

THE KIND OF FAITH THAT PLEASURES GOD

DATE: SUNDAY, 07TH OF NOVEMBER 2021 | FAITH SERIES: PART 1

TALK
IT OVER

HEBREWS 11:1-6

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

GENESIS 5:21-24

When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

NOTES FOR LEADERS:

We will be hosting a water baptism teaching on the 21st of November, and our water baptism services will be on the 28th of November.

Anyone in your group who would like to know more about water baptism, or would like to be baptised, can contact the church office for more information:

Email: hello@cityhill.co.za

Phone: 086 11 22 331

WhatsApp: 071 530 9275

START TALKING

1. What one thing from Sunday's message are you going to apply in your life this week?
2. Who is one of your heroes, and why?

START THINKING

1. How would you define faith? How does your definition compare to Hebrews 11:1? How has your definition of faith changed over time?
2. What do you think the differences are between having faith in God versus merely hoping that something is going to happen?
3. Read Hebrews 11:6. What encouragement would you give to someone who admits that they struggle to have faith?

START SHARING

1. Read Genesis 5:21-24.
 - a). Does the phrase "walked faithfully with God" describe anyone you know? In what ways do they reflect this?
 - b). To what extent does it describe your own life? What is the next practical step you're going to take to walk faithfully with God?
2. Is there an area of your life right now where you need Hebrews 11 type faith to persevere and endure? How can we encourage you in your faith?

START PRAYING

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that Your Word is alive and active. Stir us to become men and women of faith and action. Give us a new revelation of what true faith in you is like - the kind of faith that pleases you!

START DOING

This week, consider your devotional life. Take some time to set a time, place and pace for your devotional life, then start putting your plan into practice. If you already have a time, place and pace, ask God to challenge you to put your faith into action this week.

SUMMARY

OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday, we started a new series on Faith, focusing on Hebrews chapter 11. This chapter is all about the heroes of faith - it's known as the "hall of fame" of the men and women who walked faithfully with God. The point of Hebrews 11 is to inspire and encourage us when we become downcast, and our faith wanes.

Hebrews 11: 6 begins: *"And without faith, it is impossible to please God..."* Dusty shared an encouraging message on the kind of faith that pleases God.

We were created to believe, with a deep sense of faith. But as we journey through life, our faith sometimes becomes misdirected, and we start putting our faith in things or other people rather than God. In our society today, our faith is often by profession rather than by action. And the gap between profession and action is hypocrisy. But faith is a verb - it's a 'doing' word - and we were created to live out faith. God is calling us to move us from the profession of our faith to living out our faith (i.e. faith in action).

What is Faith?

Now faith is confidence [reliance, dependence, trust] in what we hope [anticipate, crave, seek, desire] for and assurance [guarantee, assertiveness, oath, secure, truth] about what we do not see [hidden, unrevealed, out of sight]. This is what the ancients were commended for. Hebrews 11:1-2.

So faith is the dependence and reliance on a desire that we have for Jesus, whom we have not seen in physical form. And what is amazing about faith is that the more we outwork it in our lives, the more we start to see Jesus in different ways.

The book of Hebrews is very cleverly written. No one is sure of who the writer is, but we know that it was written to the Hebrew people (the Jewish people) during a time when the church was undergoing extreme persecution.

Much of Hebrews references the Old Testament in order to set us up for this chapter on faith. By the age of 12, Jewish boys had to memorise the whole Torah (first five books of the Bible), so they were very schooled in the Old Testament. The author of Hebrews, in chapters 1 -10, compares Jesus to a couple of the Old Testament writings:

1. The first thing he compares Jesus to is angels and the Torah. Angels were the messengers of God, and the Torah was the Word of God. And the writer says that Jesus is a far superior Messenger, and His message is far greater than the Torah.
2. Then he compares Jesus to Moses and the Promised Land - Moses being the person who led the people of God and the Promised Land being the inheritance for the people of God. And the writer says Jesus leads all of God's people into a far greater Promised Land - eternity, the Kingdom of Heaven.
3. Then Jesus is compared with the priests and the order of Melchizedek, stating that Jesus is a far greater Priest.
4. Lastly, Jesus is compared to sacrifices and the covenant. In the Old Testament, animals were always sacrificed for the sins of the people, but Jesus was the final Sacrifice - the ultimate Sacrifice for our sin who entered a far superior covenant with us.

Then we get to chapter 11, and the writer tells us that Jesus is worthy of our faith because He is far superior to any being who has ever existed. He then lists some heroes of faith from whom we can learn great lessons in faith.

During the persecution of Christians under Nero's rule, Paul was martyred (killed) for his faith. The homes of Christ-followers were being burned, and the church had to go underground. So the writer of Hebrews is not just calling us to faith - he is calling us to faith while he was enduring extreme persecution. And the message is this: no matter what you go through, it's still worth wholeheartedly putting your faith in Jesus.

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What is incredible about Enoch is that he went for a walk one day and was taken by God. He did not experience death. There is no record of him ever doing anything significant, but he was a man that walked faithfully with God for 300 years!

When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away. Genesis 5:21-24.

What can we learn from the hero of faith, Enoch?

How to have the kind of faith that pleases God

The kind of faith that pleases God is the faith that has a deep relationship with Him. We so often make it about the miracles and the preaching etc., but Enoch teaches us that a true, profound relationship with God is the faith that is pleasing to Him. God wants a relationship with us far more than anything else we can offer Him. Walking and talking daily with Him.

So why do we struggle so much to prioritise our time with Jesus? Perhaps we don't truly understand the effect on our lives of having a daily devotional time with Jesus. We don't fully appreciate the impact it has. The more time we spend with Jesus determines what we can do with our faith. We can hear what the Father is saying in different situations, and we can respond (becoming active in our faith). We also become more kind, loving, generous etc. We may not immediately see the effect of a daily devotional time, but there is long-term fruit of that time spent with Him.

How do we build an intimate relationship with Jesus?

1. **Set a time.** Prioritise your daily time with Jesus - make it the most important meeting of your day. As you spend more time with Him, you start enjoying that time and look forward to your daily devotional time.
2. **Set a place.** When we look through the Bible, there was always a place of "meeting" - in the tent... , on the mountain... , in the garden... etc. And when you go into that place, you know that God is about to "do business with you".
3. **Set a pace.** We measure ourselves by others relationship with God rather than setting our own pace. God created each of us uniquely, and we each have a unique pace at which to grow our relationship with Him. And when we get that pace right, we end up enjoying our devotional time. Consistency will take you on a long journey with the Lord.
4. **Set a challenge.** It's not just about what God wants to do in you, but what He wants to do through you. We are here on earth to outwork our faith because people matter to Him. The Bible tells us that we are temporary residents. We are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. As we challenge ourselves daily with faith in action (acts of generosity, kindness, love, etc.), the greater of our faith becomes.

Relationship with Jesus doesn't have to be complicated, it just needs to be consistent. The more consistent you become, the deeper your relationship with Him goes, and He can do so much more through you. Consistency will get us to the end!