

Faith is Being Sure

Hebrews 11:1

—Augustine of Hippo

Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Augustine is one of my favorite authors/teachers in Church History. He is one of the ones that laid a good and solid basis for the Theological foundation that we rest on in this day and age. He lived from 354 - 430 AD. There are many, many of his writings still existant and available today. This little bit on Hebrews 11:1 is especially encouraging and uplifting to me!

He tells us that the idea of “faith” is definitely NOT what many of the unredeemed in the world think of faith as being. The perceive faith as just “Choosing” think of something without any support for it. You just “believe” whatever you choose to believe. That, Augustine says, is just not so! We do not just hear of a thing and then, because we like it or want it “hope” that it is or will be so. Rather it is a surety of such things, a surety that God enables us, by His Holy Spirit, to be sure of. Here is his (Augustine’s) description of faith:

You see something [so] that you may believe something and **from what you see may believe what you see not**. Do not be ungrateful to him **who has made you see** so that you may be able to believe **what as yet you cannot see**. God **has given you** eyes in the body, reason in the heart; arouse the reason of the heart, wake up the inhabitant of your eyes, let it take to its windows, examine the creature of God. God has made you a rational animal, set you over the cattle, formed you in his own image. **Ought you to use your eyes as the cattle do**, only to see what to add to your belly, not to your soul? Stir up the eye of reason, use your eyes as a human being should, consider the heaven and earth, the fruitfulness of the earth, the flight of the birds, the swimming of the fish, the goodness of the seeds; consider the works, and seek for the author. Look at what you see, and seek him whom you see not. Believe in him you do not see **because of these things that**

you see. If you think that it is with my own words that I have exhorted you, hear the Apostle:

*“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities ... **have been clearly seen**, being understood from what has been made” (Rom. 1:20).*

These things you saw and disregarded. God’s daily miracles were disesteemed not for their easiness but their constant repetition. For what is more difficult to understand than death and birth, that one who existed should depart into darkness and that one who was not, should come forth to light? What else is as marvelous? But with God easily done. Marvel at these things! Are his unusual works greater than those that you are accustomed to see? People wondered that our Lord Jesus filled so many thousands with five loaves, yet they do not wonder that through a few grains the whole earth is filled with crops. When the water was made wine, people were amazed; isn’t this what takes place with the rain along the root of the vine? He did the one, he does the other; both are wonderful, for both are the works of God. You see unusual things and wonder; of what origin are you yourself who wonders? You wonder at other things when you, the wonderer, are yourself a great wonder. From where then are these things that you see but from him whom you see not? But because you disesteemed these things, he came himself to do unusual things, that in these usual ones too you might acknowledge your Creator.

This is a truly marvelous and clear statement of just what Faith truly is and what it is that enables us to exercise faith in our walk with the Lord!!