

Faith Factor – Pt. 1

“And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and **gained what was promised**; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.” -Hebrews 11:32-34 NIV

- I. Intro
 - A. New series based on last week's message
 - B. Principle—Priority—Person—Process
 - C. Priority of faith
 - a. Paul concerned about the **FAITH** of the Thessalonian church (1 Thes. 3:5)
 - b. Paul longed to impart a spiritual gift to the Romans so their **FAITH** could be encouraged (Rom. 1:11-12)
 - c. He preached a gospel that revealed “a righteousness from God that was **BY FAITH** from first to last.” (Rom. 1:17)
 - d. Paul said “God's work” is **BY FAITH** (1 Tim. 1:4)
 - e. At the end of his life he declared to Timothy that he had “kept the **FAITH**”
 - D. There's a whole chapter in the New Testament devoted to the idea and importance of **FAITH**...
 - E. Question: If faith is so critical, how's *your* faith?

WHAT IS GIFTED BY GOD MUST BE GUARDED AND GROWN BY US!

II. More About Faith...

“But you, man of God, flee from all this, and **PURSUE** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. **Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called** when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

1 Timothy 6:11-12 NIV

- A. **Faith is something to be PURSUED—its active not passive.**
- B. “THE” FAITH refers to all that encompasses the gospel message including the “pattern of sound teaching” Paul mentions in 2 Timothy 1:13.
- C. “THE” FAITH includes all the attributes/virtues listed in 1 Timothy 6:11-12
- D. Read: Hebrews 11:1-7
 - a. ¹“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ²For by **IT** (FAITH) the elders obtained a good testimony. ³By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, **so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.**

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- b. ⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. ⁵By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God."
- c. ⁶And 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.
- d. ⁷**By faith Noah**, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear **built** an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith." Hebrews 11:1-7 NIV

III. Digesting Hebrews 11:1-7

- A. ¹"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ²For by **IT** (FAITH) the elders obtained a good testimony. ³By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, **so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.**
 - a. **By it the elders OBTAINED** a good testimony
 - 1. The elders = Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses...
 - 2. Promise not automatic
 - 3. Israelites received the same message but it didn't profit them because they didn't combine it with faith (Heb 4:2)
 - b. **By faith we understand...**NOT by understanding we have faith.
 - 1. God formed our world by HIS WORD—the power of our voice!
 - 2. "FAITH comes by hearing and hearing BY THE WORD OF GOD." (Rom. 10:17)
 - 3. If we're going to guard our faith we need to manage our HEARING ENVIRONMENT
 - a. Milk Illustration: You've got to "keep the faith" in order for it to keep you.
 - b. Environment matters! (Why we put water in the freezer)
 - 4. Abraham not challenged to "look about" by faith until Lot left.
 - 5. Lot's name means "veil" = representation of our flesh
 - 6. We'll never grow in faith without confronting our flesh.
 - 7. Our flesh fights faith
 - c. **Things which are seen** made by the unseen
 - 1. Faith is sight in the spiritual realm
 - 2. Unseen realm more powerful than the seen realm

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- B. ⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. ⁵By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God."
1. Abel's sacrifice represents putting God first. He brought the "first fruits"
 2. Putting God first is faith...if it's not first its not faith
 3. Cain brought his offering "in the course of time".
 4. Enoch – walked with God = secret of faith!
- C. ⁶And 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.
- D. ⁷**By faith Noah**, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear **built** an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith." Hebrews 11:1-7 NIV
- a. By faith Noah...BUILT
 - b. Building takes time
 1. Need to develop longterm faith for our grandkids, grandkids.
 2. Faith outlasts us
 3. We love breakthroughs but they happen suddenly
 4. Preparation for the breakthrough takes time and is the real test of faith
 5. Noah preached "it's gonna rain" for 120 years
 6. He also prepared for 120 years
 7. Rabbi oral tradition – He planted the trees he needed to build the ark
 - c. Noah had to build "according to the instructions"
 - d. "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." -Matthew 7:24-27
 - e. The two people involved in this story (wise and foolish) had two things in common
 1. They both received instructions
 2. They both experienced a storm
 3. NOTE: Your faith will not keep you FROM the storms but it will keep you IN them.

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