



a nine-week study of Hebrews Chapter 11



April 23, 2017

"By faith the people crossed the sea" - Hebrews 11:29

Scripture: Read Hebrews 11:1-4, Genesis 4:1-26

- What does Scripture say about faith and belief?
Romans 8:24, 2 Corinthians 4:18 and 5:7, 1 Peter 1:8-9, James 2:14-26

- What does the New Testament say about Cain?
Hebrews 11:1-4, 1 John 3:11-12, Jude 11

- Leviticus 2 and Numbers 18:12-13, 17 describe offerings. We are not told why the Lord rejected Cain's offering, but can we deduce a possible reason?

Equipping

- Each example of faith throughout Hebrews 11, begins with "By faith ...". The implication is that true, saving faith works in obedience to God. Both Abel and Cain presented offerings in obedience to God, and accordingly, Cain's offering / obedience / faith was lacking. How might this look today? What is the correlation between obedience and faith?

- Cain responded to God in anger, revealing his heart toward God and others. Do you see the progression of disobedience, anger, murder in Cain's life? Any additional observations or thoughts regarding Cain's response and that of our own sinful human nature? Can you hear Jesus' Sermon on the Mount teaching equating the anger of the heart with that of murder?

- God judges Cain (Genesis 4:13-14) - What do you notice most about this judgement passage? What is lacking on Cain's part? What tragic situation is created for Cain; similar to what we find with Adam & Eve's Garden judgment and what we find with eternal punishment?

Application

- Reflecting on the lives of Abel and Cain, what do you want to change in your - life, faith, heart, relationships - right now? How could you go about making that change happen this week?

Lord, may our offerings to you (our lives, our treasures, our worship) be pleasing to you, not because of what they are, but because of how we approach you with them. May our hearts seek to obey you, and may we daily reject the anger, jealousy, and unrepentant attitude of Cain. By faith, we come before you and offer our everything to you. Amen.



April 30, 2017

“By faith the people crossed the sea” - Hebrews 11:29

Scripture: Read Hebrews 11:6-7, Genesis 6:11-7:1

- What does Scripture say about the days of Noah? Conditions that God abhors? Read Genesis 6:11-13, Luke 17:26-27, 1 Peter 3:20 (* Ezekiel 8:17, not in Noah’s day, but as similar condition that provokes God’s anger?)

- “An heir of the righteousness that comes by faith” - Hebrews 11:7. Read the following for similar thoughts: Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:1-12, Philippians 3:7-11

- Hebrews 11:6 equates faith and “drawing near to God” with two conditions? Regarding the latter, consider Matthew 5:12, 2 John 8, Revelation 22:11

Equipping

- Each example of faith throughout Hebrews 11, begins with “By faith ...” The implication is that true, saving faith works in obedience to God. Noah is said to have done “all that God commanded” (Gen. 6:22, 7:5). What would have been difficult for Noah to obey? What keeps us from obeying all that God commands?

- “In reverent fear” Noah obeyed God through his faith (Heb. 11:7). Noah treated God’s calling on him with respect and awe, and in doing so, he demonstrates the trilogy of righteous living; faith, reverence, and obedience. As we reflect on these attributes in our own lives, are we lacking in any one of them? How might we grow in faith? In reverence? In obedience?

- The *Noahic Covenant* - Beginning in Gen. 6:18 - the first mention of “covenant” in Scripture, and then made and explained in Gen. 9:9-17, God established a covenant with Noah, humanity, and all living things. What are the provisions of this covenant? The sign of the covenant? Do these promises impact our faith?

*A*pplication

- Reflecting on the faith of Noah, is there anything you would want to change in your own faith life? Are there opportunities to grow in obedience or reverence? How could you go about experiencing growth in these areas this week?

Lord, may we desire to please you. May we proclaim your existence and may we know that your rewards are great and eternal for all who seek you. May we not be swayed by a corrupt, violent, and unbelieving world, but with a Noah-like faith, may we listen for your calling on our lives and respond in obedience to your call. Amen.



May 7, 2017

“By faith the people crossed the sea” - Hebrews 11:29

Scripture: Read Hebrews 11:8-10, Genesis 12:1-9

- What does Scripture specifically say about Abraham’s relationship with God?
Read 2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, James 2:23

- Though Abraham “by faith went to live in the land of promise, a foreign land” what does Scripture tell us of his / our ultimate and permanent “promised land?”
- Hebrews 11:10, 13:14, Philippians 3:20,

- If the symbol of Abraham’s life was a ‘tent,’ then the secret to Abraham’s life (as also found with his son and grandson) was an ‘_____’. Read these verses in Genesis - 12:8, 13:18, 22:9, 26:25 and 35:7

Equipping

- “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called ... not knowing where he was going.” (Hebrews 11:8). Have you ever felt “called” without knowing “where you are going?” How do we discern this calling against that of our own desires?

- Consider the promises that God made to Abraham; “Go to the land (Canaan) that I will show you” (Gen. 12:1), “I will make you a great nation” (Gen. 12:2), “I will make your name great” (Gen. 12:3). If granted these promises today, what would our expectation be regarding their fulfillment? As in Jeremiah 29:11, God’s promises, those for our good / His glory, are not always fulfilled in our lifetime.

- Looking back to Hebrews 11:6 and the conditions for “drawing near to God,” what do you see in Abraham’s life that meets those conditions? Consider Hebrews 11:10 as the “why?” of Abraham’s obedience. Thoughts?

*A*pplication

- Reflecting on the faith of Abraham, is there anything you want to address in your own faith life? Are there opportunities to grow in obedience or reverence? How could you go about experiencing growth in these areas this week?

Lord, may we desire to listen, receive, discern, and follow your calling for our lives. May we, with Abraham-like faith, believe so strongly in your protection, provisions, and promises, that we naturally flow in-and-out of our own comfort zones, and may we continually express our gratitude for you through our worship. Amen.



May 14, 2017

“By faith the people crossed the sea” - Hebrews 11:29

Scripture: Read Hebrews 11:11-12, Genesis 18:1-15

- Hebrews 11:11-12 introduces the faith of Sarah alongside the narrative of Abraham? Read Genesis 16:1-6, 17:15-21 for background on Sarah.

- “By faith, Sarah received power to conceive” - Hebrews 11:11. Ultimately, this led to the covenant with Abraham for a great nation and many descendants, “as many as the stars” - Hebrews 11:12. See Isaiah 51:1-2, Romans 4:16-20, and Romans 9:8-9, for additional references to this faith and God’s promises.

- Laughter appears throughout the story of Abraham and Sarah. In fact, the name ‘Isaac’ means “he laughs, he will laugh; God laughs.” See Genesis 17:17, 18:12, 18:13, 18:15, and 21:6. Identify who is laughing and why?

Equipping

- From unbelief to belief. This seems to be the progression for Sarah, judging by the narrative in Genesis compared to Hebrews. This also seems to indicate God’s mercy in allowing one to make this transition. How might Sarah have moved from unbelief to belief? Have you ever experienced a similar change of belief?

- Perhaps the change of heart for Sarah began with the Lord’s question, “Is anything too hard for the Lord” and his divine declaration “At the appointed time ...” (Gen. 18:14). In other words, this seems to be a moment when Sarah realizes her misperception of God’s working. How do we answer the Lord’s question? With unbelief, mixed-belief, or total belief?

- Abraham and Sarah model for us the idea of a “team of faith.” Hebrews implies that because of both Abraham and Sarah’s faith, the great nation and a great heir to the promise was born. They were far from perfect, as are we, yet their faith in God was strong, if not their understanding on how God would work. Are you encouraged in your faith with another; a team? Has God used a spouse, a friend, a brother / sister, to serve and fulfill a promise in your life?

*A*pplication

- Reflecting on the faith of Abraham & Sarah, is there anything you want to address in your own faith life? Are there opportunities to consider the question, “is there anything too hard for the Lord?” How could you go about experiencing growth in these areas this week?

Lord, may we come before you with hearts filled with great faith in you and your promises. May we, with Abraham and Sarah-like faith, seek to encourage one-another in our belief. May our laughter be joyful and may we recall the great mercy and grace that you show us on a regular basis, and may we extend the same to others. Amen.



May 21, 2017

“By faith the people crossed the sea” - Hebrews 11:29

Scripture: Read Hebrews 11:17-19, Genesis 22:1-19

- Hebrews 11:17 begins, “By faith Abraham, when he was tested ...” What does Scripture say of being tested? James 1:2-3, 1 Peter 1:6-9, 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

- In Gen. 22:12, God acknowledges Abraham’s obedience and says, “Now I know you fear God.” In the Hebrew, ‘Fear God’, implies that one values God as *GOD!* Read: Job 28:28, Deuteronomy 10:12 & 20, Psalm 130:4, Ecclesiastes 12:13.

- Abraham was obedient, even unto the death of his son, knowing God would provide according to his will. What do we read of the ultimate obedience and submission to God? Psalm 40:7-8, Matthew 26:39, John 6:38, Philippians 2:7-8.

Equipping

- When God called to Abraham in Genesis 22:1, Abraham answered, “Here I am.” He did this twice, again in verse 11. This reply was not intended to alert God to his location or presence, but to his readiness to obey. What is our response to a call to obey, serve, share, love? How do we learn to respond like Abraham?

- Notice how calm and confident Abraham appears to be in his speech to his men, “We will worship and then we will come back to you” (Gen. 22:5). Again, in response to Isaac, “My son, God will provide” (Gen. 22:8). Abraham’s faith was one of great hope in God’s provision and protection. He was ‘settled’ in his obedience. Are we? Do you find peace when being tested, as a result of your faith in God’s provision and protection? Thoughts.

- If we consider that Satan tempts us to bring out our worst, yet God tests us to bring out our best (keeping in mind the promise not to be tested beyond what we can endure - 1 Cor. 10:13), does this change our perspective to temptations and trials? Are there practical approaches we can take to “bring out our best?”

pplication

- Reflecting on the faith of Abraham, particularly against the setting of Genesis 22 and Isaac, is there anything you want to address in your own faith life? Are there opportunities to consider the response, “Here I am?” How could you go about experiencing growth in these areas this week?

Lord, may we stand before you ready to obey. May we, with Abraham-like faith, seek to worship you through our trials, and may we do so with the confidence that you are the great provider and protector. As Jesus is our model of obedience, may we know that all things work to your glory and honor and good, for those who know, fear, and love you.

Amen.



May 28, 2017

"By faith the people crossed the sea" - Hebrews 11:29

Scripture: Read Hebrews 11:24-28

- Moses is mentioned more than any other Hero of Faith (10 times in Hebrews). Read more of his standing before God: Acts 7:17-36, Deuteronomy 34:5-12

- "He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth" (Hebrews 11:26). A reference to his suffering as being for a greater cause than wealth or comfort, similar to Christ's endurance on the cross. Read: Psalm 16:11, Acts 26:22-23

- Moses left Egypt unafraid - unlike the first time he left (Exodus 2:14-15) - because he "endured as seeing him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27); as if God were standing right beside him. Consider 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 in this context.

Equipping

- Passover has rich theological implications for followers of Christ? As Paul would write, "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7), believers apply the blood of Jesus to their lives as assurance to salvation from wrath and death. In it, liberation and freedom are found. What details do you know of the Passover text? (Ex. 12:21-27). Thoughts on Passover as having pointed to Christ?

- One of the consistent traits found with our Heroes of Faith, is that of making obedient choices, regardless the difficulty. Not only does genuine faith encourage us to trust and follow God, but genuine faith often moves us toward paths that are far less narrow, less obvious, less traveled, than the easier more comfortable choice. Can you relate? Ever choose comfort over faith?

- One of the words that often describes the life and witness of Moses, is ‘endurance.’ Moses undoubtedly was a marathon runner and not a sprinter! His faith strengthened him to endure hardships, his faith allowed him to endure with the eternal in mind, and his faith fueled his endurance through the assurance of God’s provision and protection, even as those around him fretted. How might endurance aid your current faith journey? Does Moses speak to you?

pplication

- Reflecting on the faith of Moses, particularly with the examples provided in Hebrews 11:24-28, is there anything you want to address in your own faith life? Are there opportunities to think long-term, even if the short-term is unpleasant? How could you go about experiencing this growth today?

Lord, may we walk in this world with the endurance of a Moses-like faith. May our choices align with your desires, and may we rather suffer affliction with your people, than enjoy the pleasures of sin. May we worship you as the true Passover sacrifice and rejoice in your promised salvation for those who call you Lord. Amen.



June 4, 2017

“By faith the people crossed the sea” - Hebrews 11:29

Scripture: Read Hebrews 11: 29 / Exodus 14

- The parting of the Red Sea is referenced in many ways throughout Scripture; including: Deuteronomy 11:2-4, Joshua 24:5-6, Psalm 106:8-10; 136:13-15

- In Psalm 77:16-20, the psalmist uses a technique of Hebrew poetry that is referred to as ‘parallelism’ - the restatement of an idea with the same grammatical structure, but with different terms. Note how the waters of the Red Sea “saw” “were afraid” and “trembled.”

- “So, the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord.” - Exodus 14:31. Read Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4:9-12 for a similar thought on salvation and righteousness. Also, note the continued emphasis on “fear + faith.”

Equipping

- The people of Israel often demonstrated a wide range of faith and confidence. In Exodus 14:8, they were leaving “defiantly” and yet in 14:11 they feared for their lives. Do you experience both ends of the faith continuum? When? Why?

- The Lord ... drove the sea back (14:21), looked down and threw the Egyptian army into panic (14:24), threw the army into the sea (14:27), and ultimately ... “the Lord saved Israel” (14:30). What do you notice about these verses? As it relates to our salvation, what might we understand from this?

- Do you have a “Red Sea Crossing” experience? In other words, have you ever had to completely rely upon the Lord to bring you through a situation or conflict or challenge, that otherwise seemed to be unpassable? Which was easier to fear; the problem (an enemy closing in and nowhere to go) or the Lord (trusting that he would find a way, even if it meant the improbable)?

Application

- Reflecting on the faith of Moses and the Israelites, particularly with the example of the Red Sea in Hebrews 11:29, is there anything you want to address in your own faith life? Are there opportunities to rely upon the Lord’s salvation? How could you go about experiencing this growth today?

Lord, may we face life’s difficulties with a Moses, Red Sea-like faith. May our reverence of who you are result in great confidence for what you can do. May we never forget from where you have brought us, and from what you have brought us through, and for where you are leading us. Most importantly, may our righteousness be found in what you have completed and not in what we attempt to do in our own strength. Amen.



June 11, 2017

“By faith the people crossed the sea” - Hebrews 11:29

Scripture: Read Hebrews 11: 30-31 / Joshua 2

- Read the account of Rahab in Joshua chapter 2. Also, note the genealogy of Rahab in the line of Jesus; Matthew 1:1-16. Finally, notice how James speaks of Rahab, in both faith and works (obedience to faith), in James 2:24-26.

- Rahab believed in what she had heard, and it seems that the understanding of God as the Creator and Almighty God, was foundational to her faith. Does this - Joshua 2:11 - appear similar to Deuteronomy 4:39, Acts 14:15, Acts 17:23?

- Read Joshua 2:3-6 and consider the deceptive nature of Rahab in this context. See also: Exodus 1:15-21 and Joshua 8:5-8, and compare to Rahab. We will discuss the ethical implications in the second *Equipping* question below.

Equipping

- “Faith is ... assurance ... conviction” (Hebrews 11:1) Apply that definition to Rahab’s faith and imagine her confidence when she says, “The Lord has given you the land” (Joshua 2:9). Do we find it difficult to claim God’s ultimate victory over ... this world? Our sin? Evil? Do we walk daily “by faith?”

- “I did not know where they are from ... nor ... do I know where they went” (Joshua 2:4-5). As descriptive text, not prescriptive text, no general ethical principles can be drawn directly from the passage. So, was this ok? Does God commend lying? Was Rahab’s allegiance with God and not the King, and that makes it ok? What of God’s forgiveness and Rahab’s heart?

- The Lord worked in Rahab as she was told of God by others. Consider how much Rahab knew (protection of Israel, God the Creator, the Red Sea), and how much else she likely had heard, what does that tell us of our witness to those who do not know God? If faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17), what do we share?

pplication

- Reflecting on the faith of Rahab, is there anything you want to address in your own faith walk? Are there opportunities to rely upon the Lord’s protection and deliverance? How could you go about experiencing this growth today?

Lord, may we face the dark and difficult situations of this world with a Rahab-like faith. In acknowledgement of our sin, may we know, with great assurance and conviction, that you renew and restore us. May we also know that you deliver and protect us as we make you known, the Creator and Almighty God of heaven and earth. Enable us to share your story through your Word and share your love through our story. By faith, we too, will not perish with those who are disobedient, and we are eternally grateful. Amen.



June 18, 2017

“By faith the people crossed the sea” - Hebrews 11:29

Scripture: Read Hebrews 11: 32-40 / Hebrews 12:1-2

- The final passage of chapter 11, speaks to many more Old Testament heroes of faith. A few are mentioned by name - Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel. These are found in the book of Judges and 1 Samuel. Search the Scriptures to discover why their faith was recognized in this way.

- Many others are mentioned, though unnamed. Can you identify them?

- “Stopped the mouths of lions” (Daniel 6:22) _____
- “Quenched the power of fire” (Daniel 3:19-30) _____
- “Escaped the edge of the sword” (1 Kings 19:1-3, 2 Kings 6:15-19)

- “Made strong out of weakness” (Judges 3:12-30, Judges 4:17-24, Isaiah 38:1-6)

- “Received back their dead” (1 Kings 17:22, 2 Kings 3:34)

- “Others - mocking, flogging, chains, and imprisonment” (Genesis 39:20, 1 Kings 22:27, 2 Kings 2:23, 2 Chronicles 16:10, Jeremiah 20:1-6; 37:15, 2 Chronicles 36:16)

Equipping

- The author of Hebrews has spent much effort describing the many examples of faith. Why do you think it's important that we appreciate each of these examples and the reasons for which they are recognized? What if the author had simply said, "Many of God's people demonstrated great faith, now be like them."

- Chapter 12:1-2 begins with "Therefore, since ..." Undoubtedly, this indicates that the author is saying, "Ok, so everything I have just written you regarding these champions of godly fear, obedience, and faith, you are to do something with it." What are we supposed to do with chapter 11? What was the content of chapter 11 "there for?"

- What are the "weights" and "sins" that are entangling you and keeping you from running the race that is set before you? (Hebrews 12:1) Who does the author say is the object of our faith, who makes our faith carry through to perfection? (12:2)

Application

- Reflecting on Hebrews Chapter 11:1 - 12:2, what has most resonated with you over these past few weeks? Is there any aspect of faith for which you have grown or desire to grow? Are you anchored in the idea that "Faith is ... assurance of things hoped for ... conviction of things not seen?"
