

Hebrews

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Hebrews 11:7-12



Vs. 7

- We find the story of Noah in Genesis 6-8. Sin had so permeated the people of the earth that God chose to hit the re-set button: destroy virtually all of humanity and start over with the only righteous man that God could find. God shares His plan with Noah and Noah demonstrated his faith by building the ark as God instructed.
- Now remember how the preacher started Ch. 11: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Noah simply took God at His word. God said there would be a flood and even though Noah had never seen a flood or even heard about a flood, Noah simply believed God when the Lord said there would be a flood. And the ark would require a lot of time and work, time and work that otherwise would have been spent caring for his family. Logically and reasonably this was crazy! It made no sense. But faith works off the conviction of things not seen! And Noah was willing to invest deeply, even when he couldn't see, just because God spoke. God's warning comes to us in many ways, but will we recognize it and heed it?
- Because building a great ship in the middle of the desert seemed a bit crazy, there were many who mocked Noah for his project and for his faith. One of the hardest things a person may do is to accept God at His word and Christ as Savior when everyone around thinks they're crazy for doing so. You see this in the academic world, you see it in China, you see it in the Muslim world and in the Jewish world. And there is often a painful cost to be paid. More than just suffering the mockery of those around you, you may lose your job, your family, even your life may be at risk.
- Part of the problem that Noah faced and that everyone in his position faces is that when you make such a bold statement, the light from your faith shines on the darkness of those around you so they can see what they truly are...and then hate you for it.
- Noah was the first person in the Bible to be called righteous. His righteousness stemmed from how he simply took God at His word. While others mocked Noah, God honored him.

Vss. 8-10

- Now the preacher moves on to Abraham. If you recall the story, Abraham was in Ur, in modern day Iraq, and God tells him to get up and move his wife and his flocks to Canaan. Now

Abraham had never seen Canaan, nor did he know exactly where it was, but God had spoken and by faith he got up and set out for land he had not seen.

- Abraham had a faith that was ready for an adventure. This is the kind of faith God looks for when He calls missionaries. It's the kind of faith the 12 disciples needed to have to fulfill Christ's commands. My friend Carey Childry is not especially impressive. He's tall, thin, quiet, and unassuming. But for nearly 40 years he has traveled back and forth to India, setting up schools for young people and seminaries so native pastors can be trained. God gives the money and Carey puts it to use. God called Carey to go on an adventure in the name of Jesus and he went and is still going!
- Abraham's faith was a faith that required patience. His journey was long and indirect. He would never live to see the ultimate product of his faithfulness. It was once said that faith is planting a tree under which you will never sit. This is the faith God required of Abraham.
- Abraham's faith was a faith that required looking beyond this world. It is the faith of the martyr who knows he is right, but is willing to die, knowing that Christ is waiting to receive him. Most of the great cathedrals of Europe were built over a series of generations. You dedicate your life to building a place of worship that will honor God. Indeed, the work itself becomes an act of worship, yet you know you will never live to see it complete. This was the faith of Abraham.

Vss. 11-12

- I love that the preacher next moves to Abraham's wife, Sarah. What would the church be without the faith of Godly women!
- But truth be told. Sarah did not start great. She thought the idea of her having a child at her age was ridiculous and laughed to herself at the idea. But with faith, it is rarely where we start but where we finish that matters.
- Sarah's faith began to grow when she realized that it was God who promised her a son. When we **KNOW** that God has spoken, we are filled with a confidence that others cannot understand. They believe we are being like Pollyanna or living delusional in some unrealistic dream. But you have the power of **KNOWING**.
- Sarah's faith came to a point that she would not put restraints or limits on the power of God. As William Barclay puts it, "Faith is the ability to lay hold on that grace which is sufficient for all things in such a way that the things which are humanly impossible become divinely possible. With God all things are possible, and, therefore, the word impossible has no place in the vocabulary of the Christian and of the Christian Church."