

# Living by faith Part 3

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Hebrews chapter 11. Last week we started talking about living by faith, talking about Hebrews and this chapter on faith.

We talked about the fact that it describes and illustrates and then gives us examples of faith. It's a great chapter for us to look at, wanting to understand faith. It says in verse 1 faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. He tells us, look, when we live by faith we're learning to literally trust in God and what He is trying to do in our lives. It tells us that look, trusting God for things that we cannot see God will work in our lives if we just allow Him.

And it's not just a hopeful wish, it's a conviction that God is going to do what He says He will do. And so we talked about the fact that these people he's about to talk about lived that way. They lived trusting that God was going to do what He said He would do. As a matter of fact, in verse 2 it says, for by it the elders obtained a good report because they followed God and trusted His word.

He goes on in verse 3 and he talks about the fact that by faith we know that God created the world. He says in verse 3, through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God. So the things which are seen were not made of the things which do appear. God made the world and we understand that by faith. Evolution is saying, oh, no, no, no, we have the facts. No, they don't.

Because science has to be observable and repeatable. And no one was there to observe it other than God. And they cannot repeat the creation of the world. So they say, oh, we have the facts. We can, you know, this is the way it happened. Can you, did you observe it? Can you repeat it?

[ 2 : 0 8 ]     No, you can't. So you're taking it by faith, just like we take by faith that God created the worlds. Then he goes on in verse 4 and talks about one of the first people on earth.

By faith Abel offered God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. By that he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts. And by it, he being dead, yet speaketh. We know the story of Cain and Abel.

How that Cain brought a sacrifice based on the things that he had. Abel brought a sacrifice based on the fact that God had set the example. It had to be an animal sacrifice.

Cain brought something that really didn't cost him much. It wasn't a hard thing for him to do. Abel brought according to God's word. In 1 John 3, verse 12.

Not as Cain, who was of the wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

[ 3 : 1 4 ]     And we talked about the fact, when you look at Cain and Abel, we look at the fact that, do we live our lives according to what can I get by with?

Or do we live it, what is the best that I can give the Lord? How do I live my life? Can I just get by with this? Or can I give him the best? So, then he goes on, and in verse 5, it says, By faith, Enoch was translated, that he might not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him.

For before his translation, he had his testimony, that he pleased God. And he gives the story of Enoch there. You don't have to go there, but if you go back to Genesis chapter 5, it gives the story of Enoch, in verses 21 through 24.

Verse 24 says, Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. Enoch walked with God. That's one of those distinguishing characteristics.

Enoch, if I mention the name, what do you think of? He walked with God, and God took him. Those two things. He's another one of those primeval examples.

[ 4 : 30 ] Remember, primeval means, of the earliest, the originals. That's what the word means, so that's why we're using that word for this. In Jude, verses 14 and 15, it says this, Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, to convince all that are ungodly among them, of their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

He lived in an ungodly age. And it says, He walked with God. You know, as far as, with Enoch, Enoch's faith, got him, where he, walked with God, and then was, automatically went to heaven, with God.

So we have an example of Abel, people dying, we have an example of Enoch, people being raptured, taken. Then he goes on, and he says, verse seven, By faith Noah, being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and because, and became heir, of the righteousness, which is by faith.

If you go back, to Genesis chapter six, again, don't have to turn there, but it says, God saw the wickedness of man, was great in the earth, and every imagination, and thoughts of his heart, was only evil continually.

But what was the story, with Noah? In verse eight, it says, But Noah found grace, in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah, Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations, and Noah walked, with God.

[ 6 : 18 ] Notice that phraseology again, Noah walked, with God. The importance of us, walking with God, and the things that he does. Here's Noah. He's walking with God.

God says, Noah, here's what I want you to do. I want you to build an ark. Well, you think about that for a second. It had never rained. They hadn't seen floods.

Noah, I want you to build an ark, and I want it to be huge. I want it to be this big. And what was Noah's reaction to that? Okay, God, you say so.

That's what I'm doing. See, we put faith in what God says. Put faith in his word. And that's what Noah demonstrated, and he did it. It says there, to the saving of his house. So there's three people, of that primeval time, that first group, before the flood, that showed faith, in what God was doing.

Now, he's going to move on, in verse 8, to patriarchal. Faith, in patriarchal times. Look at verse 8. By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should, after receive of an inheritance, for an inheritance, obeyed.

[ 7 : 33 ] And he went out, not knowing whether he went. By faith, he sojourned in a land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

For he looked for a city, which hath foundation, whose builder and maker was God. Abraham, after the flood, became the father of the Jewish nation.

He's the father of Israel. He's their founding father. He's the patriarch. And, here he is, he's living in Ur of the Chaldees, and God comes to him in Genesis chapter 12.

And, in beginning in verse 1 of chapter 12, it says this, Now the Lord said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.

Stop right there for a minute. Abraham, I want you to leave where you are. I want you to leave your country. I want you to leave your father's house.

[ 8 : 39 ] I want you to leave your family. I want you to go where I'm going to lead you. Think about that for a second. Where am I going, Lord?

You'll see. Well, can you give me some idea? Am I going on vacation to Florida? Am I, what am I doing? You'll see.

Just trust me, and go. Wow. Talk about faith. He goes on in chat, chapter 12 of Genesis, verse 2. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing.

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abraham departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him.

And Lot went with him. And Abraham was 75 years old when he departed out of Haran. Think about that. 75 years of age. And he's on his way to who knows where.

[ 9 : 47 ] That's just an amazing act of faith. God says, Abraham, I want you to go. Has God ever tested your faith like that? You know, think about if God came to you today.

I want you to pack up and move. Get in your car and start driving. Where am I going? Just start driving. I'll let you know when you get there.

Reminds me, there was a story when we lived in Dothan about a guy. He was from Ohio. And he packed up his camper and was going to move. And he started driving.

And as he got ready to move, he put a snow shovel on the back of his camper. And he said, he drove and drove and drove and he got to Dothan, Alabama. And somebody asked him, what kind of shovel is that?

He said, I knew I was at the place I was supposed to be. Because they didn't have snow there. They didn't recognize the snow shovel. This is the place. So, Abraham, you're going to go.

[ 10 : 47 ] You're going to be where I send you. Just trust me to do what I ask. You know, Abraham's one of the greatest examples of faith in the Bible.

The fact that he didn't question, he didn't see what God was going to do, God didn't tell him what he was going to do, he just said, go. And he did it. Yep.

Everything he had went on foot. Yep. So, he didn't get in his car like we would here. So, nope. He, what?

No, do you all. He had a land rover. Camel. A camel. Yep. Yep. He went out and he lived like a visitor.

He lived like he was just passing through. He was not a citizen. He wasn't an owner. And he went to the promised land that God had promised to him. You know, his descendants, Abraham, I mean, Isaac and Jacob, you know, they all lived in tents.

[ 12 : 02 ] They didn't have a city. They didn't have a permanent place. But they're going based on God's word to do what God had asked them to do. He was doing it based on the fact that he knew that someday, he says there in verse 10, he looked for a city which hath foundations who will build her and make her with God.

There is God. He said, I'm going to a place that God's going to supply. God's going to build. God's going to take care of it. I am going to trust God in everything I do. Can you imagine the faith that it took to do that?

And then one of the promises that especially tested his faith back there in Genesis chapter 12, what did he say was going to happen to Abraham?

He said, you're going to become a great nation. You're going to become a nation so big that you're going to be bigger than the sands of the sea and the stars in the sky. And verse 11 tells us about that promise.

It says, Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age because she judged him faithful who had promised.

[ 13 : 18 ] Therefore sprang there even of one and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

So they had to wait for God to answer that prayer. God says, you're going to be a huge nation. Remember it said there that Abraham didn't even leave Haran until he was 75?

But you're going to be a huge nation. There was a few more years after that. How old was Sarah? Wasn't she like 99? When she had the baby?

Abraham was 100. She might have been a little younger than that. But anyway, she had this baby. Way past age it says. And she has this baby. One baby.

One. But you're going to be a nation more than the stars in the heaven. Go down to verse 13. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

[ 14 : 34 ] For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have an opportunity to have returned.

But now, they desire a better country, that is, and heavenly. Wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared them a city.

He says, look, Abraham had the attitude, I may only have one son, but God said, we're going to be a mighty nation. He gets to Isaac.

Isaac has two sons. But God said, we're going to be a mighty nation. They get to Jacob. Jacob has 12 sons. Oh, we're improving now. But we're still a long ways from a mighty nation.

But they believe God and his word. They died not seeing the fulfillment, but they believed what God's going to do. We're going to talk about that more in the morning service as we talk about Galatians, this idea of believing what God says.

[ 15 : 40 ] they recognized that the earth, as magnificent as it might be, they didn't put their confidence in the things of this earth.

They put their confidence in God. They said they were strangers and pilgrims upon this earth. Their heart was set on heaven. Look at verse 13 there again. What does it say in verse 13?

Oh, wrong chapter. Wrong chapter 12. Of all these died in faith, not having received the promises, it says they were strangers and pilgrims.

Verse 14, things declared plainly that they seek a country. A country from whence they came, they might have returned. Verse 16, they desire a better country that is unheavenly.

They were looking for God to do a great work. They sought a homeland beyond Canaan. They sought a homeland beyond Mesopotamia. You know, Abraham had come from Mesopotamia, Ur of the Chaldees.

[ 16 : 48 ] He sought something way beyond that because God had promised it. It says, look, they could have gone back. He could have turned around and said, this isn't working.

I'm going back to where I grew up. But he didn't because he trusted God. He kept his focus on God and what God had for him.

They sought in heavenly. They sought a stable city that God was going to prepare for them. Their hope was God providing for them and God giving them a place in heaven.

As pilgrims, they lived by faith and not by sight. I'm just going to keep going and doing what God has told me to do. I am now where God told me to be.

He told me to stop here, to set up here, so I am now here and I'm going to trust what God's going to do here. That's a lot of faith. Look at verse 17.

[ 17 : 49 ] But you know how that afterward when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected. Verse 12 again, wait a minute.

Verse 17. I keep chapter 11 and chapter 12 and the verses line up. Chapter 11 verse 17. By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac and he had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son, of whom it is said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure. Stop there. He says, look, you really want to put this promise thing to the test?

God says, I'm going to make a great nation. Abraham, you get the son. You finally saw that promise fulfilled. You get the son, Isaac, whom that great nation is going to come from.

Oh, by the way, Abraham, I want you to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Whoa. Wait a minute. I've waited all this time.

[ 19 : 07 ] I left her. I've made the travel. I've made it to the place where you told me to. I waited and waited and waited to have this son, Isaac, and now you want me to offer him as a sacrifice?

But you told me I was going to be a great nation. You told me that all the families of the earth are going to be blessed by me. You should. And what was Abraham's reaction? It wasn't that. Abraham's reaction is, okay, God, whatever you ask, I'm trusting you, and I've only got the one, so I guess that means you're going to have to raise him from the dead if I offer him as a sacrifice.

Can you imagine the faith that this guy has? I'm just thinking about it, too. I mean, it's like he didn't even hesitate. He had everything ready. Yep. He was to the point that he was going to do it.

Yep. Until the angel stopped his arm. He was ready to bring that knife down. Excuse me. Yeah, it says something about Isaac's face because Isaac was not necessarily a young kid.

They assumed that he was probably a teenager at the time. And his dad's how old now? Over 100? Teenager versus 100-year-old guy?

[ 20 : 26 ] I know they lived longer back then and had more strength and stuff, but still, he could have got out of there if he wanted to. So that's a good point. The faith of, the faith in Isaac, that Abraham had instilled there.

It raised all sorts of questions probably in Abraham's mind, but he trusted God to do what God had promised he would do. See.

Right. Yep.

Yep. Yep. Yep. God will take care of us.

He will provide the things that we need. Look at verse 17 again. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac. And he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.

- [ 22 : 17 ] Have you ever had to take great steps of faith that God has given to you? You know, think about the things that have happened in your life. What is the most difficult step of faith you've ever had to take?

You don't have to tell me, but just think about what has it been? And how does Abraham's example encourage us?

God has a plan. God has said. God has promised. God will take care of it.

Then he goes on, verse 20. In verse 20 he says, he gives us some snapshots of some other people. By faith Isaac, blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he had died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel and gave commandment concerning his bones.

- [ 23 : 22 ] So here's the three descendants from Abraham and how they followed God. Isaac, his inclination would have been as a father to give his blessing to Esau.

Now I know Isaac kind of manipulated things there, but it was God's leading for Jacob to be the one through whom the promise continued.

And Isaac was okay with that and gave the blessing. He accepted God's word even if it wasn't what he preferred. It wasn't what he wanted. Jacob blessed the grandsons of Ephraim and Manasseh.

You know, it's interesting. We tend again to forget how long people lived back then. In Genesis 50, beginning of verse 22, it says, Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he in his father's house.

And Joseph lived 110 years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation. And the children also of Makor, the son of Manasseh, was brought up upon Joseph's knees.

- [ 24 : 41 ] Joseph seeing great-grandkids and great-great-grandkids as part of his life. He was familiar with all them. Verse 24 of Genesis 50 says, And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die, and God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land unto a land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you and ye shall carry my bones from thence.

So Joseph died being 110 years old and they embalmed him and were put in a coffin in Egypt. I don't know why I've never thought of this before, but a thought struck me while I was going over this this week.

We think about Moses and the children of Israel leaving Egypt, going across the Red Sea, going toward Promised Land, doing the wilderness wanderings, finally going into the Promised Land.

How long did it take after Joseph for that to happen? Well, they were in Egypt for what, 400 years? Joseph only lived to be 110.

- [ 26 : 01 ] So you've got 290 more years at least. Probably more than that because of other things. And when it comes time for them to leave, they take things from the Egyptians and everything.

They're going to have a tabernacle being built. They're going to have an Ark of the Covenant being built. They're going to have all these different things. But there is also a coffin going with them.

When they left Egypt, there was a coffin that went with them. And as they did their wilderness wanderings, there was a coffin that went through those wilderness wanderings until they got into the Promised Land because Joseph believed the promises of God as well.

And God said, I'm going to make you a mighty nation. I'm going to make you have your own homeland there in Canaan, the Promised Land. You're going to be a mighty people. You're going to... And Joseph says, that's my people.

I want to be with them. And he claimed the promises of God for that. He took God's promises at face value. God has given us all kinds of promises in his word.

[ 27 : 17 ] Do we take them at face value? God said it. You know, there's no song, God said it, I believe it, that settles it. I've never liked that song.

God said it, that settles it. Whether I believe it or not, it's going to happen because God said it's going to happen. It's this attitude of faith that Joseph had, so he instructed them to make sure when you leave here.

And right then, with Joseph there, everything was fine. Everything was great. They had got along well with the people of Egypt. They were treated well there. But he says, there's going to come a time you're going to leave and when you do, take me with you.

Because I believe in the promises of God. We're out of time. But, have you caught the theme for this lesson? Do we believe the promises of God?

This whole chapter, 11, by faith. must have been being practiced and during the time between Joseph and Exodus.

[ 28 : 35 ] It must have been being practiced there somehow. Otherwise, you wouldn't have had Aaron and Moses himself even what you would say acquainted with it.

I mean, yeah, God told Moses to go do this but there had to be people that were acceptable to it to a point. Well, remember one of the things that Moses said to Pharaoh when they were first doing their back and forth thing was just let us go three days journey out so that we can do our sacrifices and things.

So they were doing it. They still had a part of them. Yep. All right. Do you have faith? Do you trust God? He's the only one to trust.

We're going to talk about that some more in the morning service, having faith. Let's pray. Father, thank you.