

Worship, Walk, Work by Faith

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Date: 22 June 2021

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[0 : 0 0] Turn just for a little to Hebrews chapter 11, the chapter we read, Hebrews chapter 11, the verses 1 to 7, Hebrews 11, 1 to 7.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous. God commending him by accepting his gifts, and through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

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.

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. By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear, constructed an ark for the saving of his household.

[1 : 2 1] By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. Now as we know, faith is the all-essential of the Christian life, and it's a question that we should often be asking ourselves and asking one another.

You know, we meet one another out and about, and I'm sure often we say, how are you doing? But we should often be saying as well, how's your faith? And sometimes we do that, and it's good to examine ourselves.

And of course, when we examine ourselves, we must always do so against the word of God, not just in how we feel, but in what the word of God tells us. And this epistle is highlighting to us the importance of faith.

And we see there that without faith, it is impossible to please God. And that really is quite an extraordinary statement, because it shows that although people can do great things and wonderful things, and there is merit in what they do, and there is value and worth in what they do, and there's good in what they do, yet as far as pleasing God, it is impossible.

And that really is one of these kind of statements that can often stop you in your tracks to realize that unless it is of faith, it is of no spiritual value, and it is not of a worth before God as such.

[2 : 5 0] Now, that's not taking away from all the good things that are done in this world, but with regard to faith, it's a very strong, strong statement. Now, this whole epistle focuses very, very much upon faith, and faith, Hebrews, for instance, in 3, reminds us of the danger of developing a heart of unbelief, and that was highlighted in Israel wandering in the wilderness, of how they, because of unbelief, they didn't get into the land of promise.

And again, even in the previous chapter, we're exhorted to draw near, in verse 22, let us draw near with our true heart and full assurance of faith.

And it's very important, this whole emphasis that we find here in faith. And towards the end of chapter 10, again, very, very strongly put, it says there, for you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised, for yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay.

But my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Now, at the beginning of the chapter, we have this wonderful definition of faith. We read there that faith is the assurance, or maybe it's a substance of things hoped for.

[4 : 29] That's the evidence and the conviction of things not seen. In fact, that word translated substance, which in the AV really means like a foundation.

So this faith is absolutely foundational to who we are and what we are. And of course, faith governs everything, everything that's about us as Christians.

It is by faith we believe in God. It is by faith that we believe in the way of salvation as is revealed to us in the word of God. It is by faith that we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

It is by faith that we come to God. It's by faith we came here tonight. We didn't come here just saying, oh, well, you know this, I should probably just go to church. And it's a good thing to do so.

No, we came by faith because we wanted to meet with God. That's faith. Faith is reaching out our heart, reaching out to God. That's what we want to do.

[5 : 41] Faith wants to meet with other Christians because we love our brothers and sisters in Christ. We recognize something of the faith in them, the faith of their love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's by faith we believe the world was created by God. And that's sometimes a great difficulty that we have when we engage with people and we try to convince people of God's creative power and that it can be very frustrating when you meet somebody who just does not believe.

And you're saying to them, how can you not believe? And there's so many people who are dismissive of everything pertaining to God. But then at the end of the day, it's by faith.

Yes, I know that the whole idea of atheism is just, it's not only is it abhorrent, but it is something that it just goes, flies against all the evidence that is there.

Because the whole creation is, as it were, screaming out that God is. The heavens declare the glory of God. So it takes a lot of work, a lot of suppression of the truth to arrive at an atheistic outlook.

[7 : 04] It's not something that can happen naturally. It has to be worked at. But having said that, we know, I've often had discussions with people and they just, they will not believe.

But then it comes back to this, that it is by faith. Everything, everything really is by faith. It's by faith we believe in the resurrection of the dead.

Now, there's so many things that we could look at here, but this whole chapter, or a lot of this chapter, is about the great men and women of faith. And I just want very simply to look at three of the individuals that are mentioned here.

The first three that are mentioned. And we see, and they're highlighted, and these are very obvious things, that we see, first of all, Abel. And it's his faith that's highlighted with regard to his worship.

And then we see Enoch, and his faith is highlighted with regard to his walk. And then Noah, we see that his faith is highlighted with regard to his work.

[8 : 11] And we could look at each one, but just a passing thought, really, on these three characters. Now, we're told here that Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.

Now, as we know the story, and we know of how Cain and Abel both brought their offering to the Lord. And Cain, we remember, was a gardener. And he brought the fruit of his labor from the garden.

He brought that, and he offered it as a sacrifice. And a lot of people say, well, you know, was it not wrong of God to not to accept the sacrifice of Cain?

Because Cain, he did perform a sacrifice. He did bring. Maybe he brought the very best that he had. But God didn't accept Cain's offering for one very simple reason, that Cain came in his own way, on his own strength, on his own merit, on his own worth.

And he thought that by doing what he chose to do, that God would accept him. And it's very obvious that from the very start, from the time when Adam and Eve sinned, and that God had shown, obviously, straight away, what the scripture tells us, that the way to God is through blood.

[9 : 36] Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. And that's what Abel did. Abel took, and Abel took the sacrifice, and Abel came by the way of blood.

Cain came the bloodless way. And, you know, unfortunately, there are so many people within the, when we talk of the church, we talk about it, the visible church, in its widest possible sense.

And there are many people throughout Christendom who look to what we would term a bloodless Christ. And what do we mean by that? They're looking to simply to the example of Jesus.

They're not looking to his atonement. They're not looking to his finished work. They're not looking to what he did on the cross and why he did it. They're simply looking at the example of Jesus.

And they say, well, we're going to try and follow that, try and live by that way. That's Christianity. Now, of course, the example of Jesus is very important. But it's by faith and accepting what Jesus Christ has done.

[10 : 42] And so that's why Abel was commended for his sacrifice. Because he came looking on this, the lamb that was in there, Abel by faith, just as Abraham did, saw Christ today, Abel was looking to the promise that was given to us, to remember how Adam and Eve, how the promise had been given of how the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

And so there was, Abel was looking by faith to the promise of God. And so Abel worshipped by faith. And that's what we're to do as well.

And that's what we pray that we're all doing tonight, is worshipping the Lord by faith. And then we see the second person here was Enoch.

And Enoch was this quite remarkable man. We're told about him. And by faith, Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death.

I think it's in the Navy it's translated. And it's the same word that's used of Elijah as he was, when he was taken up. And there was a remarkable testimony given about this man, Enoch, that he pleased God.

[12 : 07] Imagine having that written on your tombstone. Wouldn't that be a wonderful thing? Here lies so on and so on. And it was said of him that he pleased God.

You know, there are various definitions given regarding people like Abraham was a friend of God. Daniel was a beloved. There are various, various of John, the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Well, here is Enoch and we're told that he pleased God. No, I found grace in the eyes of the Lord. So these are wonderful descriptions. But Enoch, he walked with God.

In other words, he walked in communion and fellowship. Walking with the Lord was his chief delight. This was his great joy. And he lived in a world that was drifting further and further and further away from God.

He was living in a world that was becoming, it was going completely in the opposite direction. You just read through the book of Genesis and you see comes to the point where the Lord is saying that that's it.

[13 : 16] He's going to judge the world. And we know, of course, he did that in the flood. But there came one day and Enoch was not because God took him and God took him so that he never saw death.

Of course, we know that Enoch and Elijah are both there. They came from the two great periods in the world's history.

There was before the flood and people have often said in glory, there was Enoch with the body. And then that period between the flood until the time of Christ, we have Elijah.

And of course, then we have Jesus in the New Testament as our representative again in his humanity. And it's a wonderful thought and that we will, when we arrive in glory, we will reflect our Savior.

And when we again are clothed with our body, we will be there and in all the glory of heaven. It's an amazing thought. And then finally, there's Noah.

[14 : 28] And he was the one who worked because God told him. And again, it was great faith because God told Noah what was going to happen. And he said to Noah, you are to build an ark because you and your household are to be saved.

And that was great faith because when you think of the undertaking of building this huge ark and you couldn't go down to, couldn't go to any, like today, people can go to Baines or Jusens or anywhere around or anywhere where you can, you're able to.

He would have had to start from scratch and cutting down trees and doing all this and building, building, building, week after week, month after month, year after year.

And all the time we're told that he was a preacher of righteousness. And I'm sure that so many of these people used to think, oh, Noah, what on earth are you doing?

Are you still at this year after year? Noah, you, you are so deluded. where is the promise of this flood?

[15 : 36] Just as people that tells us and Peter are going to say, where is the promise of his coming? As Jesus delays his return, not that he's delaying it according to the heavenly timetable, but you know, so often we look out and we wonder, when will it be?

Well, his return is guaranteed. He's coming again. And of course, we know that the flood did come, but that was, it was great faith because there was nothing indicating what was going to be unleashed upon this world where the great fountains of the deep opened up and where the, where the heavens poured out.

There was just, it was the most, like, it was far, far worse than any tsunami. It was the most cataclysmic thing that the world really has ever known.

And Noah was prepared for it because his faith believed he looked to the Lord. And you know, as we live out our days, let us pray that we too, and I'm sure all of us are, that by faith, like Abel, we're worshipping.

And that like Enoch, by faith, we're walking. And like Noah, by faith, we're working. They're very obvious things, say it, but we pray that just even as we reflect upon these things, that this will be part and partial of our lives as well.

[17 : 05] Let us pray. Lord, we give thanks that you speak to us in your word and that every word is from you and every word is for our good.

You have not put these words there just, as it were, for information to us. They are there for our benefit. They're there for our edification, for our building up, for our guidance, for our learning.

And so we pray that we might have teachable spirits, Lord, and that we will want to know your truth and that above all we'll want to live according to your truth. Bless us then, we pray, and take each one of us home safely.

Bless our families and all whom we love. In Jesus' name, we ask all with the forgiveness of our sin Amen.