

"The Walk of Faith"

Part 12

11:1-40

Introduction: We have been looking at Hebrews chapter 11 for the past 11 weeks and in our study we have looked at some of the Old Testament saints which the writer of Hebrews holds up as examples of living by faith. We have looked at Abel, Enoch, Noah, Sarah, and Abraham. In our study tonight we have come to 4 verses in which the writer is going to pull several thoughts together concerning those he has mentioned so far.

I. **The Examples of Faith**

Part 9

1. **The Endurance of the Saints**

Notice Hebrews 11:13

This verse contains much Truth for our own personal lives. I want to consider this verse in sections.

"These all died in faith"

The first thing we notice as we come to this verse is that the writer points back to all those saints he has mentioned and he tells us they all died in faith. Now let me just remind you that Enoch did not die but the idea here is that he kept the faith until he left this earth. The others did the same but they just departed the earth through death whereas Enoch through translation.

These saints were not perfect in practice but when they accepted the promises of God they never turned their back upon them. This is an amazing statement. Throughout their lives they held on to the promises which God had made to them. Let me show you some verses that will help us to see the importance of this statement.

Genesis 12:4

⁴ *So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.*

Genesis 25:7-8

⁷ *And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.*

⁸ *Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.*

Abraham left Haran when he was 75 and he died at the age of 175 which means he followed God and walked in faith for 100 years. Let me show you how long Enoch walked with God.

Genesis 5:22

²² *And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:*

Then there was Noah who worked on the ark for 120 years and after the flood he lived 350 years so we can be sure he walked by faith for at least 470 years!!

Now to build upon the endurance of the saints the writer of Hebrews goes further.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises..."

These Old Testament lived thousands of years before the cross. God had made the promise of a coming Redeemer and they never seen a glimpse of the fulfillment in their day.

Genesis 3:14-15

¹⁴ *And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:*

¹⁵ *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

The Seed of the woman would be Jesus Christ who would crush the head of Satan in the end and Satan would bruise His heel at the cross. These Old Testament saints did not know when this would but they believed that God would send the Redeemer. Abraham was promised that from him there would be a great Nation and that his seed would inherit the land of Canaan but he never saw the fulfillment. This however never quenched his faith. He believed that God was true to His Word and so he and all the others left this world IN FAITH.

These people manifested the endurance which the writer of Hebrews had spoken of earlier.

Hebrews 3:14

¹⁴ *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end:*

Hebrews 6:11

¹¹ *And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:*

Hebrews 10:23

²³ *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*

Hebrews 10:38

³⁸ *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

The Old Testament saints lived long before the cross and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The recipients of this letter lived in the full light of the cross. The Promise of the Redeemer had been fulfilled and they could see the results. If the Old Testaments saints could live by faith then these Hebrews had no excuse for they knew that Jesus Christ had come.

Application:

Neither is there an excuse for you and me today. We have far more Truth than the Hebrews for we have the completed Word of God. But what is the key to living by faith?

2. **The Focus of the Saints.**

Hebrews 11:13

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them...

Here is the key to living by faith. It is to focus upon the promises of God and then it is BELIEVE those promises. This can only take place if we have knowledge of God and His promises.

2 Peter 1:2-3

² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

John 17:3

³ And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

1 John 5:20

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

The Old Testament saints knew the promises of God and therefore they were able to look ahead with their mind's eye and focus upon the day when the promises would be fulfilled. This had a special impact upon their lives.

3. The Contentment of the Saints

Hebrews 11:13

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them...

Here we see that the saints of old EMBRACED the promises of God. This is a fantastic statement. They did NOT EMBRACE the things of this world but instead they EMBRACED the promises of God. They had learned to be content with what God promised to them. They did not need the riches of this world for they knew it would all pass away in the end. Remember that when Sarah died Abraham did not own a parcel of land large enough to bury his wife. He had to buy land from the people of Canaan.

Application:

Let us not forget the Words of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 6:19-21, 24, 31-33

¹⁹ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

This is what the saints of old did. They sought first the kingdom of God.

4. The Testimony of the Saints

Hebrews 11:13-14

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

¹⁴ For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

The word "STRANGERS" means they were away from home. The word "PILGRIMS" means they were going home. God had truly weaned their hearts of this world and the way they lived their lives testified that God's promises could be trusted.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, **the evidence of things not seen.**

The faith of the Old Testament saints was the evidence of God's promises. Everyone who knew them knew that this world was not their home. They used the things of this world to benefit their walk but they did not cling to anything of this world. Whatever they had in their possession they held very loosely for they knew it was temporary. They found contentment in God's promises and so they lived in a way that others could see their faith.

James 2:18

¹⁸ *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*

5. **The self-discipline of the saints.**

Notice Hebrews 11:15

When Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees he never once gave thought to returning back there again. It was not even an option. There was not one physical obstacle to prevent him from going back but there was a spiritual obstacle and that was his FAITH. To return would make him an apostate. It would go against everything which he believed. There would be no returning to the past life for Abraham. Even when his servant offered to go back to his home land for a bride for Isaac Abraham forbid him to go.

Genesis 24:5-6

⁵ *And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?*

⁶ *And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.*

These words found here in Hebrews 11:15 would have been a fresh challenge to the Hebrew readers. They were thinking of returning back to Judaism and Abraham's discipline would have made them take a deeper inventory.

Application:

I just want to stop here for a moment and state the need for self-discipline in our lives. We have been called away from a life of loving this world into a life in which we are to forsake this world. This takes discipline and self-control. There is often the temptation to live for the here and the now but we must remember that this is not our home. There is no room for compromise and so we must press on as the saints of old.

Conclusion:

Notice Hebrews 11:16

The Old Testament saints desired a BETTER country and so God is not ashamed to be called their God. Throughout the Bible God is often referred to as the GOD OF ABRAHAM< ISSAC< AND JACOB. Thus He is not ashamed to be called their God.

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Hebrews 11:6

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Notice Hebrews 11:16 again.

We are reminded that God rewarded their faith for He has prepared for them a city.