

THE HALL OF FAITH - Part III

Text: Hebrews 11:11-23

Key Word: Faith

Key Thought: What Kind of Faith Does God Want Us to Have?

This sermon series of faith has led us into four different aspects listed in the book of Hebrews chapter 11. We have so far covered a **Creative Faith (Hebrews 11:1-3)**; **Commended Faith (Hebrews 11:4-6)**; **Concerned Faith (Hebrews 11:7)** and a **Called Faith (Hebrews 11:8-10)**. Today I want to focus upon another three areas of faith that are very important to our spiritual growth. **Lets Also Strive to Grow in a . . .**

I. FLOURISHING FAITH (Hebrews 11:11-16)

II. FORBEARING FAITH (Hebrews 11:17-19)

III. FORTHCOMING FAITH (Hebrews 11:20-23)

I. FLOURISHING FAITH (Hebrews 11:11-16)

It is so easy to dry up in our faith as time goes on especially when our prayers don't seem to be answered. Difficulties and disappointments can cause us to lose the fervency we once had. Time can bring about **growth** but it can also bring about **death** due to the many problems of life.

*** On January 7/97 the Christian Counsel met with Mayor Martelle. He addressed our group of pastors and priests and lay persons with what could be called his address of the year. I appreciated hearing him say that he has made it this far only because of his faith in God. He told us that he often was in danger because of his comments and actions against the drug, alcohol and cigarette smugglers.

His life and the life of his family had been threatened a number of times by organized crime. He openly confessed his faith in God and asked for our prayers on his behalf. There is no doubt that he had flourished in a place of high unemployment and crime because he had maintained his faith in God. ***

Abraham was not a man who walked in either a **blind faith** or a **hyper-faith**. He simply had placed his total trust and confidence in God who was leading him all the way. The Bible tells us that Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran to go to the promised land (Genesis 12:4).

He never hesitated to do what God asked him to do. I'm sure some of the things that God said were a little hard for him to accept by sight. He had to learn to walk by faith.

I. FLOURISHING FAITH (Hebrews 11:11-16) (Contd.)

God had just given him a wonderful covenant.

“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

3. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Genesis 12:2-3

God went on to say something that must have overwhelmed Abraham at the beginning.

“The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring (or seed) I will give this land.”

Genesis 12:7

One of the dangers of the hyper-faith teaching today is that they claim that you cannot waver in your faith if you expect God to answer your prayers or requests. Abram, who was the father of the faithful, had a time when he wavered.

“But Abram said, ‘O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?’

3. And Abram said, ‘You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.’”

Genesis 15:2,3

God assured Abram that His Word would come to pass.

“Then the word of the LORD came to him: ‘This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.’

5. He took him outside and said, ‘Look up at the heavens and count the stars - if indeed you can count them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be.

*6. **Abram believed the LORD,** and he (God) credited it to him as righteousness.”*

Genesis 15:4-6

I. FLOURISHING FAITH (Hebrews 11:11-16) (Contd.)

It was because Abram believed God that he grew in a **Flourishing Faith**. His offspring has multiplied to fill the whole earth. This great patriarch (much like us) have tried to help God when our faith is wavering. His handmaiden Hagar gave birth to Ishmael. But God waited until Abram was 99 years old before He reaffirmed His covenant. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was finally born. It took twenty five years before this kind of faith began to visibly see any results. Since Isaac was born, Abraham's offspring has grown to number in the millions even though millions have been persecuted and killed. This is a **Flourishing Faith**.

1491 Communion Set in Advance

*** In "*The Life of Robert and Mary Moffat*," edited by their son, we are reminded that for ten years the early mission in Bechuanaland was carried on without encouragement for the faithful workers. No convert was made. The directors at home began to question the wisdom of continuing the mission.

A friend from England sent word to Mrs. Moffat asking what gift she should send out to her. The brave woman wrote back, "Send a communion service; it will be sure to be needed."

At last the breath of the Lord moved on the heart of the Bechuanas. A little group of six were united into the first Christian church, and that communion service from England, singularly delayed, reached Kuruman just one day before the appointed time for the first administration of the Lord's Supper. ***

London Missionary Society
"*Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*"
Dr. Paul Lee Tan
p. 403

II. FORBEARING FAITH (Hebrews 11:17-19)

The word "*forbear*" means "*to refrain or abstain from.*" It also means "*to be patient.*" Abraham grew in a Forbearing Faith in such a way that he had to learn to abstain from walking in a way that made sense to the human mind. He didn't give up on God although it appeared that God had given up on him. Abraham met the test of faith before there was any visible evidence of God's intervening hand. There was a real offering of Abrahams' will even though his son Isaac was only figuratively put to death.

Genesis chapter 22 records the full story that we are referring to. God called Abraham to sacrifice his one and only son born by faith, in order to test his faith. Without hesitancy, Abraham AGAIN followed the Lord's instructions.

II. FORBEARING FAITH (Hebrews 11:17-19) (Contd.)

Some would argue that God was only requiring Abraham to “make a sacrifice in spirit.” There is enough archeological information to conclude that human sacrifice was unquestionably practiced in the O. T. **Abraham responded to this ultimate test by gathering wood, and taking a knife as well as fire. He was prepared to offer a burnt offering of his son to God.** Yet God made it clear in the Mosaic Law that He would not allow human sacrifices by his covenanted people (Leviticus 18:21; 20:1-5; Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10).

There is no doubt in my mind that this represents a **Forbearing Faith**. **Abraham chose to believe in God even though it didn't make sense.** He knew that God would resolve the conflict in that was building in his heart. He patiently walked into the greatest challenge of his faith. He knew that at the worst case, God was able to resurrect the body of his son Isaac.

“We will worship and then we will come back to you.”

Genesis 22:5b

The question of Isaac must have further added to the struggle of the patriarch's faith. Picture yourself in the same situation. How would you answer Isaac's penetrating question?

“The fire and the wood are here, 'Isaac said, 'but where is the lamb for the burnt offering? ’”

Genesis 22:7

The words of Abraham still captivate the hearts and minds of those who choose to walk by faith and not by sight. These words challenge us in our daily struggles to overcome the trials of our faith. Do we patiently respond as he did?

“Abraham answered, 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' And the two of them went on together.”

Genesis 22:8

The Lord is still providing for those who put their trust in him. **We will never be able to provide our own sacrifice.** God is our provider - Jehovah Jireh - ***“YHWH will see to it” or “Yahweh will provide.”***

III. FORTHCOMING FAITH (Hebrews 11:20-23)

Faith works in the present, is based upon the past and looks with anticipation to the future. Faith is certain of what we cannot see (Hebrews 11:1b).

“Faith is the eye of the unseen causing the future to subsist and be present in the heart.”

“Faith provides a firm standing ground while we await the fulfillment of God’s promise.”

Charles A. Ratz
“*Outlines Studies in Hebrews*”
p. 247

The word used for “*evidence*” (KJV) or “*being sure*” (NIV), is the Greek word “*elegchos*.” Thayer defines it as “*that by which invisible things are proved and we are convinced of their reality.*” In a courtroom this word was used to denote that which furnishes proof such as a proven evidence (i.e.. Exhibit A). Therefore, we could translate this text in Hebrews 11:1 as . . .

“Faith is the irrefutable proof of the invisible transactions.”

The writer of the book of Hebrews uses four incidents to illustrate his point - they are found in the life of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and the parents of Moses.

A. Isaac’s Forthcoming Faith (Hebrews 11:20)

When Isaac blessed Jacob (thinking it was Esau) he spoke of nations that would serve him and bow down to him (Genesis 27:29). He saw a future filled with promises even though he existed in a family filled with problems. It was through faith that Jacob was blessed.

B. Jacob’s Forthcoming Faith (Hebrews 11:21)

At the end of Jacob’s life, while sitting on his bed and leaning on his staff due to his weakness, he began to worship Jehovah. According to Genesis 49 and 50, Jacob made a request just before dying. He asked for his body to be buried with his fathers in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre. There he would join the remains of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah.

III. FORTHCOMING FAITH (Hebrews 11:20-23) (Contd.)

B. Jacob's Forthcoming Faith (Hebrews 11:21)(Contd.)

Another thing Jacob did before his death was to bless all of his sons as well as the sons of Joseph. His blessing of each of them was a sign of their future.

“Then Jacob called for his sons and said: ‘Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come.’”

Genesis 49:1

C. Joseph's Forthcoming Faith (Hebrews 11:22)

When Joseph approached the time of his death, he remembered the promise made to Abraham (Genesis 12:7; 13:5; 15:7,13,14) that his descendants would be taken into a strange land and become slaves until 400 years pass by. They would then return to THEIR land that God had given them. According to Exodus 13:19, Moses remembered to carry the embalmed body of Joseph in order to bury it in the land of his forefathers.

D. Moses' Parent's Forthcoming Faith (Hebrews 11:23)

Exodus chapter 1 tells the story of Amram and Jocebed who hid their child for three months after he was born, refusing to adhere to Pharaoh's demand to have their son killed. They saw in this child that God was going to make of him a great leader.

“Their faith was strong enough to see, in the rare beauty of their son, a sign that he was destined to some distinguished place among his people. He might be their deliverer.”

Pridham

Faith looks ahead in hope while fear looks behind in doubt. May we grow in our faith in order to please God! We too can be found listed in God's Hall of Faith.

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Date: Nov 4 & 18/18

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: The Battle Belongs to the Lord - Gm

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I. FLOURISHING FAITH (Hebrews 11:11-16)

Genesis 12:4; Genesis 12:2-3; Genesis 12:7; Genesis 15:2,3; Genesis 15:4-6

II. FORBEARING FAITH (Hebrews 11:17-19)

Leviticus 18:21; 20:1-5; Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10; Genesis 22:5b; Genesis 22:7; Genesis 22:8

III. FORTHCOMING FAITH (Hebrews 11:20-23)

Hebrews 11:1 . . . “Faith is the irrefutable proof of the invisible transactions.”

A. Isaac’s Forthcoming Faith (Hebrews 11:20) - Genesis 27:29

B. Jacob’s Forthcoming Faith (Hebrews 11:21) - Genesis 49 and 50; Genesis 49:1

C. Joseph’s Forthcoming Faith (Hebrews 11:22) - Genesis 12:7; 13:5; 15:7,13,14; Exodus 13:19

D. Moses’ Parent’s Forthcoming Faith (Hebrews 11:23) - Exodus 1