

Shepherd of Hope Christian Chat Room (www.shepherdofhope.org)

Special Guest Speaker: Ron Cameron

Topic: “By Faith...”

Date: April 17, 2008

Shep: Now I would like to introduce our speaker, a dear friend, a mentor to me, I call him my ‘advisor’ on many issues that arise as I am learning how to administrate this chat room. Ron is a long time friend (over a year now) who I met in Rest Ministries Chat room and I am so glad he has agreed to come to share with us tonight. Ron lives in Sydney, Australia, and was diagnosed as having Parkinson’s in 1998 although according to other people it had been evident since around 1993. He first came upon Rest Ministries in 1999 whilst searching the internet for information on Parkinson’s. Over the years he has mainly been involved with the various chat rooms that have existed. He is also involved in the work of his local church, looking after the CD/tape library for many years. Chronic illness might slow us down but God still has a plan and purpose for each one of us for are all unique and have a unique ministry which calls us to be obedient to His prompting and leading.

Shep: most of you will recognize Ron as the guy who always greets you with “g’ day!”

It is my joy and my privilege to introduce and turn this over to Ron Cameron — as he shares his presentation “BY FAITH...” Please welcome Ron!

Guest_Ron: Thanks Shep for the intro, it’s great to be here and G’Day to you all.

Guest_Ron: Hebrews 11:1-3 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; for by it the elders obtained a good report. By faith we understand that the ages were framed by a word of God, so that the things being seen not to have come into being out of the things that appear.” (MKJV)

Guest_Ron: We all exercise faith each day whether we know it or not. We place our faith in the seat we sit on, in the driver of the bus or train we catch – the list could go on and on.

But what is faith, and faith in God in particular? It comes down to being willing to trust God with every event in our lives; to walk a pathway not knowing what’s around the next bend but knowing you have God on our side; to be willing to suffer taunts and persecution or to live with chronic illness or pain, following His leading each and every day. We may not know the final outcome but we have the assurance of knowing that God is our hope for the future. The writer of Hebrews doesn’t leave us there, but rather goes on to give us some examples of some of the people who have gone before who lived “By Faith .” We’ll take a brief look at just a few of them; you can look more up yourself later by reading the whole of Hebrews 11. And here’s a challenge for you to work on later - Who is missing from the list?

Guest_Ron: First, we will look at Noah. “By faith Noah, having been warned by God of things not yet seen, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” Hebrews 11:7 (MKJV)

Noah is included in the Hebrews list of faith because he was obedient to God’s instructions to build an ark to save his household from the coming destruction. Can you imagine building an ark in the middle of nowhere, miles from water; come on, you’ve got to be kidding?

But no, God was serious, so Noah went about the building project, willing to suffer the taunts from the crowds, and even his own family. Noah was not perfect by any means, no doubt he uttered a few unprintable words when he hit his thumb instead of the nail, yet remained faithful and obedient to God. You can read more about Noah in Genesis chapters 6-9.

Guest_Ron: Next, we will move onto Abraham. “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out into a place which he was afterward going to receive for an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he went.” Hebrews 11:8 (MKJV)

Abraham was called by God to go to a new land even though he did not know where it was. Yet in spite of this, Abraham set out in faith to follow God’s leading. We also read later in Hebrews 11:17-18 that God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his own son Isaac. By faith Abraham, no doubt with tears streaming down his face into his beard, was prepared to sacrifice his only son. God seeing his faithfulness and obedience stepped in at just the right time and stopped Abraham, providing a ram instead for the sacrifice. You can read more about Abraham in Genesis chapters 12-24.

Guest_Ron: Finally, we look at Daniel (He is not in the list in Hebrews, so that’s one for your challenge.) “Then the presidents and rulers sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom. But they could find no occasion or fault, because he was faithful. Neither was there any error or fault found in him.” Daniel 6:4 (MKJV)

Even though Daniel doesn’t appear in the list he could be added by saying “By faith Daniel refused to bow down to anyone else but rather he was obedient to God.” Daniel did not swing with the tide of popular peer pressure and bow down to the king; rather he remained faithful and obedient to God trusting Him to see him through any situation. Sometimes you have to stand out from the crowd regardless of the consequences. In the end Daniel prospered because of his obedience (Daniel 6:28). Read the book of Daniel to find out more about him.

Guest_Ron: I was going to stop there, but there is one more person not on the list, Jesus himself.

He was obedient, faithful, long-suffering and more. So, how would you finish the following statement: “By faith Jesus _____.”

angelfree: lived to die for the greater cause. But he was without ANY sin that’s truly amazing.

ThereIsHope: was obedient to the point of death

Guest_Ron: My answer would be - By faith Jesus endured the agony of being forsaken on the cross of Calvary on my behalf.

Guest_Ron: We could go on to talk about more people on the list in Hebrews but I will leave you to look at that yourself. There have been many people down through the ages that we could include in the list of “By faith ..”, do any names comes readily to mind?

ThereIsHope: the woman at the well

Ann_van: the syro-phenician woman

Alice: All the Prophets

Guest_Ron: But how about you?

whitecap: I believe I get through each day by faith

angelfree: I find no other way to live; it brings such peace knowing my Savior

ThereIsHope: yes faith in Jesus is my hope and my salvation

Guest_Ron: Thanks, let’s move on - What could be written about you? “By faith (your name)” Think about it for a moment, we’ll come back to that shortly.

I'd like to close with a quote from a book I am currently reading, 'A few good men' (written for men) by Richard Coekin "There is no assurance of salvation in Christ if there is no practical obedience to God's commands in our lives, because real faith is expressed in obedience. If we want Christ as our Saviour, we must accept Him as Lord – for He is both, and we cannot have the Saviour without having the Lord. Faith in our Saviour is expressed in obedience to our Lord."

You may need to let that quote sink in for a bit and maybe come back to it later.

Guest_Ron: As an example of faith in action / obedience we need look no further than the unknown woman who touched the fringe of Jesus' robe and was healed of her illness (read Luke 8:40-48). Obviously some of the crowd jostling around Jesus, and touching Him, would have had some illness but there is no record of their healing, only this woman who "By faith touched the fringe of Jesus' robe". She too can be added to your "By Faith" challenge list.

In the providence of God I was reminded of John Stephen Akhwari at a lunchtime Bible talk just yesterday (Wed. April 16). Does anybody know who he is?

Akhwari was an athlete who represented Tanzania at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico. He returned home a hero and earned him a place in Wikipedia for finishing last in a field of 74 in the 26-mile Marathon. How could this be? The Marathon was over two thirds completed, Akhwari was no doubt amongst the front runners with his eyes fixed firmly on the prize to be won, the gold medal. Then disaster occurred; a trip; a fall, and Akhwari lay on the ground in agony, his dream shattered along with a badly cut knee and dislocated joint. Rather than quit he bound up his knee and struggled on with the Marathon. By the time he entered the stadium over one hour behind the other contestants most of the crowd had left. Those who remained watched as Akhwari completed one grueling lap of the stadium as he struggled to make it to the finish line.

Finally, in complete exhaustion he fell across the finish line, his race had been run. Asked why he continued and did not quit he replied "My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race. They sent me to finish."

It reminds me of our walk with God whilst enduring chronic illness or pain. We start out well then along the way something happened. Yet we are still loved and cared for, our race is not over, and as Hebrews 12:1 tell us "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us" (NLT)

So back to the question I asked before the quote, what could be said about you?

Guest_Ron: By faith

angelfree: this reminds me of the picture when Jesus was struggling carrying the cross and His mother knelt down to encourage Him to continue on, I saw the movie and that sticks in my soul.

Guest_Ron: He struggled for us

angelfree: more than we can understand

Guest_Ron: this brings us to the end of the presentation, open for Q & A

whitecap: I lean on Christ and struggle on through pain and depression still striving to serve God at every opportunity.

Beth: It seems so strange to me that God would ask Abraham to sacrifice his “son of promise” and almost as amazing that he didn’t hesitate to obey.

Guest_Ron: it must have been a heart breaking decision for Abraham to go through with it, but his faith in God was stronger. Makes us wonder how obedient we are

Beth: Indeed! And what a beautiful picture of the Father offering Jesus, His Son!

angelfree: I have found that my faith causes me to choose obedience. Because of my suffering, my obedience cannot excuse my lack of obedience and yet when I choose to obey and choose faith in Him I find strength to be obedient.

Guest_Ron: we all walk by faith

Shep: Ron, in regards to Noah, what do you suppose he asked the Lord while in the process of being told to ‘build the ark’?

Guest_Ron: I think he would be wondering if he got the message right, that he should build it somewhere near the water. It would make you wonder and then have people come around and think you were crazy, spending the family fortune on a boat.

Shep: and the sneering of those who were watching and ridiculing him, that truly showed a man of faith, didn’t it?

Guest_Ron: it took courage and faith

Beth: If I have my facts straight it had never rained before either.

Guest_Ron: that’s right, so that would have added to the challenge

angelfree: isn’t it just like our God to pick the most challenging and remote places and people to show His love? Like me, I feel that way sometimes - challenging and remote

Guest_Ron: Anybody like to share their “By Faith” statement, I think we had some earlier that I might have missed

Shep: By Faith, Harold and I took a step into the world of online Christian Chat rooms and God has shown Himself faithful!

Guest_Ron: Thanks Shep, yes the Lord has been faithful.

whitecap: Sometimes I fail but ask forgiveness, pick myself up and struggle to pick myself up, trusting in God to help me keep going and do better.

Shep: By faith, I learned to trust again after a horribly abusive relationship and the Lord was faithful and provided a good, faithful and godly husband.

mayogram: By faith, Bob and I left the security of a well paying job to serve in a mission organization and live on support.

whitecap: By Faith I keep on Keeping On.

Guest_Ron: Thanks mayo, that was a big step for you both

angelfree: By Faith I relied on God to save our marriage and bring my husband home and He did and he was baptized last Sunday, God is good.....all the time even though it took almost 2 years

Shep: okay one last comment then I will close us in prayer

Beth: This is a small thing in a way: By faith I drive by myself to the city and go shopping, etc. Sometimes very hard for me.

Guest_Ron: sometimes God's timetable is different to ours

Shep: Okay — I will close us now in prayer, then I will ask if anyone would like to stay after — I would like to go over the chat procedure portion again for those who feel a little confused by it — that will help us in future chats sessions as well!

Shep: Father, YOU ARE SO FAITHFUL! You have brought to us a challenging message — one that makes us ask “What is it that I am doing ‘by faith?’” And IF I am NOT doing something by faith, why not? You have proven yourself over and over and through Your Word we see so many examples of others who trusted and took steps BY FAITH and YOU never disappointed them or let them down. Give us the courage to live BY FAITH. Give us the challenge to look into these scriptures deeper and to seek examples of godly men and women of Faith. And Lord, please, bless Ron for his devotion to us tonight, his love for You Lord and for preparing this lesson for us — thank you for allowing him to be well enough to do this presentation when typing can sometimes be very difficult for him — Thank you that Ron did this lesson BY FAITH. We thank you and praise you and lift you up, in Jesus precious name, Amen!!!

angelfree: AMEN

Beth: Amen!!

cakrejci: Amen!

Guest_Ron: amen

LJ: amen

Shep: Thank you Ron — this was truly a study that we needed to hear — you have challenged me to look deeper into this area.

angelfree: me 2

cakrejci: yes ty Ron.

Beth: Ron, God has spoken to me through you. Bless you!

angelfree: I have to go care for my husband now and I will share this with him as well. Thank you for this privilege.

Guest_Ron: thanks all, al glory and praise to our Heavenly Father

Shep: I want to thank each of you for your time in coming out to hear this — across several countries! And, as I have a captive audience, I do want to ask you to spread the word of this room to friends who are living with chronic illness. I would like you to also consider looking through ALL of the pages on this site and last, but not least, if the Lord lays it on your heart to financially support this site, you can do so on the Donations link at the top of the page.

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Shep Wilson

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