

What Makes Us Want to be Freemasons

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I'm sure everyone is here to be inspired by the words of wisdom and the new and ground breaking news that I have discovered about Freemasonry. I was hoping to make it into a reality program like 'THE Curse of Oak Island' or 'storage wars where hidden way in the back of all the junk in an obscure area at the very last minute is the find of a life time. The genuine secrets and a time portal to the origins of Freemasonry. Well, I'm afraid I have to disappoint all of you; in my research, I have not found the secret of Freemasonry or anything new and ground breaking, although there are 475,000 articles on GOOGLE written on the subject. I have always researched different facets of our fraternity looking for the source of certain parts of our history and ceremonies. And what makes us want to be freemasons.

We all declare that we wish the privileges of Freemasonry from a favourable opinion preconceived of the institution, a general desire for knowledge, and a sincere wish to render ourselves more extensively serviceable to your fellow creatures. We are then taught that our fraternity is based on three great beliefs, Faith, Hope and Charity. But have we ourselves considered the meaning of each of these as they pertain to our own beliefs. Is this what we consider the attraction we have to this great fraternity?

If we start with the definition of each of these, maybe we can understand what is expected of us:

Faith is defined as: "*Complete trust or confidence in someone or something.*" Here we have a lot of meaningful words: Trust, Belief, Confidence, they all point to us having Conviction. Being an engineer, I compare this with the brakes of my car. I trust; I believe; I have confidence that when I put my foot on the pedal my brakes will be applied and the car will stop. This is real conviction, because my life depends on my faith in the brakes. And knowing some of the engineers who design brake systems it's a real jump in faith?

Faith is also defined as: "Strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof."

This is indeed another real leap; as humans we need proof of everything before we believe and have faith. This is one area where most of us struggle. We are asked to believe and have faith in Divine Providence. Divine providence is the governance of God by which He, with wisdom and love, cares for and directs all things in the universe. The doctrine of divine providence asserts that God is in complete control of all things. He is sovereign over the universe as a whole, the physical world, the affairs of nations, human destiny, human successes and failures, and the protection of His people. This doctrine stands in direct opposition to the idea that the universe is governed by chance or fate. Fate is the development of events beyond a person's control, regarded as determined by a supernatural power. In today's crazy, violent and nonsensical world our faith in this is definitely challenged. This is definitely different from my faith in the brakes of my car which is proven each time I apply them? But I am not here to challenge anyone's faith only to encourage thought.

Hope. Hope is a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. If you expand the meaning, it is: aspiration; desire; wish; expectation; ambition; aim; goal; plan; design; dream; daydream; pipe dream. According to Greek mythology, the first woman on Earth, Pandora, was given a box that she was not to open under any circumstance. Being a woman, she was too curious to resist. She opened it, and all of the evils of the world flew out: hate, pain, destructiveness, starvation - every inconceivable evil you could think of. When Pandora saw what she had done, she closed the box before the last thing in there could escape. That last thing in the box was hope. Was Pandora saving Hope for mankind, or keeping Hope away from humanity?

Hope is the belief that circumstances in the future will be better. It's not a wish that things will get better, but an actual belief, even when there may be no evidence that anything will change. Hope can encompass a wide variety of beliefs. We hope for salvation, which is deliverance from sin and its consequences, believed to be brought about by faith in God. It can be thought of as: redemption; deliverance; reclamation; a source or means of being saved from harm, ruin, or loss.

Charity. Charity; is viewed as: The voluntary giving of help, typically in the form of money, to those in need, (financial assistance, aid, welfare, relief.) Charity is also defined as an organization set up to provide help and raise money for those in need. (Nonprofit organization, voluntary organization, charitable institution) or the body of organizations viewed collectively as the object of fundraising or donations. Charity is also defined as kindness and tolerance in judging others. (goodwill, compassion, consideration, concern, kindness, tenderness)

I do not think that our membership in Freemasonry is only these three beliefs; I strongly believe these are there to guide us. I have always considered that the way we lead our lives and the perception that people have of us, is greater than all of the above. Jimmy Carter said:

"I have one life and one chance to make it count for something... My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever; I have to try to make a difference."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:said "*Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'*"

Brethren, as masons, we are told to build a superstructure perfect in its parts and honourable to the builder. We should consider ourselves the rough ashlar that we talk about in lodge; we need to be worked on, to remove the imperfections and polish the stone so that the luster of ourselves shines through. So that all can see the outstanding structure of our lives. As masons we are all

extraordinary and outstanding people; we just haven't discovered ourselves yet. We have not removed the rough exterior to expose our inner selves. We must be master craftsmen, continually shaping and polishing our characters and personalities so that we evolve and grow into someone important and worthwhile. We are the superstructure of masonry the solid foundation of our fraternity. We must design our lives to what we want them to be. Leave your mark for everyone to see, to admire and to emulate! Be the Master craftsman we all strive to be! Be the architect of your own personal edifice!

Some succeed because they are destined to, but most succeed because they are determined to. How often do you ask yourself "What's it all about?" "What's my purpose?" "Where am I going?" Like most people, many times, I would imagine. In reality we won't know the answer to that question while we are alive. We can speculate and guess and make educated hypotheses. We can also learn to listen to our inner voice, telling us that something just feels right.

Why are we on Earth? For some, being on Earth is to wake up in the morning, "do your thing" during the day and go to bed at night, then repeat it all the next day; with no in-depth meaning of what life is about. For others, being on Earth is about experiencing life, being glad you are alive and looking forward to the next day because it has meaning for you. I have said previously we must wake up each morning with determination and go to bed with satisfaction.

Brethren, it is our duty to inspire those around us; that they would wish to live by our morals and Masonic beliefs. Being a mason is not a lapel pin and a fancy ring or how much we gave to charity; we must live within the bonds of moral and social justice. We must constantly give a positive image that encourages all to believe in what we believe in, We are the ambassadors of our craft, and by a positive perception of us will our craft grow stronger. Our actions and daily life's will inspire others to emulate our thoughts and beliefs. This is a great challenge and you cannot do it alone. Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something."

We must have FAITH that our lives and actions are a benefit to our family, friends and community.

We need to have HOPE that the way we lead our lives is a positive influence on those around us.

Pliny the Elder *"Hope is the pillar that holds up the world. Hope is the dream of a waking man"*.

And we must be charitable. We must give of ourselves to improve not only the lives of those nearest and dearest to us but to all. This I believe is our masonic duty and teachings. The following quote is from Michelle Obama, I reckon if Donald Trump's wife can quote her, so can I:

"You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own."

Brethren be proud of what you are and go out and show the world.