

Monday, October 19 - Read Hebrews 11:1-3, 2 Corinthians 5:7 Faith can be a tricky word...we often think of it as a synonym for "belief" or "trust" or "hope" or probably a dozen other words along those same lines. But, what does it really mean...or, more importantly, what is God's definition of faith? Well, he tells us straight-up in Hebrews chapter 11. It is, "confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." The key words there are *confidence* and *assurance*. These aren't words of blind hope or wishful thinking...these are words of near certainty. Now, the "what we do not see" part is what usually trips us up. How can we be confident and assured of something we've never seen before? Well, that question alone could be the subject of an entire book, but the writer of Hebrews gave us one quick example. In verse 3, he uses creation itself as evidence of this kind of faith. Essentially, he says, "there was nothing, and then there was everything we see. There was the *unseen*, and because of God, there is now the *seen*." In other words, he calls us to begin looking back on all the ways our unseen God has made himself seen by what he has done. I'm not saying that one little tidbit will solve all of our faith issues, but it all points to the big question we all have to wrestle with: *do you really believe God is in control?* When you're faced with the big, scary unknown, do you believe that God has it in his hands? It's a tough question, but let me leave you with one assignment to help you with your faith: make a list of all the times God has come through for you in the past. Think back on your life, and whenever you faced something unknown, what did God do...how did it work out? How did what as unseen break into your life and take care of the problem you could see?

Tuesday, October 20 - Read Proverbs 19:21, Romans 8:37-39 Having surgery has gotten fairly routine in recent years. However, no matter what kind of surgery you have, there is always a little apprehension. You are allowing yourself to be put to sleep and have put your life in the hands of doctors and nurses (some of whom you never see). There is nothing you can do - someone else is in control and that worries us. Now, the reason this idea of trusting someone with your life can be so difficult is that we like to be in control...or at least to *feel* like we're in control. It's hard-wired into our independent, American spirit. But, when it comes to the big things in life - when we find ourselves staring into the unknown - we realize that we aren't *actually* in control. And that could easily cause us to freak out...unless we realize that the One who is in control is very, very good at it. You see, if you stop for just a couple minutes to think about it, we aren't actually in control of much. God is the Creator of the universe, the author of life, and is the reason we wake up and have oxygen every morning...He is fully in control! While that last sentence will make the control-freak in you want to spaz-out a little bit, it should actually fill us with resounding peace. Yes, God is in control...can't get around that. But, God is also so good, holy, and loving that we actually *want* him to be in control. God's character never changes, he doesn't have a bad day, and he will never, ever stop loving you more than you can imagine. Who better to be in control of everything than an all-powerful God of infinite love? So, whatever unknown and freaky thing you're facing right now, take a moment and simply pray to God: "Thank you, Lord, that you are in control and that you are good. I know you've got this."

Wednesday, October 21 - Read Matthew 6:25-34, Romans 8:28 Call it what you want, facing the unknown often causes us to worry (or flip-out, or lose it, or however you want to say it). There's this natural anxiety that washes over us when we're trying to peer into the future and have no idea what's going to happen. We can imagine some things that *might* happen, and following that rabbit-trail can get real scary real quick. But, I'm sure if you've ever found yourself spiraling downward into worry and shared that with someone, you've probably received the same utterly unhelpful advice I have...*don't worry*. Oh...*don't worry*? I never thought of that...thank you so much for your help. [insert eye-roll emoji] Fortunately, Jesus tackled the concept of worry head on. And while his advice was in fact "don't worry," he provided some much-needed context as to *why* we shouldn't worry. You'll read it for yourself in a second, but Jesus gives us two examples from nature: flowers and birds. In both cases, he points out how they don't worry (I mean, how would a flower worry in the first place?). But, the real point of his teaching is that these creatures don't worry because God provides everything they need. While birds aren't consciously aware of it, God has always and will always provide them with food, shelter, and water. I live in the desert where there is little rainfall and a relentless sun, and yet wildflowers cover the hillsides at certain times of year. No one plants them or cares for them, God just provides everything they need despite the harsh climate they live in. Jesus wraps it up pointing out what should be obvious: God cares *way more* about you and me than he does about birds and flowers. We are his prized possession...his favorite thing he ever created. If he's going to take care of little things like pigeons and dandelions, he's absolutely going to take care of us. The real question for us then becomes, *do we trust that God's way is better than our way?* You see, often we worry not because we fear something bad happening (though that's part of it sometimes), but it's because we worry things won't work out exactly the way we want them to. Are you willing to give that up to trust that however God works it out will actually be better for you than whatever you had in mind in the first place? I can't tell you how many times I didn't get my way, only to see later that what I got was way better because God is in control and knows better than I do. So, what are you worrying about, and are you willing to let God have control of it? He's going to work it out, and it's going to be better than whatever "perfect" outcome you've dreamed up in your head.

Thursday, October 22 - Read Ecclesiastes 7:13-14, Psalms 47:6-8, Psalms 46:10 We've talked a lot about faith and trusting God over the past few days, and here's why: God wants to set you free from worry. Think about it, worry is never a pleasant experience, right? As Jesus pointed out in the passage we read yesterday, it's basically a huge waste of time and energy. God doesn't want us sitting around, blood pressure elevated, driving ourselves crazy worrying about "what if." He is a good, loving Father, and he wants us to live in freedom, trusting that our Dad has everything under control. And, if finding that kind of peace meant we needed to know what was going to happen, don't you think God would have designed some way for us to actually see into the future? Well, he didn't, which means there must be a path to peace even when we have no idea what the future holds. That path is *acceptance*. That may sound overly simplistic, but coming to a point where you accept that you can't know how things will work out is the key. *There is freedom in accepting that you don't know, but you know the One who does*. Wherever you're at right now, and however much fear, anxiety, or worry you've been dealing with, think back on all that God has shown you the past few days. Over and over he reminds us that he is in control, that he is good, and that all we need to do is trust in him. I know that's easier said than done, but if you're still worrying it means you're still trying to control...you're still hoping you can figure it out. Accept that you'll never be in control. Accept that you cannot know the future. Accept that God is God and you are not, and that's actually a very good thing. Today, honestly search your heart for any ways that you've been refusing to accept God's total control over your life and the world around you. Then, finally give that control over to him.

To view the complete study guide, visit covenantdothan.org/messages/archive.

THE COVENANT HAPPENINGS

WORSHIP AT COVENANT

10.18.20

Sundays

CovKids

8:15 AM | Traditional Service
Sanctuary

9:45 AM | Contemporary Service
Sanctuary

11:00 AM | Contemporary Service
Christian Life Center Gym

Wednesdays

6:00 PM | 1st Wednesday
Sanctuary

Bible Study
Sanctuary

Online Campus

No matter where you are on Sundays, you can join us for worship on our Online Campus. Visit our online campus at covenantdothan.org/locations/ online for more information.

Livestream: covenantdothan.online.church
Facebook Live: [facebook.com/covumcdothan](https://www.facebook.com/covumcdothan)
YouTube: Search Covenant Dothan UMC

Welcome!

We are excited to welcome you back on campus for all worship services! Our online campus will continue as usual. Activities are available for children and students.

Visit us online for worship:
Livestream: covenantdothan.online.church
Facebook Live: [facebook.com/covumcdothan](https://www.facebook.com/covumcdothan)
YouTube: Search Covenant Dothan UMC

October Sermon Series

Where Do We Go From Here? Jesus began a disruptive sermon with the calming words, "Do not let your heart be troubled." Despite the world changing a lot in the past few months, we know where we are going because we are following Jesus. Join us in October as we learn more about staying on our mission to be a Christ follower.

A Note From the Finance Office

We are called to be cheerful givers. Even in times of uncertainty, tithing is meant to be a joyful expression of thanks to God, not an obligation. It comes from a heart of worship that recognizes everything we have and give already belongs to the Lord. God wants us to give because it shows that we recognize He is truly the Lord of our lives.

"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

We offer many easy options to give and we would love to share more about them with you. Contact Annette Lovrich at annette@covenantdothan.org or 334.944.6208 for more information on how to give with online, text to give and automatic draft options. Thank you for your continued support and generosity through this fall season.

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THE COVENANT APP
Search & download
"Covenant UMC Dothan" on
any phone or tablet device.



Baptism

We believe baptism is an important step of obedience in our faith journey. It shows that we have personally trusted Jesus for our salvation, and just as Jesus was baptized on earth, we do this to follow his example. Your baptism symbolizes the new life you have found in Christ just as Jesus rose to life again. If you have questions about baptism or would like to be baptized, contact Rev. Kyle Gatlin at kyle@covenantdothan.org.

Discover Your Purpose



The Growth Track was designed to help you discover your purpose to live the life God created for you. If you are wondering what your next step at Covenant is, then Growth Track is for you! Make plans to join our next class on **Sunday, October 25 at 5 pm** in the Fellowship Hall.

Contact Shawn Shirley at shawn@covenantdothan.org to sign up.

Celebrate Recovery

No *hurt* is beyond healing. No *habit* is beyond help. No *hang-up* is beyond hope. It takes courage to let others into our lives, but we were never meant to walk through life alone. Let us walk with you. We are excited to have resumed in person meetings on Thursdays at 6 pm in the Christian Life Center. Masks are required and social distancing will be in place. We will meet for large group worship as well as hear a lesson or testimony each week. Dinner will not be served at this time. Small groups will be based on need and make-up of groups returning. Childcare will be available by reservation only (masks will be required for children as well). Download the Church Center app on your phone to register your child.

Like our Celebrate Recovery Facebook page – search Covenant Celebrate Recovery – for up-to-date news & information.

Upcoming Opportunities to Serve

Harbor Serve Day Saturday, October 31 from 7:30-10 am – Our next Harbor serve day is quickly approaching. Here's how you can help:

- Prepare a breakfast casserole
- Provide pastries or fruit
- Help put together take-out boxes at The Harbor on Saturday morning beginning at 7:30 am (masked and safely distanced of course)
- Join the street ministry team on Saturday morning

Love Dothan Saturday, November 7 from 8 am-12 noon – You are invited to participate in "Love Your Neighborhood" – part of the City of Dothan's "Love Dothan" campaign. During this time we will be working in the Harmondale (also known as Lakeview) neighborhood. The coordination point will be Jerry Lee Faine Elementary School located at 1901 Stringer Street. Please bring your lawnmower, gloves, rake, shovel, weed eater, edger, or whatever tools you would like to work with so we can help our neighbors better care for their properties.

SARCOA Santa for Seniors 2020 SARCOA Area Agency on Aging will be doing their Santa for Seniors program differently this year. Rather than an open wish list, they will be providing specific items for the Senior Christmas boxes. Visit covenantdothan.org/connect/missions for the 2020 Request List. Donations can be dropped off on December 4 & 5 and December 12 between 9 am and 6 pm at the former National Guard Armory, 2755 Choctaw Street, Dothan. Volunteers are needed to wrap gift boxes and assemble cleaning buckets on Tuesday, November 17 from 8 am-12 noon and 1:30-4:30 pm at the armory.

Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Packing a shoebox is a powerful way to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with children all over the world! Grab a shoe box from one of our displays on campus or visit covenantdothan.org/uncategorized/operation-christmas-child/ to fill a box virtually. Return your packed shoe box back to the church on or before November 15.

Volunteering at the OCC Processing Center Another fun way to be a part of this worldwide ministry is to volunteer at the OCC Processing Center in Atlanta. We will be taking a small team to Atlanta on December 8 to work the 10 am-4 pm (ET) shift. Be prepared for fast paced work and lots of standing! We will leave Dothan at 5 am and return around 8 pm. Please contact Barbi Nolan at 793.4440 if you would like to join us.



Stay connected with our CovKids on Facebook & Instagram!

Facebook: facebook.com/CovKids

Instagram: instagram.com/covkids_

Our weekly lessons are available on our website at covenantdothan.org/connect/covkids.



The REFUGE
covenant's student ministry

Stay connected with CovStudents!

For the latest news and information for students, visit the CovStudents Facebook or Instagram pages.

Facebook: facebook.com/CovStudents

Instagram: instagram.com/covstudents

CovStudents Pumpkin Carving/Paint Party

Our CovStudents are invited to join us for a Pumpkin Carving/Painting party **October 25 at 5 pm**. We will be collecting a \$5 donation for our Compassion children. Register by October 21. To sign up, contact David Burnham (davidb@covenantdothan.org) or JoBeth Weatherford (Jobeth@covenantdothan.org).

Covenant News & Happenings

Are you interested in receiving a weekly eNewsletter, Sermon Notes and other Covenant news by email? This is a great way to stay up to date on upcoming events, registration, prayer concerns and more. Email Courtney Hardy at courtney@covenantdothan.org to sign up.

Covenant Concerns

Sympathy

The Pastors and congregation would like to express our deepest sympathy to...

- James & Laura Barnes on the death of her mother, *Jeanette Poplin*.
- Dr. Ann Jacobs on the death of her husband, *Dr. Walt Jacobs III*.
- Keith & Kay Jackson on the death of her mother, *Alice Arnold*.

Recent Prayer Concerns Densie Williams, Thomas Evans, Sandy Lisenby, Sandra Matthews, Jo Peterson, Virginia Hornsby, Dwight Jeffcoat, Gene Kearley, Paul Hall, Kenneth Arnold, Lori Lamb Weathington, Sharon Jenkins, Carrie Mathis Allday, Gianna Allday, Steve Morrell, Jennette Gayer, Ava Blackburn, Beth & Tom Sherrer, Ronnie Brannon, Molly Tew, Tom Renshaw Sr., Margaret Wilson, David Cunningham, Linda Griffith, Chris Smith, John Babinski, Tim Koogler, Linda Avera, Carrie Williams, Beverly Youse, Tammy Reese, Family of Patsy Bowling, Johnathan Berry, Carla Lawrence, Wallace Family, JJ Price Family, Alan Tidwell, Terri Daughtry, Lori Burns, Dr. Bill Lies, Lisa Silcox, Natalie Faulk, Christy Goodwin Bullard, Mary Lisenby, George Stokes, Mark Arrington, William Brown, Peter Collins Jr., Jill Walden, Sue Reynolds, Hays McKay, Helon Scott, Jeanne Stringfellow, Dutch Holland, Lucy Cline, Carolyn Benton, David Johnston, Yvonne Reid, Cher Hicks, Happy Fox, Pete Shelley, Lisa Henry, Karen Medley, Gayle Moores, Lamar Spence, Martha Jane Shannon, Jerry Dooling, Tipton Family, Kathy Clark, Wynn Arkle, June Granberry, Evie Riley, Tony Justice, Richard Duncan, Sarah Grantham, Charles Meeks, JoAnn Gamble, Laurie Axtell, Allwyn Nilsson, Trip and Haley Moseley & family, Avery Wells, Jeffrey Bostwick, Scott Berry, Jennie Lawson, Scott Brown, Angie Goodson, Janis Caddell, Shelby Clark, Kendrea White, Kelly Armstrong Smith, Bobby Simmons, Michael Buntin, Bernice White, Beverly White, Audrey Miller, Carolyn Thomley, Bob Drummond, Connie Moore

Currently Deployed Jerrad Anderson

Have a prayer request? If you have a prayer request you would like to add to this list, please email Kyle Gatlin at kyle@covenantdothan.org.

Contact Information Request

Connection and interaction is essential during this time of uncertainty and it is important to stay grounded in God's Word and in community with others. We want to make certain that Covenant has current information so that we may stay connected with you. If you have not already, please visit covenantdothan.org/contact-info to update your information or you can contact us at 793.4440.