

11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

11:2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

11:5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

11:7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

11:9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;

11:10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

11:11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

11:12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude-innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

11:14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.

11:15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.

11:16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Good morning, everyone.

We are now in the time of Obon.

Today we too would like to take a moment to reflect on the words of God from the Bible in memory of our family members and brothers and sisters who have been called to be with the

Lord in faith.

1 Now faith is being convinced of what you want and confirming what you do not yet see.

Conviction and confirmation.

I feel especially these days that the old "it was this way in the past, so if we do it the same way now, it will be okay" is gradually and rapidly becoming untenable. I have been using a certain throat lozenge for many years, and for a long time, even if I wanted to order the same thing in the same way, I could not get that throat lozenge in the limelight from all over the world during the Corona situation. I also see the same thing at a surprisingly high price. After the war and the spread of the corona disease, the world sometimes seems to have become a different place. In such an uncertain world, I have the impression that we have become very uncertain about how to be sure of things, or how to check what is going to happen.

Even if we look carefully and make sure, tomorrow the situation will be completely different. We live in a world where we cannot predict the future.

In such a situation, the Bible still tells us the truth as it has for 2,000 years.

1 Now faith is being convinced of what one wants and confirming what one has not yet seen.

We have many desires and wishes. It is the harsh winds of the world that confront us with them. Like in a child's story, everything is not as it should be, not everything that is right and warm comes true as it should, or is beyond our ability, and nothing goes as we would like it to. But in faith, the Bible tells us, we can be sure that we have what we want ahead of time, that the blueprints of the unseen will come to us clearly and precisely, that what we truly desire will come to us, and that we will receive the seal of confirmation to affix to our table. The Bible tells us that this is faith. That is faith, the Bible says.

What is faith? It is comfort of mind, it is peace of mind, it is a source of comfort for some people, it is a state of mind that each person should choose, and if you think you need it, go ahead, but it is not as easy as saying that everything will open up just because you have faith. However, it is not so easy to open up everything just because you have faith.

However, the word "faith" that is repeatedly spoken of here is more powerful than just the state of our mind, which cannot be relied upon in such a way.

1 Now faith is the conviction of things hoped for, the confirmation of facts not yet seen.

2 Men of old were commended for this faith.

3 By faith we realize that this world was made by the word of God, and that therefore the things which are seen do not come from the things which are manifest.

We are both happy and sad at what we see. Rather, we are dimly aware that what we cannot see is more important. The hard work, the invisible love of people, life, etc., are more important than the visible results. We say that the things that are truly important, such as water, air, and life, are given to us naturally, but in fact, they are not natural products.

3 By faith we realize that this world was made by the Word of God, and therefore the things that are seen do not come from things that appear.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God covered the face of the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light. And there was light.

4 And God saw the light, and it was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

5 And God named the light as day, and the darkness as night. 6 And the evening and the morning were the first day. The first day.

The biblical account of the world's first creation goes something like this.

In the beginning the earth was without form and void, and darkness was overhanging it. It was chaos. No form, no order, no law, just chaos and darkness. We still speak of the "dark side" today, referring to the dark side of the human mind and the unknown dark side of society, but at that time there was only an empty, chaotic, inorganic world.

It was there that God spoke to us, saying, "Let there be light. When God said, "Let there be light," light was created. The warm, life-giving, good-nurturing light of life, the light of salvation, the light of goodness, was born in the midst of the chaos and the void.

In this way, God created light in the midst of chaos, and then He created land and sea and sky, sun and moon and stars, plants and animals, one after another, and finally He created human beings.

In the midst of reality, in the midst of difficulties, in the midst of darkness and chaos, we are both happy and sad. We worry that we do not have enough of this or that, or that we need this or that but cannot get it. There are many worries and darkness.

Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 6

Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious about what you will eat or what you will drink. Do not be troubled about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. For life is better than food, and the body is better than clothing.

6:26 Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap, neither do they put them in the storehouse. Yet your heavenly Father provides for them. 6:27 Are you not far better than they?

6:27 Who among you can prolong his life even a little because of a thought?

6:28 And why do you trouble yourselves about your clothes? 6:28 And why do you worry about your clothes? They neither work nor spin.

6:29 But I say unto you, that even Solomon, when he was in the height of his glory, was not so clothed as one of these flowers.

6:30 For if God so dresses even the grass of the field, which today grows and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how can He not do you more good? O ye of little faith!

6:31 Therefore do not be troubled, saying, What shall I eat, or what shall I drink, or what shall I put on?

6:32 All these things the Gentiles long for. Your heavenly Father knows that all these things are necessary for you.

6:33 Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be yours. Then all these things will be given to you together.

6:34 Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow. 6:34 Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow itself will be anxious about itself. The toil of one day is enough for one day.

You are a child of God, and all your needs will be met. Go forward with faith that this is true. God made everything out of nothing. He created everything by the word of His mouth. So, in the same way, take comfort from the Bible, the Word of God's mouth. Get light. That is the first thing. Then you will be given everything in addition to that, Jesus said.

The world of faith. It is where we believe that there is a God, and we believe that He is not

the One who can make the desires of His children sing when we believe and ask for them.

6 Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must surely believe that He is and that He will reward those who seek Him.

2 Men of old were praised because of this faith.

7 By faith Noah received the message about the things he had not yet seen, and with fear and trembling he built an ark to save his family, and by faith he judged the sins of the world, and became the heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Noah obeyed God's command to build a boat because the world would be destroyed by a flood in a clear day, and as God had instructed him, he built a three-story wooden boat about 137 meters long, 23 meters wide, and 14 meters high, and he and his family entered the boat, along with every living creature, one by one. He and his family entered the boat. Incidentally, this "length:width:height = 30:5:3" ratio is said to be almost the same as the ratio that is said to be the most stable when building large ships such as tankers today.

Even though he had not yet seen it and had no idea whether it would happen or not, Noah took it seriously because it was God's word, and he saved his own life, his family's lives, and the lives of all the animals. But those who did not believe and made fun of his actions were swallowed by water.

8 By faith, when Abraham received the call to go out into the land he was to inherit, he obeyed it and went out, not knowing where he was going.

9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise, as if he were in another country, and he dwelt in the tabernacle with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs of the same promise.

10 And he looked forward to the city which was built upon an unshakable foundation. For it is God who has planned it and built it.

11 By faith also Sarah, though she was old, was given power to conceive seed. 11 By faith also Sarah, though she was old, was given power to conceive seed, because she believed that he who made the promise was true.

12 Thus out of one man as though he were dead came to be born a multitude, as the stars of heaven, and as the uncountable sand of the seashore.

At the age of 75, Abraham left the land he was accustomed to living in and departed for the land God showed him, without clear instructions as to where he should go.

Like Noah earlier, it is astonishing to see how he followed through with the construction of a huge ship, spending a great deal of materials and labor in a place he had not yet seen and where there were no signs of it at all.

Abraham, too, in his advanced age, leaving his familiar ground, not knowing where he was going, and then setting out for an unfamiliar land as a traveler, "as if in another country". At this time his wife Sarah was 65 years old. This world of "faith" is remarkable.

2 People of old were admired for this faith.

At the age of 75, Sarah gave up the idea of giving birth to her own child and encouraged her husband Abraham to take her as his wife. From Isaac, as from the stars of heaven and as from the uncountable sands of the seashore, there will be born a multitude of people.

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we are not discouraged, but we do not lose heart. For though our outward man perish, our inward man is being renewed day by day.

4:17 For this little tribulation shall work, that we may have eternal and great glory, which shall abound to the full.

4:18 We look not at what can be seen, but at what cannot be seen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen endures forever.

3 By faith we realize that this world was made by the word of God, and that therefore the things which are seen do not come from the things which are seen.

6 Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must surely believe that He is and that He rewards those who seek Him.

We know that what we see is not everything. Rather, we know that it is what is invisible, that is, listening to and obeying God and His Word, the Word of God who made something out of nothing, that brings a heavy glow of glory and salvation to our lives.

Even if we seem to follow this earthly journey as travelers "as if in another country," the Promised Land awaits us, and the work of God, who makes the impossible possible, is always waiting before us.

13 All these died in faith. They had not yet received the promise, but they rejoiced to see it,

and they said to themselves that they were sojourners and sojourners on earth.

14 By so expressing themselves, they show that they are seeking a homeland.

15 If they had thought of the place from which they had come, they would have had the opportunity to return.

16 But in fact, what they wanted was a better, heavenly home. So God was not ashamed to be called their God. In fact, God had prepared a city for them.

Thus, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah had God in front of them, and even though they did not see or understand Him, they went on and received His blessings according to His word. But they also died while holding on to their faith. Even though we have received from God various joyful and gracious guidance, even though we are convinced of what we want, even though we confirm facts that we have not yet seen, even though we live our lives with strong faith, even though we believe that God is and that He will reward those who seek Him, physical decay is inevitable.

However, the full fulfillment of the promise of their blessing was prepared for them in their heavenly home.

That was their home country, and they confessed that on earth they were only sojourners and sojourners.

No matter how comfortable they were with their home and how joyful they were in the midst of blessings, they expressed themselves as sojourners and sojourners on earth. Why, by so stating, they indicated that they were seeking a home away from home. In fact, what they wanted was a better, heavenly home.

It is a life that cannot be undone, a life that cannot be turned back. There are some things that can be undone. But there are also things that cannot be undone. Some will succeed, some will fail. There is an unimaginable and insurmountable gap between those who succeed and those who fail. Some are born in rich countries, others in poor countries. Those who are blessed with opportunities and those who are not. Due to those critical differences, no matter how hard they try, some people seem to be unworthy of their efforts.

But what a comfort it is to be a traveler and sojourner on earth, if we know that a better, heavenly home awaits us, if our events and achievements here on earth are not all that matter.

A world of faith. It is not a fantasy or a comfort, but a light that rescues us even when we seem

to be caught in the vortex of chaos, the power to believe in the One who does so, who calls forth unknown miracles when we respond to His word, and who, after all, is prepared for us, the travelers and sojourners And we know that it is the path of God's grace that leads us to a homeland that is even better than ours.

Men of old were praised for their faith.

We, too, must follow in the footsteps of those who came before us in faith, confident of what we hope for, confirming facts we have not yet seen, realizing that the world was made by the Word of God and that therefore what is seen does not come from what is manifested, "He who comes to God must surely believe that God is, and that He rewards those who seek Him. Therefore, we hope to be people who live by the words, "He who comes to God must surely believe that God is and that He rewards those who seek Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for today's worship. During this Obon season, we remember those who have returned to their hometowns, their heavenly homes, where they have gone even further in faith. Faith is being sure of what we want and confirming the facts we cannot see. Thank you for your powerful words that through faith we can be sure of our desires and confirm the facts that we cannot see with our eyes. All of us in this world were created by the Word of God, who is invisible to the eye. And God speaks to us with the same Word, shaping in us hope, confidence, peace, and a good future. And in time, He will lead us out of this world of hardship and trouble to a better home, our heavenly home. Thank you. Bless our families and the people in our community. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.