

February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
“**Obedient Faith**”  
Hebrews 11:8-19

**Hebrews 11:1-3** is an awesome description of faith. “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.”

God’s people, whether in the days before Christ’s coming, during the days He walked on this earth, or since He ascended back into heaven, have always lived by faith. Genuine faith in God trusts and believes Him, and is expressed through action.

In **Hebrews 11:4-7** we are given examples of faith in action: Abel’s sacrifice was acceptable to God; therefore he was considered righteous; Enoch pleased God and was taken up into heaven; Noah found favor in God’s eyes and it was counted to him as righteousness.

In **Hebrews 11:8-19** we find a lengthy section devoted to the obedient faith of Abraham, of whom **Genesis 15:6** says, “He believed in the Lord; and He [the Lord] reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

The writer of Hebrews gives examples of faith meant to encourage all who read this letter, from first century A.D. until the end of time.

**Hebrews 11:8...** Abraham called out from his family and culture, was told to go to a new land where he would receive a promised inheritance that he could neither see nor comprehend; and yet, he obeyed and went.

Chuck Swindoll wrote an article titled, *Going, Not Knowing* [Where]. How about you? When God called you out of sin into salvation, did you have any idea where God would lead you or where you would end up? I sure didn’t!

When I came to Christ on 8.01.78, I was in a 28 Detox Program in a VA Hospital in Los Angeles. In 9/79 I went back to college, where I met Nancy, proposed to her 3/80 and we were married 12/80. Then came children: Hannah 1982, Joshua 1985, Benjamin 1987, Ruth 1994.

I have been teaching/preaching since 1981; I was ordained in 1986. Together, Nancy and I have had several *Going, Not Knowing* experiences like Abraham, where we left familiar and secure surroundings, trusting God to provide, from: California to Ohio, Oregon, Maine, Idaho, and back to Oregon. God has always been faithful.

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**Hebrews 11:9-10...**

It is very likely that the early Hebrew recipients of this letter, because of their belief in Christ, felt like strangers in their own land, unable to fellowship with their families, rejected by their culture, having become outcasts, in order to follow Jesus.

These Jewish believers were meeting together in houses, rather than synagogues, living apart from friends and families and the culture they had been raised in.

As Christians, we can understand that somewhat, for we live in a nation that was founded upon the teachings of God’s Word, a nation where, until the 19th century, the majority of its citizens professed to believe that God exists and that the Bible is His Word. That is not true today; in fact, true Christians are a minority in America.

But then, God doesn’t want us to be too comfortable in this world (cf. **1John 2:15**), for it is not our permanent home; He has something much better for us. We should be like Abraham, looking beyond the cities and houses of stone and wood (**Hebrews 11:10**), “for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”

**Hebrews 11:11-13...** Both Abraham and Sarah were old when the promise of children was given to them by God; they both thought it was funny (**Genesis 15:1, 5-6; 17:1-8, 15-17; 18:10-15**).

But God did just as He had promised to Abraham and Sarah. God is faithful, and we can trust Him to keep all His promises to us, especially forgiveness and eternal life.

Just as God made the universe from what could not be seen, He made the nation of Israel out of one old man and his barren wife, just like He said He would.

The author of Hebrews, in **verses 12-13**, interrupts his list of the obedient faithful, in order to summarize some lessons from their lives, for all who read this.

Think about it, we will not realize the fulness of God’s blessings in this life. We are granted eternal life, yet we will most likely die; although some of us may very well not see death (cf. **1Thessalonians 4:16-17**).

Either way, God’s blessings are real and His promises to us will be kept; but we must trust God to bring it about by His own power and authority, in His own timing.

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Our life on earth is temporary and we don't really belong here; our permanent home is in heaven and we can only get there through Christ, not by heritage, works, law-keeping, or religious rituals, but in Christ alone!

**Hebrews 11:15-16...** We have no reason to believe that Abraham wanted to go back to Mesopotamia, but he could have gone back, if he had wanted to.

Have you ever wanted to go back to the life you had before you believed in Christ as Savior and Lord? Have you ever wanted to go back to a different time or place or situation in your past, to exchange where you are now for what you had before you knew Christ? I doubt it!

It is possible that some the early readers of Hebrews were tempted to return to what they had known all their lives, Judaism; with all its ceremonies, rituals, traditions, and heritage, the called out people of the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the Twelve Tribes.

God, through this book, told the Hebrews, the same things He is telling us; there is something much better waiting for those who believe and trust in Jesus Christ.

We will live in God's presence in a perfected world, forever; but we must trust God with our here and now, if we expect to trust God with our eternity.

**Hebrews 11:17-19...** So, how much do you really believe in and trust God? By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac (his long awaited for son) as a sacrifice. Think about it, God said to Abraham (**Genesis 21:12**), "Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named."

Abraham believed God, and although Abraham did not know how God was going to make a great nation out of Isaac if he was dead, Abraham trusted that God would keep His promise, even if it were necessary for God to raise Isaac from the dead (cf. **Genesis 22:1-18**).

When Abraham took Isaac up the mountain, he told his servants (**Genesis 22:5**) "we" (both he and his son) will return; he clearly did not expect Isaac to stay dead, although he had no idea how God was going to fulfill His promise of descendants through Isaac.

God provided a substitute sacrifice for Abraham's son, i.e., (**Hebrews 11:19**) "figuratively speaking," says "Abraham did receive Isaac back as a type, i.e., as one who returned from death."

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In Abraham’s mind, Isaac was as good as dead, the knife was raised to kill him, then God rescued him, never intending for Abraham to harm his one and only son.

Perhaps some of you were as good as dead to your parents, your spouse, your children, “figuratively speaking,” before you repented and believed in Christ to save you and grant you eternal life?

God has a marvelous plan and purpose for all those who will believe in and seek to obey Him (**Ephesians 2:10**), “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

**Hebrews 11:6**, “And 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 seek Him.”

**Galatians 3:6-9**, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, ‘All the nations will be blessed in you.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.”

**Galatians 3:26-29**, “For you are all sons [& daughters] of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ [*immersed, placed in, buried with Christ*] have clothed yourselves with Christ [*put on Christ, i.e., living for Him, following His example*]. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one [*as children of God*] in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants [*offspring by faith*], heirs according to promise [*salvation’s blessing*].

Saving faith begins and ends with Jesus Christ, God’s One and Only Son, Lord of all, but Savior only to those who believe in and receive Him.

**Romans 4:16**, “the promise [*forgiveness & eternal life*] comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all of Abraham’s offspring.”

**Romans 10:13**, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” **17**, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

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Listen! Islam, Judaism, and Christianity all revere Abraham. Both Islam and Judaism consider Abraham as the patriarch of their race (Arabs & Jews); but only Christianity reveres Abraham as the patriarch, the father, of all who, by faith, believe in God through Jesus Christ, from every nation, tribe, and tongue.

**John 3:16**, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

Jesus died for us, but He didn’t stay dead!

**John 11:25-26**, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” **John 14:6**, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

**1John 5:11-13**, “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

If you believe that Christ’s death has provided you with forgiveness for you sin, and His resurrection has granted you eternal life, then should proclaim, along with every true believer and follower of Christ, as does Paul in

**Galatians 2:20**, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

*Pastor Mike*

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