

Hebrews 11:

As Pastor Reggie said last week, Heb. 11, “demonstrates more than defines faith”. We have in Heb. 11, a list (... which is by no means all-inclusive) of those who lived by faith.

2Cor.5:7, “We walk by faith and not by sight.” We usually think of this as a NT principle... & it is. However, faith/trust/reliance/dependence on God has always been the standard, as we will be reminded when we get to vs. 6 & 7.

Reggie quoted last week from Jerry Bridges , “...we must be enabled not merely helped ... help implies we have some ability but not enough... enablement implies we have no ability, & must rely completely on the One Who enables ...we are powerless...” Thus was the case with each of the following who “walked by faith and not by sight”.

The F.A.I.T.H. acronym should describe our relationship with God: Forsaking All I Trust Him.

ABEL, 11:4. Gen.4 tells us the story of Abel. Abel’s story is so far back in history, but as the text tells us, “...though he died, he still speaks.”

I’ve been a little puzzled over the years as to why God did not accept Cain’s sacrifice. Perhaps Cain’s offering was not the “first fruits” of his harvest. Although Abel’s sacrifice was a blood sacrifice, there were actually other sacrifices that did not require blood. So Abel’s sacrifice was not accepted just because it involved blood.

Lack of faith on Cain’s part seems to be the key. Verse 4 says, “By faith Abel offered... & God accepted” the offering. God knew Abel’s heart of faith.... & He knew Cain’s motive and lack of faith.

ENOCH, v.5, By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God

This amazing statement occurs in the midst of historical characters who “lived X# of years...had children ... & died.” It’s kind of like the story of Jabez. In the context of “who begot who”, Jabez stands out as different.... 1 Chron. 4:7, “Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers...”, and the text continues to detail his prayer for a life that would honor God and “keep (him) from evil.”

Enoch’s story is told in part in Gen.5:24, (where it says he “walked with God...”). The ESV footnote says that “walking with God” suggested an ongoing intimacy with God. This “intimacy” with God is most certainly essential for a life of faith. How in the world could these saints (or ourselves) “walk with God” without being intimate...in touch with...close to... & devoted to Him!

I like how the Phillips translation puts this verse: “It was because of his faith that Enoch was promoted to the eternal world without experiencing death...”

The text tells us Enoch had “pleased God” in his life. The Septuagint (the first of a number of translations of the Hebrew OT into Greek) actually interprets the phrase “walked with God” as “pleased God”. Several OT characters were said to have pleased God/walked with God: Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, & Joseph. Like us, they made their mistakes, but their overall lives “pleased God”.

I challenge you to let this be your constant prayer and hope.... that your life “pleases God”. The Psalmist said, 19:14, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord my rock and my redeemer” May my life “please” you, Father.

NOAH, V. 7, “By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith”

Gen.6:9-22, tells the story. And once again, Noah’s faith response speaks of the definition of faith in v.1, “... conviction of things not seen...”, when it is recorded in v.7, “... being warned of God concerning events as yet unseen...”

His faithful actions “condemned the world”, that is, Noah’s faithful & righteous conduct showed by contrast how sinful the world was.

VERSE 6, “And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

Picking back up this thought of Enoch & others “pleasing God”, the writer of Hebrews says “faith” is essential. The NLT puts it this way, “You can never please God without faith, without depending on him...” It would be ridiculous to try to “draw near” to God... to learn from Him-to know Him... without depending on Him. It kind of reminds me of the guy who came to the door & asked in a subdued voice, “You wouldn’t want to buy one of these magazines... would you?”

Instead, if we “want to draw near to God”, we must believe 2 things: “we must believe that he exists” ... And that he rewards those who seek him”. In other words, “faith” involves believing in the existence of God... & in his trustworthiness to keep His promises.

Earlier in chapter 4, the writer challenges us to “strive” to live a life pleasing to God...to “hold fast the profession of our faith”, and then in v.16, “with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and grace to help in time of need.”

ABRAHAM, v.8-10 “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.”

This event in Abraham's life is recorded in [Gen.12:1-4](#), where he is still known as Abram.

Can you imagine the degree of faith it took for Abraham to move forward? Leave your family... your country... I'll show you the way... & will make a great nation of you... in spite of your barren wife Sara.

It took the faith defined in [verses 1 & 2](#), as he had an "assurance of things hoped for...a conviction of things not seen." And Abraham, [v.6](#) "believed God existed... & would keep His promise".

"By faith he obeyed, [8](#) ...by faith he went, [v9](#) ...by faith he stayed & lived, [v.9](#).

WHY? [V.10](#), "For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God."

This "city" is further defined in [verses 13-16](#), as a "homeland... a better country... a heavenly country".

Friends, are we not looking for... longing for... eager for the coming of that city? [Chapter 12:22](#), speaks of "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem..." [Rev. 21](#) gives us a picture of "a new heaven and a new earth".

SARAH, [v.11-12](#), "By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised

Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore."

Some of you are probably asking, *"What about Sarah's apparent lack of faith or belief when she laughed at the thought of her bearing a child... so far past normal child bearing years?"* [Gen.18:9-15](#). Was she not doubting? YES. But who of us in our life of faith have not at some time doubted... & then come to our senses & trusted the Lord?

The author clearly speaks of her faith.... she had a change of heart. She did name her son, "Isaac", meaning "laughter", [Gen.21:6](#).

Although we should trust God for day-to-day guidance and provision, the real test of our faith is when we are faced with "impossible" situations or needs. Henry Blackaby calls these issues "God-sized" challenges. Chuck Swindoll has said, "God often gives us tremendous opportunities, cleverly disguised as impossible situations.

What God-sized "opportunity" has God sent your way recently. Hold on... one is coming!