

## The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren in Liptál, 26.8.2018

/The number song 610/

### Hebrew 11, 1-10

Faith in Action

„Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.”<sup>[a]</sup> For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.“

/The song number 611/

## John 6, 60-69

“On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”

Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit<sup>[a]</sup> and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.”

From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.

Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

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Dear Friends,

„And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God!“ This is the declaration of apostle Peter, one of the Jesus’s disciples. ....*we believe and are sure...* Since the age of enlightenment until the present, many act in the reverse order: they need to understand first, only then they are willing to believe.

However, it is the faith that is the window into this world. The world, that is greater than ourselves. And without faith there is no way for us to enter it.

Our human knowledge is limited and insufficient. The God has bestowed upon us the great gift of reason for us to use. Nevertheless, reason alone is not the source of true happiness and fulfilment in our lives. How many people blessed with great intelligence who cannot find happiness and purpose in their lives are there? How many extraordinary minds can create great things, things that can benefit mankind greatly or to decimate human lives in seconds, even our entire planet? The point is how we use our gifts. Who do we serve? Who do we listen to? Who do we follow? It is the reason itself that gives us the ever-present notion that there is more to this, more than reason itself. It is our spirit, our gift from God. This is what makes our different from other living creatures. The spirit fills us with desire for God, for a union with God. That is the reason why human life can never be fulfilled by anything else but God. Education, work, beauty, other people... these are the things that we care about because they are parts of our lives, but not the purpose. The purpose is God. And only in union with God we can truly discover the reason for being and everything that comes with it.

Faith is a tool, the means to be connected to God through our spirit. Living faith as Abraham had. When God called upon him, he believed and followed. He did not say: "Wait, I need an explanation. What's going on? Where do I go? And why? What are the pros and cons? And who exactly are you supposed to be? Etc. „By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.“ Would we be able to follow like that? With our entire families? Can we trust God when he wants us to leave something or someone, to take a step into the unknown when we have no idea what's ahead of us? Abraham believed so he went. And thanks to this faith he could later discover how faithful and loving God really is. How God cares about him and his family. This is why Abraham is called the forefather of faith. Living faith.

*„And we believe and are sure...“* Jesus's disciple Peter confesses. Jesus calls him: "Come, follow me and I will send you out to fish for people." – And so he drops everything and follows. And so do the other disciples. How is that possible? He has no understanding what is happening at that moment, he knows nothing of what awaits him. Still, he goes. Leaves everything and follows Jesus. How is that possible? What is the reason?

Dear friends, this is faith... Reason cannot explain it. Reason surrenders to it because faith exceeds reason. Faith opens a window for us, a window into world that reason knows nothing about. The man however knows and can rest assured that he, who calls upon me by my name, loves me! His love is greater than any love we can experience in our lives! He knows me perfectly and wants me! He has hopes for me, he wants to give me something better than I or anyone else can ever get on our own! His heart radiates peace, it is something so beautiful that his presence fills me with joy I have not felt ever before! I may not understand many things but I know this: I want to be with him! „And we believe and are sure...“ Through faith we know who Christ is! That he is the son for God, God himself who came to walk this Earth. He died for our sins, was resurrected, and gave us eternal life. His words are spirit and life. That's why they have power far above any human. There are many religions, but Christianity is the only one that believes that God came down to this Earth. And made himself be known as love. As the one who loves mankind. And our faith in him, our connection to him changes us. It gives us strength to make it through all the crisis, **faith in him changes us so even we can love and be there for others.** Faith in God's love makes us into loving, forgiving, and helping people. As we need water to live, so we need God and his love to live. For without water and without God, we die. And reason cannot save us. We need to come to God, who is the source of life and drink from his love through our faith. For he loves each and every one of us very much.

Amen

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/The song number 635/

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we  
forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are  
yours now and for ever. Amen.

/The number song 702/