

## Hebrews 11:1-16 (ESV) – Faith

**Main point:** God rewards those who have faith in him to the end.

**Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.**

**Background:** Chapter 11 of Hebrews is one of the great chapters of faith in the bible. We'll be looking only at the beginning of it, but in the rest of the chapter the writer tells about many more biblical figures who had faith in God through thick and thin.

### Focus of the study:

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.<sup>2</sup> For by it the people of old received their commendation.<sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.<sup>4</sup> By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. [And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.<sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.]<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

<sup>7</sup> By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

<sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.<sup>9</sup> By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.<sup>10</sup> For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

<sup>11</sup> By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.<sup>12</sup> Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

<sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.<sup>14</sup> For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.<sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.<sup>16</sup> But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

### Questions:

1. v. 1: *I wonder what the definition of faith is? What is assurance? What is conviction?*
2. v. 3: *How do you have faith in something you don't see?*

- a. evidence – wind, love, stars, voice of someone on the phone or in another room
  - b. repetition – the morning dawn, the moon, the seasons
  - c. leads to conviction and surety (assurance) – you’ve seen it all your life, repeatedly, so all signs give you expectation for what *will* come
3. *What does faith do for us?*
- a. helps us “keep on keeping on”
  - b. helps us obey God’s word
  - c. helps us listen and believe that he is good, whatever direction he takes us
4. *v. 2, 4: What does “commendation” mean?*
- a. approval, “good job,” your boss is pleased (e.g., what is a military commendation? means honorable notice, attention from your superior that you did something well, praise)
5. *How does it feel when someone says “good job,” when someone commends you?*
6. *v. 6: How does the writer say that we please God? What is required to please God?*
- a. *faith*: in what?
    - i. that God exists (though unseen)
    - ii. that God rewards those who seek him
7. *v. 6a: In your own life, what encourages you to believe that God exists?*
8. *v. 6b: What kind of rewards are we talking about here?? What kind of rewards have you encountered in your life, that you think have come from God? (Everything comes from God...)*
- a. family, friends, work, health, education, food, patience to bear trials, community, church
9. *v.7-16: [read this aloud] By faith, what did people named in this passage do?*
- a. Noah: in reverent fear, constructed an ark, became “an heir of righteousness”
    - i. What does it mean when you’re an heir to something? You inherit it from your father/mother; it becomes your own, part of who you are
  - b. Abraham: obeyed, went to a foreign land promised as an inheritance (there’s that “heir” idea again!), “not knowing where he was going”!
    - i. *How do you think that felt? How did he do it?* He looked to God
  - c. Sarah: received power to conceive – giving birth to the descendants of Israel – how?
    - i. “since she considered him faithful who had promised” – she looked to God, not to her circumstances (she and Abraham were very old!)
10. *Did Noah, Abraham, and Sarah see the fulfillment of everything God promised?*
- a. no, they “died in faith”
  - b. saw themselves as “strangers and exiles” in this world, looked to the heavenly kingdom
11. *What are your eyes on today? How can we encourage one another to look in faith to the heavenly city and our reward from God?*
12. Ask for prayer requests for today.
13. Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
14. End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace