

Continuing in the spirit

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[0 : 0 0] and different Hall of Fames that are available around the country. I've been to one of them and talked about Fred going down to Washington, which is kind of a Hall of Fame all in itself.

When you go to D.C., they've got all kinds of memorials and one monument. All memorials. I learned that from you. So, alright. So, God has given us a Hall of Fame.

Hebrews chapter 11 is kind of God's Hall of Fame from the Old Testament. People who stood for faith. It's probably one of the greatest chapters in the entire Bible.

If you get into Hebrews chapter 11, it describes and illustrates the concept of faith. And then it gives you all kinds of people and shows how their faith operated in their life and how it affected their life.

So, he's going to trace the life of these different heroes of the faith and he's going to show us the challenges they went through. He's going to show us the way their faith worked in their life and how it helped them to come out on the other side.

[1 : 0 8] A lot of times we face dangers and difficulties and things. It's good to go back and be reminded these people did the same. And how did they come through it?

How did they get through it? By having faith in God and what God's going to do and how he'll take care of them. See, the writer of Hebrews can take us back to those Old Testament saints and say, this is what they faced.

This is how they handled it by faith in God. We in the first century can face it. Now, we in the 21st century can face things in our life because God gives us these examples and says, I worked here, I worked here, I worked here, I worked here.

You can now have me working in your life and helping you. You need to live by faith. Trust me in what I am doing.

So, let's have a word of prayer and then we'll talk some more about the idea of living by faith. Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for this time together this morning, Lord. I thank you that we can just gather and look at your word.

[2 : 1 6] Father, I pray that you would minister to our hearts this morning, that we might see how you work in these people's lives. We're only going to touch a few this morning, but Lord, I pray that you'd help us to be aware that by faith, we can accomplish so much by trusting you, allowing you to do a work in our life.

Lord, help us to understand the importance because we can't do anything in and of ourselves, but with you, we can accomplish anything.

Lord, I pray that you would just help us as a church to have faith that, Lord, you're going to work, you're going to grow, you're going to help us to have people coming in. Lord, by faith, we're going to see you do marvelous work here and we're trusting you for it.

Lord, thank you for loving us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. First thing I want you to see this morning, and I'm going to use a word you wouldn't normally expect, but faith in primeval times.

Primeval. You say, well, that's primeval. You're talking about back before the dinosaurs and all those people and stuff like that. No, that's not what I'm talking about. The actual word primeval means belonging to the first or the earliest age, the original.

[3 : 38] So he's talking about faith in the original times, when he first started everything. What kind of faith was demonstrated back then? So he's going to talk about that.

In Hebrews 11, verse 1, he defines faith for us. He says, Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, and God testifying of his gifts.

And by it he being dead, yet speaketh. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God had translated him.

[4 : 35] For from his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

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 became heir of the righteousness, which is by faith.

Let's stop there. First verse. By faith, now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. He says, you can put your hope, you can have confidence in God to do things that maybe you have never seen before.

God will take care of you. We have not seen him do certain things by direct observation. But as we read through scriptures and we see things that he has done, he says you can have faith in what God is going to do.

You know, we may not see it, but he says take God's word as truth. Take God's word. Trust what it says. As we go through scripture and we go time, especially coming up on Christmas time, we look at all the prophecies.

[5 : 56] He prophesied this and this and this and this and this, and we have seen them fulfilled. Every one of them. Every prophecy, except for things that are taking place coming up, he fulfilled it.

It has been done. Again, Christmas time, what did we talk about? There's a hundred and something prophecies concerning Christmas and every one of them was fulfilled. So, we can take God at his word.

We can trust him for it. See, faith is not just, I wish. Faith is a conviction. God has done this over and over and over again.

I can trust him to do it now. All right? Can your mic be turned up a little bit? My mic be turned up a little bit. Can you move it up? All right, I can move it up. How about now?

That's better. That's better? Okay. So, faith is a conviction. Based on God, based on his word, you know, things we don't necessarily see.

[6 : 58] But we know he's going to take care of it. It's a confidence that the Old Testament believers had. Notice it said in verse two, for by it, the elders obtained a good report.

By putting their faith in God, those early Old Testament patriarchs and others saw God do some tremendous things in their life.

And all it took was them trusting him. How are we at trusting God? How are we doing what he wants us to do in following him?

You know, when God declares something to be true, when God says something's going to happen, you can know that it's going to happen. Do we have confidence in the Lord?

And the examples of faith that he's going to give us helps us to develop a life of faith as well. Because we said, look, he's done it. Over and over again. We want visible proof of things.

[7 : 59] We want to know, before I make a decision, I want to kind of see how things are going. If you're like me, today's age, before things happen, I want to see some things to make sure that it's going to happen.

I want some proof that, you know, if you tell me this, I want to see that you've done that in the past. If you tell me this, I want to see evidence that you can back that up.

You know, we kind of live our lives that way, don't we? We want to see things. But God has done things that people have not seen.

But because he did them, we have faith in what he can do. Good example. The beginning of the world. If you look at the definition of science, science is observable and repeatable.

Has anybody ever been, anybody around ever observed the beginning of the world? No. Only one person saw the beginning of the world. And that was God.

[9 : 05] And in Genesis, he says, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. That's where they started from. Repeatable. Anybody been able to repeat the things that they say caused the world to start?

No. Nobody's taken the test tube and boom. There it is. See? I just created that. No. Can't do it. So, it has to be observable and repeatable.

And although you try to come up with all kinds of things about why creation is wrong and the beginning of the world happened this way, God says, nope.

I did it. And if we trust in God, the fact that he did it, we can trust God in other things in our life and we can see him work in our life.

See, when God framed the world, actually look at verse 3. It says, 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.

[10 : 10] what does all that mean? Go back to Genesis, you don't have to turn there, but go back to Genesis 1-3. God said, let there be. And it was.

God framed the worlds by his word. It says. God made the world. And after he made the world, after man and woman were created, and Adam and Eve, he had a, they had a son by the name of Abel.

And Abel, look at verse 4, it says, by faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh.

You remember the story? They were supposed to bring offerings to God. Adam and Eve, God had made sacrifices for them. He had brought the sacrifices so they could have forgiveness of sin.

Cain and Abel were to carry on doing that. And Abel brought the animal sacrifices. Cain brought the things from his garden. God had already set the example.

[11 : 28] God had already shown us how he wanted those sacrifices done. Because when he brought the sacrifice for Adam and Eve, he brought animal sacrifices.

So they had the example from God himself. Abel was faithful to carry on what God had said. Cain came up with his own way of doing things.

And Cain kind of reflects the fact that I'm going to do things my way, I'm going to do it the way I think is right, I'm going to do things and it did not work out too well for him, did it?

God said, no, I'll take Abel's sacrifice, I won't take yours. 1 John 3, verse 12 says this, Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.

And wherefore slew he him, because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous. He was upset, he was angry, because Abel's sacrifice was accepted, his was not.

[12 : 34] But Abel followed God's lead. He did what God had already set in place and he followed through on it. Cain says, I'm going to do it my way. I'm going to do it the way I think is right.

How often do we do that today? God's word has, this is what I want. We're going to talk about that this morning as we talk from Galatians chapter 3. God says, this is what I want.

But we try to come up with our own way of doing things. I think this works better. I think this would be okay. And that's kind of where Cain is. He went through the motions of doing things, but it was simply a matter of, I'm doing this out of duty.

I'm doing this because I'm supposed to. Not because he loved God. Not because he wanted to worship God. This is what I'm supposed to do.

Abel, on the other hand, gave a sacrifice in faith. You know, a lot of times we do things and we look at it this way. What can I get by with?

[13 : 40] What can I do to get by? Whereas Abel's was, what is the best I can give the Lord? So often, we look at, what can I get by with?

What can I do that was, that'll satisfy? Instead of saying, what's the best thing I can give God? How's the best thing, what's the best thing I can do?

Abel, obviously, didn't get rewarded on earth. He wound up being killed by his brother. He wound up being murdered. But God recognizes what Abel did here in this chapter.

He recognizes that Abel did the right thing. And where is Abel today? Abel's in heaven with God. So, Abel, what he experienced on earth, maybe was not the best measure by what he's experiencing now.

It's a life of eternity with God. Then he goes on and he says in verse 5, by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.

[14 : 48] and was not found because God had translated him. For before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God.

In Genesis chapter 5, you don't have to turn there, but in Genesis chapter 5, verse 21, it begins the story and it says, Enoch lived sixty and five years and begat Methuselah. And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years and begat sons and daughters.

All the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years and Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took him. What's the distinguishing things in that little passage of scripture about Enoch?

What two things jump out at you? Let me just read verse 24 again. Genesis 5, verse 24. Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took him.

Enoch walked with God. Those of you who were with me on Wednesday night, last Wednesday night we were talking about walking with God. How do you leave a legacy? You walk with God.

[16 : 02] Agreed. Yep. So, agreeing with God. Yep. So they walked together. So he says, Enoch walked with God all of his life.

Can you imagine that? Walking with God all of his life, wanting to fulfill whatever God wanted done. And then the other thing that sticks out to me is he was not for God took him.

He never died. Just recently we finished up talking about Elijah. Remember Elijah going to heaven? God taking him. That word translate there in verse 5 means that God took him.

He didn't die. He just was gone to heaven. He says, Enoch had that kind of relationship and again, I mentioned this when we were talking about Elijah.

But again, can you imagine being Enoch? I'm out one day. I'm walking along and I'm talking with God and I'm just having great fellowship with God and the next thing I know I look down and there's streets of gold underneath my feet.

[17 : 04] Not desert. That's the kind of life that Enoch had. He would have had glorified God. Yep. God probably gave him a body on his way there.

So, yep. So the second example of, you know, this example of faith is Enoch. And Enoch's a good example for us.

Enoch is a little ways from Adam, a little ways before Noah. And we know how bad the world was. God destroyed the world with Noah because how bad it was.

So Enoch would have been in that kind of world in Jude verses 14 and 15. Enoch also, the seventh from Adam.

So you think about that, the way the generations were and how long they lived back then. Enoch probably knew Adam. Enoch probably knows Noah because of the way the generations went and the length of time they had.

[18 : 13] Anyways, Enoch, also the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints. Now listen to this and describe our world.

To execute judgment upon all, to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Do you get the fact that during the time that Enoch lived it was ungodly? What does that say about our generation now? There's a whole lot of ungodliness out there taking place in the world.

A whole lot of things happening. And he says, Look, if you want to please God, Enoch went through all of this and you know what he found out about pleasing God? Look at verse 6. But without faith, it is impossible to please him.

For he that cometh to God must believe that he is and he's a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. He says, The only way you're going to please God is by faith. By faith that God exists and that God cares about you.

[19 : 26] Do you notice that? Believe that he is and he's a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. God says, Do you believe in me?

Okay, good start. Now, do you want to know more and more about me? Do you diligently seek him? And if you do, he says, I'm a rewarder of those who do.

You want to get to know me? You know what? I will let you know who I am. You want to get to know me? I will introduce you to me. I will show you who I am.

Many of you have been walking with the Lord a long time. You've been saved for many years. Have you seen God show himself to you day after day after day? Showing you new things, showing you things that, you know, I'd forgotten that God could do this.

I'd forgotten that God will answer this prayer. I'd forgotten that God will, he says, but you come to me, he says, and you trust me, you have faith, I will reward you for that. He chose to respond to Enoch's faith differently than he did Abel's.

[20 : 35] Hang on, hang on just a second. Abel wound up being, dying at the hand of his brother. Enoch wound up being translated. So, God has a response, has a responsibility to take care of us and get us to heaven.

He doesn't necessarily say how that's going to happen sometimes. Right? Well, we're talking about people who were born and died and went to heaven before the Bible was never written.

He said, you have to, today's world, you get into the words of the Bible and learn what it said. Well, these people didn't have a Bible.

They did not have a Bible. They went by faith in the sense of what they actually saw going on and what God had done. Not necessarily reading the book.

But God had also spoke to them at different times. He'd spoken to Adam and Eve so Adam's not, you know, telling them this is what God told me about things. And there are other times, instances, where God spoke to different ones at times.

[21 : 40] So, they would have the word of God not written in a form like we do but they would have the word of God to carry on, to pass on. But a lot of it was, like you said, by faith in the fact that God has done this and God has done this and God has done this, I trust him to do more of the same.

Well, they did have some stuff like Enoch wrote a book. Yeah. We don't have it in our Bible but Enoch wrote a book so they did have stuff but we just don't have them in our Bible.

Yeah. So, yeah, they had different things too. Yep, they did. So, okay. Is it not written in the book of Joshua? Yep, it says that, yep.

There's different books mentioned even in the Bible that we don't have but they do mention the books. Abel, like I said, died for his faith.

God's not bound to do everybody the same. That's one of the great things about God. He looks at us as individuals and he's not bound to treat everybody the same in every way.

[22 : 58] Some people need this. Some people need this. Some people need this. And God will look at the need and provide for the need. When we have true faith in God and who he is and what he does, then we realize that God knows best.

God knows what we need and how he's going to take care of the need that we have. Have you ever asked the question and I'm sure you have because I have and most people I know have.

Why does this have to happen to me? Ever asked that question? Some of you more than once have asked that question. Why is this happening to me?

You know, that question actually shows a lack of faith. Why is this happening to me? I have no idea but I trust God.

God has an answer. God has a purpose. God has something he's doing. I need to trust him. Noah, look at verse 7. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark by the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

[24 : 29] Noah, again, like Enoch, lived in a society that was ungodly. He lived in a society where no one cared what God thought, what God did.

They didn't care a thing about God. Nice fact, other places it says that they only did that which was evil continually back in Genesis. Actually, let me read it to you.

Genesis chapter 6, beginning at verse 5, it says this, God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And it repented God that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him at his heart. And God said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast and creeping thing and fowls of the air for repenteth me that I have made them.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations and Noah walked with God.

[25 : 34] Did you notice the theme here? Abel, Enoch, Noah walked with God.

They walked with God. And you think about Noah. I always find Noah fascinating. God gave Noah a command that was absolutely ridiculous.

You think about it. Noah, I want you to build an ark. What's an ark? A really big boat.

Okay. Where would you like me to build that? There's no water right here. Right here, fine. You can build it right here. Okay. Can you imagine what's going through Noah's mind when God gives him that command?

But what was Noah's reaction? Okay. I trust you. I have faith in you. I'm going to... His neighbors all thought it was a big joke, didn't they?

[26 : 44] His neighbors and those around were like, Noah, what are you doing? Especially when he's building and building and building and building and gets to be about year 50 and he's still building and building and building.

Takes him 120 years to build this thing. But his obedience saved his family. He was the first boat builder.

Yeah. Probably. I don't know if they built other ones if people live near the Mediterranean or the Dead Sea or something, but yeah. But one that big, yeah.

So anyway, his obedience saved his family. He demonstrated faith in God and that faithfulness in obeying God paid off dividends for him like nothing else.

Because he trusts God, he was saved. His wife was saved. His kids were saved. His in-laws, kids, I mean, his son-in-laws and daughter-in-laws or whoever, daughter-in-laws, were saved because they followed God.

[28 : 00] See, faith in God. He says, you must believe that he is, Abel, Enoch, Noah, all believed that he was and he's a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

And the best example is Noah. Noah was rewarded because he diligently sought God, because he diligently listened to God, because he diligently followed what God had told him.

As he walked with God, his faith increased and increased and increased and he did what God had asked him to do. It's a beautiful picture of a contradiction to the statement that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children.

The obedience of the fathers is visited upon the children. Good point. Good point. Yeah. One thing he also saved was saved. Saved what?

From sin. With what he also saved was sin. For the simple reason being, it would not have been prevalent today. Right. They were sinners, still sinners.

[29 : 07] Every human born since Adam is a sinner and has sin in their life. But, Noah walked with God. His kids, they might have been a little more questionable, but they got saved.

But, that sin nature would still have been in all of them. Matter of fact, if you remember right after Noah got off the ark, sin started happening again already.

So, yeah. Yeah. Good point. if people want to use that argument that children can be saved by the actions of their parents, these kids would choose to go home.

Yep. They were good at the choice. Yep. and then they made choices after they got off the boat that, like Fred said, sin continued on. So, by faith, we're going to talk some more about that next week, but by faith, do we trust God?

Too often, I think we don't. Too often, I think we, we question God and we, we, we, uh, look for excuses not to do what he asked us to do.

[30 : 22] And he says, no, just trust me. Follow me. Walk with me. As we talked Wednesday and this morning. All right.

Let's have a word prayer. Do you have any, Father, just thank you for this time.