

Faith: Learning to Trust God Like Our Heroes (Hebrews 11)

Sermon Notes for Message #3: The Purpose of Faith (11:5-6) – Pastor Jeff

- We are learning that faith is a confident trust in the Lord.
 - It is trust in what is foreseen (*“assurance of things hoped for”*) and in the unseen (*“the conviction of things unseen”*).
 - It is trust in God’s pathway to favor (*“for by it men of old gained approval”*)
 - It is trust in God’s powerful word (v. 3)
 - It is what leads to being *“righteous”* (v. 4)
- Now, God uses the life of Enoch to reveal the purpose of faith which is summed up in two words: pleasing God (two times in v. 5-6)
- Everyone has three choices or options concerning who they are going to please in life: 1: self; 2: others; 3: God. Enoch’s life was driven by faith in God which is pleasing to Him: This is seen in the following people and responses: Solomon (1 Kings 3:10); the Psalmist (Ps. 104:34); God’s people (Prov. 16:7); David’s confession (Ps. 51:16-17); Jesus Christ (Jn 8:29; Lk 32:22; Mt. 17:5); obedient children (Col. 3:20); financial giving (Phil. 4:18); living for Christ (1 Jn. 3:22); the proclamation of the gospel (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 2:4); doing His will (Heb 13:20-21).
- Enoch displayed a God-pleasing faith and was only one of two men who never experienced death (other was Elijah) and described as someone who *“walked with God”* (Gen. 5:2; the other was Noah-Gen. 6:9)
- We learn three things from Enoch’s life about the purpose of faith in Hebrews 11:5-6 and Genesis 5:18-24.

① God-pleasing faith is rapture-ready (11:5; Gen. 5:24)

- What is first mentioned about Enoch is how he was raptured to God without experiencing death. Verse 5 quotes Gen 5:24: *“Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him”*
- As you read through the line of Adam’s son Seth in Genesis 5, you can’t miss how each person lives over 900 years and then *“died”*, but when you come to Enoch he is removed from the rule and reign of death by God.
- Enoch becomes an Old Testament type of those who will be living in the future for Christ and will bypass death when He returns for His church (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Enoch’s rapture is different from the believer’s future rapture which will include a simultaneous resurrection and glorification when Christ returns (1 Cor. 15:22-23, 51-53).
- Enoch changed his place (to heaven), but not his company. As he walked with God on earth, so he now walks with God in heaven.

② God-pleasing faith is right living (Gen. 5:22, 24)

- God makes some inescapable points about Enoch’s life in Genesis 5.
 - First, he only lived 365 years when all the other pre-flood patriarchs lived over 900 years (averaged 912yrs) and fathered the oldest recorded person in history, Methuselah (969yrs old).
 - Second, God repeats two times how Enoch’s faith was demonstrated: he *“walked with God”* (Gen. 5:22, 24)
- What does it mean to *“walk with God”*? It is living your life in and under the direction of God. God uses the metaphor of walking to describe the Christian life of faith (2 Cor. 5:7; Col. 2:6). Walking assumes a direction of life and walking with God assumes living life in God’s direction (Lev. 26:12; Deut. 10:12; Gen. 17:1; Ps. 1:1; Rom 6:4; 8:4; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 2:10; 4:1; 5:2, 8, 15; 1 Thess. 2:12; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:1)

- Enoch was a prophet who fearlessly proclaimed a true and direct message (Jude 14-15) amid a godless culture that was so corrupt, it led God to say He was sorry He had created mankind (Gen. 6:6).
- Enoch didn't please everyone including his own family, but he did please God. God is far more interested in a holy minority than He is a moral majority.

③ God-pleasing faith is reality-driven (11:6)

- We learn about two essential realities of faith:
 - The *"impossibility"* reality that says you cannot please God without faith.
 - The *"must"* reality that says you are required to come to God by faith.
- Real faith is necessary to please God (*"impossible"* without it). All the personal knowledge, good works, skill, and sincere religiosity is powerless to please God. Only an Ephesians 2:8 kind of faith is able to please God (*"it is the gift of God, not by works"*; 1 Cor. 2:4-5)
- Real faith is needed to come to God (*"for He who comes to God must believe"*)
 - You *"must"* believe in God's being (*"that He is"*). This points to God's existence and His self-identification (who He claims to be).
 - ≈ God offers no proofs of His existence but says everyone knows He exists *"within them"* (Rom. 1:19) and by His incredible creation so that everyone is *"without excuse"* (Rom. 1:20). Those who deny His existence are identified as *"fools"* (Ps. 53:1) and living with a *"foolish heart"* (Rom. 1:21-23).
 - ≈ God repeatedly reveals Himself like this: *"I am God and there is no other; I am God and there is no one like Me"* (Isa. 46:9).
 - You *"must"* believe in God's bounty (*"He is a rewarder of those who seek Him"*). The seekers are believers since unbelievers do not seek God by their own willpower (Rom. 3:11). God rewards faith in so many ways: the gift of salvation (Col. 2:10); the Holy Spirit; being *"blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ"* (Eph. 1:3); access to God in prayer; brothers and sisters in Christ, and many amazing promises (2 Cor. 1:20; 2 Pet. 1:3-4)