

# Family Service

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn back to the chapter we read, Hebrews, the New Testament, letter to the Hebrews, and chapter 11.

The other day I was asked to speak to one of the campaigner groups, and I took along with me, some of the young ones will remember this, those of you who belong to that group, I took along with me a picture that hangs in the wall of our house, and this picture is the most famous face in all the world, ever.

The most famous face in all the world, ever. It's not the Queen. It's not Barack Obama.

It's not Taylor Swift. Do you know who the most famous face is in all the world, ever?

It is the Mona Lisa. And if you don't know what I'm talking about, then ask your mom or dad when you get home, and they will tell you, and you can look it up on Google or whatever, and you can see then the most famous face in all the world.

[ 1 : 47 ] Mona Lisa was a young lady who was painted by a man called Leonardo da Vinci, and that painting has become the most famous painting of all time.

And it hangs in our house. Well, not the real one, but a copy of the Mona Lisa hangs in our house. But I took along this painting because it's really rather special. It's not a normal picture. It's actually a jigsaw.

All right? The jigsaw took ages to make up. Therefore, I had to be very careful. It didn't all fall apart. But the jigsaw is made up of hundreds of tiny little pieces. Now, here's the clever bit. Each of the tiny little pieces is itself a painting of some other person.

[ 2 : 56 ] So, you have this big, big picture, a jigsaw, that's made up of hundreds of tiny little pieces, and each of the tiny little pieces has a different face, a different painting, different person, and yet when they've all come together, it's so clever.

It makes up the one big picture of Mona Lisa. It's really, really clever. That all of these hundreds of different people, different people living at different times with different names in different places, and they've all come together to form one face.

And every time I look at that jigsaw, I'm reminded of the Bible, because the Bible is something similar.

The Bible is about hundreds of different people, different faces, different stories, different places that they all lived in. They were all so different, living at different times, and different things happened to them, and yet, all of them in the Bible, they come together to form one face, one person.

And you know, of course, who that one person is? The Lord Jesus Christ. Because everything in the Bible, every story, every person, points to the most famous person of all, who is Jesus Christ.

[ 4 : 42 ] Christ. This chapter that we read earlier on, Hebrews chapter 11, it's all about people. And they lived at different times, in different places, and they did different things.

And they had different names. All different stories. And yet, there's one thing that brings them all together. One thing in common, and that is, they all loved God.

And they all knew God. And they all obeyed God. And they trusted God. And they listened to God. And that's why they are men and women of faith. And that's what faith means. What does faith mean? People talk about faith, don't you? You know that it's a really important word in the Bible. The word faith. But have you ever wondered what it means? Well, it means, first of all, listening to the voice of God.

[ 5 : 45 ] All of these people that we read about earlier on, Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, and we're going to look at them in a few moments time, they all listened to the voice of God.

God spoke to them. And God, they listened, and they obeyed God. That's the first step in what it means to have faith. To listen to God.

Now, I know what you're saying. You're saying, well, how can I listen to God? I've never heard His voice. Well, you know what? I've never heard His voice either. Because God speaks to us today in a different way.

You know how God speaks to us? He speaks to us in the Bible. That's why the Bible is so important for hearing God's word. Every time you open your Bible, you're hearing, you're listening to God's voice.

Telling us what He has done in the past. And telling us, most importantly, about what He has done in Jesus Christ. So every time you read your Bible, remember this, that the Bible is God speaking to us.

[ 6 : 53 ] And that's why I should have mentioned this before on your bulletin. We're told that if you don't have a Bible, if you're a visitor or someone else, then if you don't have a Bible, you would like to have one, then we would like to give you one.

Because the Bible is so important. It is the most important possession that you could possibly have in your house. All right? So they all listened.

And they all trusted God. And they all obeyed God. Now I want to just look at four of these people today. I want you to just look at four of these people.

And each of these people, I hope that you will find interesting. First one is a man called Abel. Abel. And we read about him in verse four in this chapter. By faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.

Now Abel lived way, way, way, way back at the very beginning of time because he was, you know what? He was only the second person ever to be born in the world.

[ 7 : 54 ] He had a big brother called Cain. And his brother called Cain was the first person ever to be born in the world. And their father and mother were the first people ever that lived in the world.

They were Adam and Eve. All right? So we're really going back now to way beyond anything that is ever written.

So this man Abel, there's just him and his brother. And their father and mother is called Adam and Eve. And they were the first people that ever lived in the world.

Now you know what happened when God created the world. He created the world perfect and beautiful. It was such a wonderful place. And there was no fear.

And there was no danger. And there was no badness. And there was no violence. And everything in the world was perfect in every possible way until Adam and Eve chose to disobey God.

[ 8 : 56 ] That was the worst thing that ever happened in the world when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. You remember what God said to them? He said, you can eat anything you want except one thing.

And the one thing was the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And that was exactly what they did. That was incredible. The one thing God told them not to do is the one thing that they did. And so the world became a sinful place. It became a rotten place. It became a place full of fear and guilt and violence. And it became the place that you and I know today.

All right. So Abel was Adam and Eve's son. And he had a brother called Cain. And the way they worshipped in those days was very different to the way they worship today. We worship when we gather here like in a place like this and when we sing and when we hear God's word.

But in those days, they worship by bringing an animal and killing the animal because that's how God told them to do it. Now here's the difference between Cain and Abel.

[ 10 : 02 ] Cain didn't love God. All right. Didn't love God. But he still, he wanted to do his best. And he wanted to, he just did what was enough for God.

So he brought to God a whole bunch of vegetables. Stuff that grew in his garden. All right. And he said, right, that'll do God. That's enough for you.

Because he just wanted to live his own life the way he wanted to do and he wanted to please himself. But Abel loved God. And so he brought a lamb, the very best.

He brought the very best for God. And he killed the lamb and he gave it to God because that's what God told him to do. And God loved Abel.

And Abel loved God. That was a big difference between Abel and his brother. Do you know what? His brother did something really, really wicked. He killed Abel because he was jealous of him.

[ 11 : 05 ] It was just such a terrible thing that happened. That was the first time anyone killed anyone else in the world because Cain was jealous of him. And God had to speak to Cain and punish him and drive him away from him because he had done such a terrible thing to his brother.

But Abel lived by faith and he gave God the best. Let me tell you this, alright? If you really love God today then make sure you give him your best. Make sure you give him and God is not asking for your money.

He's asking for you. He's asking that you give him your life. Whether you're a young person or whether you're an older person, whether you're a grandmother or grandfather, it doesn't matter. God is asking that we give him our lives. Asking that we give ourselves to him. So that's Abel. That's the first person. Abel.

You can read about him in your Bible later on. The second person is found in verse 5. Verse 5. And this is a man called Enoch who lived a little bit later than Abel.

[ 12 : 16 ] And Enoch had a very famous son. And the reason the son was very famous was because his son lived, listen to this, you'll hardly believe this, guess what age his son was when he died.

His son was, do you know this? You probably know this. Maybe some of you know this already. His son was called Methuselah. Methuselah is a very long name. Methuselah.

And he was not 80, not 90, not 100, not 150, not 200, not 300.

keep going. Methuselah lived to the age of 969 years.

Now that is a good old age, isn't it? We, none of us here today will ever live anywhere close to the age that Methuselah was when he died.

[ 13 : 33 ] But you know, I'll tell you something that's even more wonderful than that. Okay? Methuselah's father was this man Enoch. This is even more marvelous than that. He didn't die at all.

And the reason he didn't die was because God just made him disappear. One day he was there in the world going about his normal business and the next minute he wasn't.

Gone. Vanished. Where did he go? He went to heaven. God took him.

Just took him straight like that. There was only two people in the Bible that didn't die. Do you know who the other one was? One was Enoch, this man here that we're talking about, and the other one was a man called Elijah.

And he didn't die either. Again, God took him, but he took him in a very different way. He took him in a chariot of fire. But Enoch, imagine that.

[ 14 : 39 ] Imagine Enoch was 365 years old when God took him. Now, it was a young man. He was young when God took him. But that's what we read.

That he'd never died. And we also know that he was a man who loved and obeyed and listened to God as well. That's why God took him.

Took him to be with himself. Because he loved God and because God loved him. See? See what they have in common? Same as Abel. Abel loved God and God loved him.

Enoch loved God and God loved him. And God took Enoch away to be with him. But you know, I'll tell you something that's even more marvelous than that. Jesus promises, listen to this, listen to this.

He says that if we follow him, we will never die. that's his words.

[ 15 : 41 ] You can read it in John chapter 11. John chapter 11, he said, I am the resurrection and the life. He who lives and believes in me will never die.

And that's because when we love and when we follow Jesus Christ, when it comes time to die, for us, it's not death at all. We go straight into heaven to be with God.

And that's why I'm so excited about being a Christian. That's why I'm so excited about what the Bible is because it's the most marvelous. No one else can give you this. What God can give you.

No one else can give you the gift. No one else can change your life and can take death away and can bring you into heaven. Only the Lord Jesus Christ, because he died on the cross, can bring us into heaven.

And he promises that. He promises that to everyone. And again, whether you're old or whether you're young or whoever you are today, that's the promise that God gives us if we live and believe in him.

[16:49] So that's Enoch. What we got so far? We've got Abel and we've got Enoch. Now, let's go to the next one who's probably the best known of all to the young ones.

And this is a man called Noah. Verse 7. Now, everyone knows about Noah. Everyone knows about Noah.

Noah is one of my favorite stories in the Bible because, and I'm sure, it's one of your favorite stories as well. You know the story of how he lived in a world full of badness and unbelief where he was the only, listen, he was the only person in the world who loved God.

There were thousands of people in the world, thousands of them living all around him, and he was the only person in the world who loved God. and he was, and the world was such a bad place, such a place full of unbelief and badness that God said, enough is enough.

I'm going to have to destroy the world. I'm going to send a flood that will cover the whole of the world. but, not everyone.

[18:10] I'm going to save Noah because he loves me and because I, see, once again, just like Enoch, just like Abel, Noah was a man who loved God and a man who God loved.

And so, God said, I'm going to save Noah and his family. However, he has to obey what I tell him. You know, of course, what God told him to do?

He told him to build a massive, massive boat. I shouldn't actually say that. It wasn't really a boat. It was a massive, massive wooden box.

So big, you know what? It was actually much bigger than this building. Much, much, much bigger than this building. So, you can imagine how long it took him to build this, enormous, enormous, great box with three floors on it.

And you can imagine how the people would have wondered what Noah was doing when he was building it with his family. They would have said to him, Noah, what are you doing?

[19:23] And Noah would say, I'm building a massive, big, wooden box. and they said to him, why are you building a massive, big, wooden box? And Noah would say to them, because God is going to send a big flood to all the world.

And do you know what they said? They laughed. They said, you are completely crazy, Noah. Of course he's not going to send a flood. This place, this is dry land.

There are no rivers nearby. There's no lakes nearby. We're nowhere near the sea. And where's all the water? Where's the flood? And Noah said, God's going to send a flood. And day after day, Noah built more and more and more of the ark.

And day after day, the people would say, Noah, Noah, you're wasting your time. This is ridiculous. Why are you doing this? And day after day, Noah did the same thing until it was finished.

Do you know what happened after that? Well, of course you do because you've read the story. You've heard the story hundreds of times. You know what happened after that? This is such an amazing, an amazing thing.

[20:33] All of a sudden, when Noah was finished and the door is open, the door is open in the ark and there's a big ramp going up to the door. All right? Picture this. There's a big ramp.

The door is open and all of a sudden, Noah looks around him and there are animals. Animals. Hundreds of them. Thousands of them. Big ones, small ones, creepy crawly, snakes, mice, dogs, cats, rats.

I don't think I would have liked that. That bit. Lions, tigers, elephants, gorillas, monkeys. You see, you think that Noah went out and got the animals.

No, he didn't. If you read it very carefully, it was God that brought the animals together. So all of a sudden, Noah looks around him and he sees all of these animals everywhere.

[21:42] Now, you tell me that you wouldn't have loved that day. You would have loved that. But then, you're going to ask me, well, hold on a minute, hold on a minute.

What about the lions? Because everybody asks, what about the lions? Everybody asks that. Did they not feel hungry?

And would they not have eaten the other animals? Because that's what lions do. They eat other animals and tigers and cheetahs and other.

Why did they not eat the other animals? I'll tell you why. For the same reason. Remember the story of Daniel? When Daniel was put into the lion's den?

What happened to him? God shut the lions' mouths, which means that he took away their wildness. The lions became tame because God took away their wildness.

[ 22 : 48 ] Now, that would have been so cool, wouldn't it? that would have been such an amazing thing to be able to go up to any animal you want and know that the animal's not going to eat you and it's not going to do you any harm because God has taken away its wildness.

It would have been so great, wouldn't it? And so God led all of these animals and they piled into the ark, three floors of the ark, and then God shut the door and that was it. The rain started and my word did it rain.

We think we've got rain here in Lewis. We've got nothing compared to the flood because it rained and rained and rained so much that the waters covered the earth and the ark started to float and the rain carried on and on and on day after day until even the mountains were covered and it was too late.

Now here's my question because we don't have time. I'm going to stop soon. We don't have time to ask. Noah's one of my favorite stories in the Bible. If you had been around at that time and if you'd been listening to Noah and watching him building the ark, right, and Noah says to you, God is going to send a flood, here's the chance you have, the door is open, come with us so that you too will be saved from the flood, what would you have done?

Would you have done what everybody else did and laughed at Noah and said, this guy is crazy or would you have believed him and would you have gone into the ark so that you would be saved?

[ 24 : 40 ] What would you have done? It's a really important question because God comes to us today and says, my son Jesus has opened the door of heaven for you if you will go into it.

What are you going to do? Are you going to listen to him and are you going to ask him to be your savior so that you will be saved just like Noah or are you going to walk away from him and not bother believing?

Well, there's three Abel, Enoch, Noah and lastly Abraham. Now, I don't know how much you know about Abraham. I'm quite sure you do, but Abraham again, another man who loved God and who God loved.

But what does it tell us? It tells us here, this is really incredible, by faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.

And he went out, this is the bit that I'm going to talk about, and he went out not knowing where he was going. Abraham went, now imagine this, this is holiday time.

[ 25 : 54 ] Alright, so this is the time when school is finished and there's six weeks and I can feel the happiness in here today. All the young people here are saying, this is the first day.

Do you ever wonder why holidays go past so quickly? Don't they? They always go past. I remember when I was a young boy, at the beginning of the school holidays, I would say, yes, six weeks, it's going to be so long.

And then before you knew it, the six weeks were over, you had to go back to school again. Why is it that holidays always seem to go past so quickly? I don't know why that is, but it does, doesn't it? But anyway, the holidays are here on us, and some people go away. Not everybody goes away, especially if the weather's good. There's sometimes no reason to go away. And sometimes you don't need to go very far.

You can go to so many beautiful places around here, like Ugg and Harris, and you can maybe go to Skye, or some people go to Inverness, or Glasgow, or Edinburgh, or whatever.

[ 26 : 56 ] And other people choose to go further afield, like Tenerife, or Mallorca, or somewhere down south, or whatever. But one thing is for sure.

When you ask your mum and dad, where are we going on holiday? They'll tell you, won't they? Maybe it's a surprise, but they will know where they're going.

You always know where you're going because you have to plan it. You have to know where you're going to stay. You have to know how you're going to get there. But you imagine that it came to going away on holiday.

And you said to your mum and dad, right, where all the bags are packed, into the car, and you said to your mum and dad, where are we going? And they said, well, we actually don't know. That would be really strange, wouldn't it?

That would be really weird, wouldn't it? I mean, nobody does that. You don't just start the car and just say, well, let's see where the car takes us. You don't just go to the airport and say to the person at the airport, it doesn't matter what plane, it doesn't matter, anywhere at all, it doesn't matter, I don't want, you don't do that, do you?

[ 28 : 08 ] But Abraham, when God said to him, pack your bags, Abraham, I want you to leave home, I want you to leave your town and your home and your city.

And Abraham must have wondered, where is God telling him? But you know what? God didn't tell him where he was going. And yet he still went because he trusted God.

He trusted God. And that's what faith is all about today. It's about trusting God who sent his son into the world to die for us, to give us ever lasting life.

What does trust mean? It means when you trust, let me give you a story that I've heard so many times and many of the big people have heard it so many times about what trust is.

And hopefully you'll remember what this story is. Have you ever seen anyone who walks a tightrope? Have you ever seen anyone walking a tightrope?

[ 29 : 17 ] Some people can do it. I'd be terrified to do it. I had no way would I ever attempt to do it. A person who walks a tightrope, if you can imagine there's a rope from this side of the balcony to that side of the balcony and somebody actually walks on the rope itself.

That's a tightrope walker. And some people have done it over the most ridiculous places. There was one man called Blondin.

He lived many years ago. His name was Blondin and do you know what he did? He walked a tightrope across Niagara Falls. Hard to believe, but that's what he did.

He walked a tightrope across Niagara Falls. Do you know what? He actually walked a tightrope with a wheelbarrow in front of him. And there was a big crowd when he did it.

Massive crowd on the other side. And he walked across with a wheelbarrow and he got to the crowd on the other side. And then he got down and he spoke to someone in the crowd.

[ 30 : 25 ] And he said, what do you think of that? And he said, that was great, that was fantastic. He said, do you think I could do it again? And the man said, yeah, of course, of course. And he said, do you believe that I could walk with my wheelbarrow with someone in it?

And the man said, yeah, I think you could do that. And then he said, well, get in. Ah, that's different, isn't it?

Would you have got in? That's the way people are today. Lots of people believe in God. Lots of people believe in the Bible.

They believe in Jesus. How great he was. Jesus comes to us today and says, how much do you really believe in me? Are you prepared to get in?

Because that's what faith is. Faith is asking Jesus to be our Lord and our Savior. Faith is getting in to be with Jesus.

[ 31 : 34 ] God's God. I hope you remember all of these people we've been talking about. Abraham, Enoch, Abel, and more so that we live the life that they lived, a life in which we love God and a life in which we are loved by God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's pray together. We thank you for everyone here today, Lord. we thank you for all that we've spoken about and we pray that you'll bless everything we've done and everything that we've said and pray that your word will speak to each one of us for we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. Psalm 36 from the Sing Psalms version.

It's on page 44. Psalm 36 verse 5 to verse 9 on page 44.

Your steadfast love is great, O Lord, it reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful extending to the sky. Your righteousness is very great like mountains high and steep.

[ 32 : 51 ] Your justice is like ocean depths both man and beast you keep. Psalm 36 verse 5 to verse 9 and we're going to stand to sing. Your steadfast love is very adored.

It reaches heaven high. It reaches heaven high.

Your faithfulness is wonderful extending extending to the sky.

Extending to the sky. Extending to the sky. Extending to the sky.

Your righteousness is very great like mountains high and steep.

[ 33 : 59 ] Like mountains high and steep. You're just as it like ocean depth.

veins high on with your steadfast love.

What What confidence it brings. What confidence it brings.

Both high and low, find shelter in. The shadow of your wings.

The shadow of your wings. The shadow of your wings.

[ 35 : 16 ] Lift peace within your hearts and drink. From streams of your delight.

From streams of your delight. For with you is the source of light.  
In your light we see light. In your light we see light. In your light we see light.  
In your light we see light. And now may the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the love of  
God the Father, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest on and abide with each  
one of you both now and always.  
Amen. Amen.