

BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study

Sermon: “Faith Defined and Embodied” from the “Anchored” sermon series

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-16

Key take-aways from the Scripture

- In this section of Hebrews, we explore the importance of faith through great examples provided to us throughout biblical history. The writer of Hebrews moves from giving encouragement in our faith to defining the type of faith necessary for salvation.
- In verses 1-3, faith is something that “shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.” Verse 3 says, “By faith...the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.”
- In verses 4-7, we read about the faith examples of Abel, Enoch and Noah. Verse 4 explains how Abel “offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain’s.” Even though Abel was murdered by his brother, “...but through his faith he still speaks.” Verse 5 explains how Enoch faith so pleased God, that he “...was taken so that he did not experience death; and he was not found because God had taken him.” Verse 6 explains that in order to please God, we must believe who God is and that God will reward us for our faith. Finally, verse 7 explains Noah’s great faith and how he “...warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning (of God) and built and ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world...”
- In verses 8-12, the writer of Hebrews discusses the faith of Abraham who “...obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going.” Verse 10 speaks of the “city that has (divine) foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” This is a reference to Jerusalem, as also noted in Psalms 87:1 and Isaiah 54:11. Verse 11 explains further, “By faith he (Abraham) received power of procreation, even though he was too old-and Sarah herself was barren-because he considered him faithful who had promised.”

Key take-aways from the Sermon

- Hebrews 6:19 “We have this hope as an *anchor* for the soul...” The purpose of an anchor is to hold us steady during difficult times. Jesus is our anchor!
- In last week’s Scripture (Heb. 10:19-25), the author shifts from ideology to action, beginning with the word: *therefore*. Whenever you see the word *therefore* in the Bible, you know it is a “call to arms!”
- From last week, there are 3 admonitions for Therefore in Heb 10: (1) “Let us approach God with a sincere heart in full assurance of *faith*” (v22); (2) “Let us hold fast to the confession of our *hope*, without wavering.” (v23); and (3) “Let us consider how to provoke one another to *love* and good deeds.” (v24)
- Chapter 11 in Hebrews is considered as the “Roll call of the saints”, who offer their example in faith as a guide for us today. None of us came to our faith on our own...it came through the power of God’s grace and the example of someone else.
- In chapter 11, we are given a definition of faith: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Heb.11:11)
- The idea of “seeing is believing” (think of the story of the apostle Thomas) vs. faith.
 - Jesus told Thomas that he believes because he can see Him, but blessed are they that believe who do not see!
- The 16 names in this passage are examples of faith! They believed without seeing, and followed without knowing where they were going!
- The key to this chapter is in verse 6: “Without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists, and that he rewards those who seek him.” (Heb 11:6) Faith begins with an awareness of God!
 - Science and faith: science addresses the *how* question, faith answers the *why*! You cannot please God without *trust*...this leads to assurance.
- Faith is not performing a certain action to win favor from God. Faith in God is its own reward...regardless if this leads to a crown or a cross. Faith can be costly!
- Blessings of faithfulness (see Hebrews 11:33-35). In the following verses, we see a shift from blessings for faith to what faith can cost you! Risk living a life of faith!
- When you are anchored in Christ, you are an “iron woman/man”. You are an example that understands that faith and obedience is its own reward. There is nothing better in life than pleasing God, regardless of who does or doesn’t approve. When you get this, you receive an assurance that enables you to persevere in life, death and life beyond death!

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- How is faith defined in the first few verses of chapter 11? Do we believe because faith makes logical sense? Does faith need to make sense to us? Why?
- What is one essential aspect of our faith in God?
- What do we learn about the faith of the Old Testament saints in these verses?
- In what ways can we *provoke* our neighbor into encouragement in their faith?
- Whose shoulders do you “stand upon” in your faith life? How were they a role model to you?
- What does Rev. Dr. Chappell mean by “faith in God is its own reward”?

