. Every cell in your body represents a unit. Our body is composed of cells. One cell of your body alone has all the genes that control your make up, the color of your eyes, the color of your hair. They could take one of those cells and duplicate it and produce a physical being that looks like you; it is encoded in every cell. So every cell is a part of you. All your cells group together to form the various organs of your body. And your organs and tissues group together to form your physical body. In a sense your physical body is your logos. And the cells represent the rhema. The rhema makes up the logos. Can you see the relationship? And a part of the logos is the rhema. There is a relationship.

People who teach on logos and rhema many times isolate rhema and logos so much that they don't see the relationship. In the bible sometimes logos and rhema have

been used interchangeability. Like for example in the book of Acts 10. About 4 or 5 years ago the question of rhema and logos was very controversial. All kinds of teaching came in that area. So I did a study in the Greek on rhema and logos and I found it has been used interchangeably several times. But one very clear cut incident is found in the book of Acts 10: 34 while Peter was still speaking this rhema the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the logos. The word rhema and logos has been used to refer to the same sermon. That same sermon was referred to both as a rhema and a logos. The word rhema and logos are used interchangeably sometimes. For in essence and in content they are the same. If I take one cell of your body in essence and in content it's a part of your body in nature it's the same. So rhema and logos in essence and in content is the same. For example rhema contains the power of God. And some people preach rhema so much that they forget that the logos is also powerful.

In Heb. 4:12 *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edge sword, piecing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intention of the heart.* The word in Heb. 4:12 "the word" is the word logos. It is the logos of God and its living. So the logos contains power.

Col. 3:16 says *Let the word (logos) of God dwell richly in you, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thanksgiving in your hearts to God.* We are exalted to let the logos of God to dwell richly in us. There is a relationship and there is a difference. Logos is more so like potential power. Rhema is the application of that power. Logos is like a potential power its like a battery charged to the fullness. And rhema is like drawing from that battery. When you charge your battery you put electricity into it. Then when you use it you pull the electricity out from it. What is stored is pulled out. So the logos is in a sense stored rhema and stored power. We need a balance in that kind of teaching so that people don't underestimate the power of God.

This is where the problem people have when you look at logos and rhema. For example, if you want to be filled, you need a rhema from God. If you don't have a rhema from God you have no right to claim healing. That's a common teaching of people who teach rhema and logos. That statement is correct and incorrect at the same time. It is correct because it makes half a truth. It is incorrect because it did

not present the other half. That statement says that you can't claim a healing unless you hear a rhema from God. It is true you need a rhema from God. But as we all know many white lies are half-truths. It is a statement of truth but yet it is given in such a way that it makes you draw a different conclusion. And that's what's this statement is. It is weak that it can lead people to draw the conclusion that therefore if I see something in the logos that promises healing I can't release it. Sounds like a common white lie. Like somebody phoned you and asked you whether your boss is in the office. And your boss told you to say that he is out. So you try to give a neutral answer and you end up telling a lie. It's a statement that is correct yet incorrect because it cause others to draw a wrong conclusion. This is where people who don't teach rhema and logos in a balance way pull the extremes and wrong conclusions out. The problem is they don't see the relationship between rhea and logos. They isolate them into 2 camps. If you see the relationship you can help people better. It is correct to say they can't be healed unless I hear a rhema from God. But it is incorrect to say that you can't be healed through meditation of the logos.

And some people teach that way and they illustrate with this. They say for example when Peter was walking on water and Jesus says come and he walked. And as he walked on the water and almost drowned, Jesus came and helped him. Therefore you can't just act your faith out on the logos. You got to get a specific rhema. Like when Jesus says come so you got to hear Jesus speaks to you even though you read the bible from cover to cover. You meditate on the thousands of scriptures on healing. You have stored in your heart that God promised you healing. Healing is in the covenant, it's the children bread etc. yet that teaching says you can't have it yet unless you hear the rhema the spoken word that comes to you and says, "It is My will to heal you." In other words if you read in the bible its God's will you still need to hear from God, "It is My will to heal you." Then only you consider its God's will. And there are those that pull this teaching to the far extreme that they say that God wants to heal some God doesn't want to heal others. There are some that God wants to heal. There are some that God doesn't want to heal. If you believe that God wants to heal some and doesn't want to heal some, the devil will always tell you that you are among those that God doesn't want to heal. Can you see the trick of the devil?

Several hundreds years ago the doctrine of pre-destination was strongly advocated by John Calvin. He pulled it to the extreme. He discovered pre-

destination but he pulled it to the extreme. He says God chose some to be saved and He chose some not to be saved. So you don't have to do anything if you are chosen to be saved. And you can't do anything to be saved if you are chosen not to be saved. What a doctrine. And people like John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's Progress, struggled with that doctrine. Because of the wrong teaching in those days he struggled. And he was at the conclusion that God doesn't want him to be saved. If you tell some people that God choose some to be saved and some not to be saved, the devil will always come to them and say, "You are among those that God chose not to be saved." See John Bunyan struggled with that doctrine and in his biography he says he was rejected and angry at God that he was chosen not to be saved. The devil told him that. One day as he was walking along the scriptures around in his mind "As many as cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." As many as come to Me I will not cast out. Who is talking about God choosing anyone to be lost? And it began to stir in him until he realized that the doctrine of pre-destination was a wrong doctrine. Pre-destination by itself is sound because God called and chosen before we were born. Except that it is balanced by the fact that God has a will for everyone which means He planned for everyone to be saved. And so this is where the extreme of the wrong teaching goes. Similarly, it is a wrong teaching that says that the logos is powerless and useless for you need a rhema.

And I got another second question to this to be a rebuttal to that. If you see the Word of God says that its God's will to be healed. And you have to pray to God and ask, "Lord, is it your will to heal me?" Then God will say, "Yes it is My will." Then only you conclude God wants to heal me. I can act in faith. We have a question for you. Can it be possible that when God says something is His will in the written Word, that you pray and you ask God, "Lord, I read in your bible from Genesis to Revelation cover to cover and it says its Your will to heal your people. Please tell me whether it is your will to heal me. I need your rhema. This is the question. What happens if you hear the conviction that says, "It is not My will. I have better plans for you." I have a question for you. Since when did God contradict His logos? Have you ever thought about that? I asked those preachers who teach that way. Since when has God ever contradicted His logos? And by accepting that kind of teaching you are saying that God sometimes contradict His written Word, which is not possible. You can see how much wrong teaching can be involved. It is also saying that even if God promised something and you hear a rhema that says, "No, its not My will." My question is doesn't that show that God

contradicts Himself. That is also saying that the rhema is contradicting the logos. This is never so for in essence and in power logos and rhema are one.

The second question is this. If that is the way we always must hear the voice of God to be led, how do we know that the voice that we hear whether is from God if we cannot judge it by the logos any more? Where is the drawing line? Where is the boundary? Then God's people will be pulled to the extreme where they will receive false revelations, false voices, false visions, false dreams that are contradicting to the logos. There is no more the protection from the logos. And this is where we present this picture that the logos and rhema never contradict.

There are some scriptures in the bible that store the power of truth for our application. Like for example when the bible says its God's will to save all. Whoever believes in Him shall not perish Jn. 3:16. Do you need to come to God and say, "God I read in your bible that you want to save all people? Do you want to save me?" Praise God if God says yes I want to. But what happens if you hear a "rhema" that says, "No I don't want you to be saved."

This is where you have to divide the logos carefully. There are different types of logos. There are some parts of the logos that records incidences of God's miracles without any specific promises. So lets draw a line in the logos. Part of the logos moves into the area called promises. Part of the logos does not move into the area of promises. There are just mere records of what God can do.

Like for example Moses crossing the Red Sea. The bible never say that those who believe in Him they shall cross rivers and seas. If it did you have to be practicing in your bathtub. Take your stick every day and part the water if the bible says it but it is not a promise to every believer. It is a record of what God can do. That means that if God ever want to do it again, for example, God wants you to lead an evangelistic team to Indonesia. And He told you don't go by land, don't go by sea but walk through the Straits of Malacca. That type of record helps you to realize that its possible to be done again provided you heard correctly. However it is not a promise that you could walk through the Straits of Malacca, open the bible and for

a pillar of cloud you ask some people to burn some smoke. You take your cane and say to the sea, "Open up, O seas, and let my people go," and the rain and storm come down and it did not work. If God did not give you that Word you can't do it. You can't claim that promise because it is not a promise. It is a record not a promise.

So under record you need to hear the Lord. Under promises there are stored energized pockets of batteries that God says to hook onto them and draw them out. Healing is a promise. Salvation is a promise. Deliverance and supply of providence is a promise. That means I can claim them. And that's where faith comes in. You understand faith, you understand how to take the promises convert them into rhema and get it out into your life. So there are many scriptures here that are included under the area of promise. There are some that are not, like waking on water is not a promise but it's a record. Healing is a promise. Salvation is a promise. God does promise to save all. Scriptures on the baptism in the Holy Spirit you don't have to pray whether its God's will for you to be baptized it's a promise.

For example, take the biblical record of manna coming down from heaven. You can't claim it as a promise. But it's a record. It can be done again. If God has done something once He can do it all over again without any effort. So there are scriptures that are classified as records. You need a specific rhema to do that. There are also scriptures that are promises and they are stored pockets and batteries of power where God tells you to hook into them and draw them out. The secret of walking in faith is learning to draw on these promises. Learning how to convert logos into rhema. That's where the understanding of faith is.

There are 3 things that faith cannot do. You cannot move into an area that God's Word did not speak about or cover. You can't claim a promise that the Word did not cover. I know many people claim many things that are not covered by the Word. Some claim promises that are contradictory to the logos. Remember this divine principle the logos and rhema never ever contradict. There are some people who don't understand faith. They mistook faith for confidence. Faith includes confidence but not all confidence is faith. Faith will produce confidence. But not all confidence is from faith; confidence could come from mental assent. For example some people believe that they could claim the Word of God, claim the promise of

God for birth control. It did not work. The question is on what scripture are you standing on? There are none. In fact the bible promises the opposite. You could stand on the Word for lorry loads of children. What happens is some people move beyond the Word of God.

There are certain things that the principle of faith will not cover. Faith is limited by the boundaries of the Word of God. There are certain things that are promises and certain things that are not promises. We have to discern between those two. There are some people who act on the Word but it has not gone through its process. In other words there is a promise but before the promise could take root in them they act on it and they still fail even though it's a promise. The promise has not become a part of them.

All of you eat food daily. For example if you take a piece of chicken, and you ate that chicken, the chicken will be converted in your stomach. The gastric juice comes to the chicken and dissolves the meat. If there is a fight between the chicken and the gastric juice and the chicken say, "I refuse to be dissolved," the next thing is your body will give it up. But if your body succeeds and the chicken surrender and dissolve into the various components, then your body takes those components and bring them as food to yourself. And after some time the chicken actually became a part of you. Every 7 years your cells change and renewed totally. Your physical body is a part of what you eat. So your body changes the cells all the time. Cells die and get replaced all the time. Where do the new cells come from? Your digestive system is making use of the components that you eat to produce new cells. So there is a process. One of the most intricate parts of our body is the digestive system where the intestines are so long that they need a long process to convert that so call chicken into you. It needs that long process to convert the chicken into you.

And yet we expect in the spiritual world to take the Word of God and the next day produce it. Can you see the foolishness involved? The natural is a part of the spiritual. When you eat something in the natural it takes time before it becomes a part of you physically. When you eat something spiritual, which is spiritual food the Word of God, it takes time for the Word of God to become a part of you. And here is where some failed. Before the Word of God can become a part of them they

act on it. They didn't give time for the digestive process to take place in the spiritual world so they fail. They failed not because the Word did not work. They failed because they didn't give enough time in meditation.

How do we digest in the spirit realm? What are our small intestines? They are the process of meditation and contemplation. It's a process of digesting the Word until it becomes a part of you. And it can take quite some process. The things you meditate on 4 or 5 years ago now only become a part of you. There are many things that you have read that you have been thought today and it has become a part of you. So there is a process where you convert the logos into you. You become a part of it and it becomes a part of you. That's when you can act on it. The energy becomes yours to act on.

The first area that faith does not cover and will not cover that it will not cover areas that the Word does not promise. If you say you are exercising faith on any area, if someone comes and say what scripture do you stand on? If you can't give any scriptures, then it is not faith. Or if you can't tell of rhema that you received its also not faith. Like for example I constantly talk about the church, the building etc. these are rhema. It is in line with the promises of God's Word. I must keep seeing it constantly the things that are not seen. When God gives you a rhema it locks into you. It is encoded into you. It becomes a part of you. That's why I love to seek God and wait on God to allow His rhema to come forth. There are many decisions that some times I have to make and I pray until I receive a rhema. There is where the rhema will produce the confidence to pull through without that you can't move. And God works on logos and rhema all the time. God does not do anything unless He sends a rhema to a human vessel. In this bible everything that God did He gives a rhema first. He looks for men and women to impregnate with the rhema so that the rhema can come forth to their life. He put it into Noah and he conceived. He put it in Abraham and it conceived. He put it into Moses who saw the deliverance of the Israelites even 40 years before he was sent. It was burning in him. He put it into Jesus, He put it into the prophets, He put it into the apostles. And today God is putting in rhema. You don't have to stand in the five-fold ministry to receive the rhema. All of us in the body of Christ need rhema. You need your specific rhema to do the work that God has called you to do. Even place like which place to work in. God will give you the rhema.

There is another area of teaching how to discern God's voice and learn to recognize the rhema. There are principles involved. Every one of us God has a plan for your life. God does not speak only to five-fold ministry God speaks to every one of us. The rhema can come in our inward voice, our inward witness, visions or dreams. In the realm of interpretation a person can be influenced by what is on their mind. But in the realm of receiving a vision it is not so possible to interpret it wrongly because the vision just comes like a ray of light. So there is not so much of a possibility of adulterating the vision with our interpretation. So here we have in this realm about opening to God to receive rhema. Ninety percent of the time of all that you see will be in your inward witness. The other ten percent will be visions, dreams etc. So the limitation of faith is that you cannot go beyond the Word and what the Word promises. If you go outside that you can't and you don't operate faith.

There are areas that the Word promises you can operate. If you want to operate outside an area where the Word really didn't cover you need a rhema. See there are areas that the Word cover and how you operate in this area is to draw from the Word what it covers and operate. If you want to operate outside an area that the Word covers you need a rhema but its conditional. The rhema cannot contradict what is already there in the written Word. It has to be a rhema that does not contradict that. Like for example God calls you to build a bible school or God calls you to go to a mission field somewhere. All these don't contradict. But if it contradicts the logos you have to remove the rhema. No rhema that contradict the written Word from God. The logos is a check on that.

The second realm that the realm of faith cannot operate is that you can't exercise faith over human spirits. You have faith and authority over circumstances; you have faith and authority over evil spirits, demonic powers and even over Satan himself. But you cannot exercise your faith over human spirits except children before the age of accountability. So you cannot exercise faith over somebody. You can intercede over that somebody for that person to change. But you cannot exercise faith against their free will. You cannot go to somebody and say I am believing God that you are going to marry me. You can't do it. It violates the free will of that person. That person may believe God not to marry you. See the realm where it contradicts the free will.

However there is a principle of faith that we touch on as we go along. If I could get that person to agree with me it releases twice the amount of power of faith. Jesus said in the gospel of Matthew that if two agree on earth that is touching anything it is done. But if that person does not agree I cannot use my faith to steamroll down that guy. Even God Himself will not. God can do all things. He could have destroyed this world after Adam fell. Even God Almighty who have enough power to stop all men from their evil and going to hell if He wants to. But He will not because He will not go against the free choice. We can't exercise faith over and against the will of a person. Faith is limited it has boundaries. Sometimes people who are taught on the teaching of faith they start exercise faith over individuals. When it didn't work they blame God and they blame the principle of faith. Remember changing lives is different from changing circumstances. Even Kenneth Hagin says when he pray for anything in his personal life, it is always 100% results. But when he pray for other it does not hit 100% because the free will comes in.

Let me balance it a little bit. You can exercise faith for salvation for you family for your loved ones and your friends. By all means go ahead and exercise faith for them to be changed. But understand this no matter how you exercise your faith their free will is still important. If we don't touch on this principle many people will get discouraged. For they ask, "Why is it taking so long?" without realizing that faith cannot go beyond the boundary of free will. The free will of that person is involved. That's where intercession comes in too. We believe God that your loved ones will change. We believe God for those who you are praying for will change. But don't get discouraged when you don't see the change coming as you like to for their free will is involved. Keep on believing. God is now exercising faith right now on this whole planet earth. He is believing that His church is perfected which we know the church will be. And God now sees the church perfected. But why is the church not perfected yet? It has taken nearly 2000 years and we are not there yet. Because the free will of men is involved. So keep your faith up but understand that faith is limited by free choice.

The third category faith will not operate without the principle of Christ like character. In other words if you are not flowing with the spirit of faith you can't operate faith. Outwardly it looks like faith but inwardly it is not. Jesus in Mark 11

verse 25 say when you pray forgive. Why does he mention the principle after verse 23 and 24. It is because of this third area here. Unforgiveness, hatred or anything that is outside of the Spirit of Christ and the love of God will nullify the effect of faith working. So you can't exercise faith when you are angry. Some people do exercise their faith when they are angry but it does not work. Faith is limited by the boundaries of the character of Christ. The moment you move outside of the character of Christ all the forces of faith will be cut off. All you have left is the confidence of your soul and of your physical faith. The spiritual realm is cut off. We have to keep the Spirit of Christ; keep in His character and nature to exercise strong and powerful faith.