

HEBREWS 11a THE HALL OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- **NLT - Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.**
 - **CEV - Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see.**

- **Chuck Smith** – Faith is resting in the Lord when all seems hopeless.
 - **COURSON** - "I know it's tempting to go back to that which you can see with your eyes, smell with your nose, and touch with your hands. But don't do it," the Paul pleads, "for now you are called to something entirely different. You are called to walk by faith."

- CCSV, when you sat down in your chair this morning, how many of you tested it first? Did any of you have doubts that it would hold you? (Maybe a couple of us?)
 - NO – You TRUSTED your chair. You HAD FAITH in your chair!
 - Well, you might argue... My chair has never failed me yet... AH!!!!

- Our God HAS NEVER failed you either! **Zephaniah 3:5** The LORD is righteous in her (*Jerusalem*) midst, He will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails, But the unjust knows no shame.

BY FAITH...

2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. **CEV - It was their faith that made our ancestors pleasing to God.**

- CCSV, THIS is what will make US pleasing to God too! **FAITH in Him!**
- I think of proud MY Dad was when I jumped into his arms into a pool, or out of a tree, or off of the roof – I got in trouble for that one...
 - But, I really remember when MY kids agreed to jump into my arms... It made me SO PROUD. Jumping into the arms of the Lord in faith, pleases Him like nothing else.

- **BY FAITH...**

3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were **not made** of things which are visible.

- Here, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is good science thousands of years before it's time.
- We know NOW that God made everything using atoms which CAN be seen with microscopes, but that they are held together with energy that is invisible.
- DO NOT MISS that God's words... His very breath, created the world and its neighbors.

THE HALL OF FAITH

ABEL

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

- We could spend hours speculating about WHY God accepted Abel's sacrifice but NOT Cain's... We won't, other than to observe this...
 - They both showed up... They both brought sacrifices that were allowable... They both went through the motions of religiosity... BUT
 - **Only one of them had FAITH**, Abel. Cain was just there to look good.
GENESIS 4
- Look... I could visit our Army / Navy surplus store on Royal Avenue and purchase a uniform... Buzz cut my hair... And march down L A Avenue... BUT... That does NOT make me a soldier, right?
 - Signing my life away, reporting for duty, suffering through months of boot camp... Schools... Night maneuvers... Running miles without sleep... Being called a rotten dying cockroach while doing all of the above DOES. NO THANKS!
- Keith Green used to say that going to church didn't make him a Christian anymore that going to McDonald's made him a hamburger.
 - **FAITH** is what makes us a Christian! Trusting God with everything! THAT is what Abel did.

ENOCK GENESIS 5

5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "AND WAS NOT FOUND, BECAUSE GOD HAD TAKEN HIM"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, **that he pleased God.**

- This is the first rapture of someone off of this earth... BUT NOT THE LAST! Elijah was the second, BUT NOT THE LAST!
 - WHY did they get chosen as #1 & #2? **FAITH!**
- When the Lord descends from heaven to collect His Church, What will HE be looking for? People of... **FAITH! WHY?**

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- This verse could be used to Bible-bash people who say there is no God... But since they are NOT my audience today I want to encourage us to diligently seek Him, with FAITH, AND with expectation of His favor!
 - HE is FOR you... NOT against you!

NOAH GENESIS 6

7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, (**Reverence**) prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

- Chuck Smith says Noah's was the first "**Illustrated sermon.**" Chuck wonders how big the crowds got to watch Noah and his family drive the nails...
 - That made me think about what some of US are going through... Who is watching **OUR Illustrated sermon?** One? Two? Twenty?
- Who is watching me worship through my struggles?
 - Are people noticing how reverently I follow my Lord?
- BTW, Noah's neighbors thought he was crazy... Until rain began to fall from the sky for the VERY FIRST TIME!
 - We believe that Noah is a sign of things to come – God sparing people of faith from His wrath.

- o Noah is a prime example of a Pastor who's congregation lived under his roof. His **ministry was small**, (8 people) and his task was impossible, (Without God) and he is in **the Hall of Faith!**

ABRAHAM

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. **(NOW... This is NOT for the same reason I often am in this situation...)**

- o God had NOT told him where he was going. I know a young family in the military who has been told to pack their lives up and be ready to relocate in a week's time. To where?
 - o We will let you know after you start your moving van. THAT is faith!
 - That was Abraham's calling too.

AFTER A 450 MILE WALK

9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents (**Nomads**) with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. **CEV - Abraham did this, because he was waiting for the eternal city that God had planned and built.**

SARAH

11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, **(90)** because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

- o Hey CCSV, was Sarah's faith perfect? What were her faults that we KNOW about?
 - o Doubt, fear, laughing at God's promise, Suggesting short cuts, BUT...
 - o Here she is in the Hall of Faith. WHY? Her **FAITH!**

MORE ABOUT ABRAHAM

12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. **HOW MANY SONS OF ABRAHAM HAVE BEEN BORN?**

ABEL, ENOCH, NOAH, ABRAHAM & SARAH

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, (**Salvation through Jesus**) but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

- By FAITH, they all confessed that their home was in heaven, NOT in this world...
 - We sang as children that "This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through." I hope we all feel this way too...

14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

- Think of it... Abraham and Sarah had some REALLY tough years... Besides being barren for 90% of her life, Sarah was kidnapped, **WITH HER HUSBAND'S CONSENT...** She was made to call Abraham her brother... AND... She NEVER had a house to live in!
 - Poor Abraham was afraid that everywhere they went, the local Kings would see his beautiful wife and have him murdered to get her in their harem.
 - Abraham thought that his inheritance would go to his servants...
 - He was 100 years old and was waiting for Sarah to conceive... AND **THEY NEVER... ASKED TO JUST GO BACK HOME!** Not once!

THEN IT GETS HARDER

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR SEED SHALL BE CALLED," 19 concluding that God was able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

- This account is in Genesis 22 and it bears reading... AND... We WILL indeed read it, every word... The next time we are together...

Until then...

Concentrate on the congregation under your roof. Pray for your family, then pray for the families in this church.

Pray for Family Camp this week.