

FAITH – What it IS and DOES!!

Sunday, 8/11 – 9:00 † Monday, 8/12 – 7 PM

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost / Eighth Sunday after Trinity – 2019

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Today we are beginning a short three-week series on the letter to the [Hebrews, chapters 11 and 12](#). However, *before we jump in at chapter 11, what is written in [chapters 1-10](#)?* This is a nice summary from the Thursday lectionary class taught by Harold:

- 1-2 display Christ as Son of God and Son of Man.
- 3-4 warn of the dangers of unbelief.
- 5-10 explore the power of Christ's priesthood.

Today, in [chapter 11](#), we focus on **faith** – what it is and does!!

- Faith – what it IS:** ¹ **Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.** // What does that mean? The “*things hoped for*” are talking about *God's yet-to-be-fulfilled promises*, for example, Jesus' return and eternity in God's glorious presence for all who trust in Jesus; **faith** is being *SURE* that God will eventually fulfill those promises! ² **For by [faith] the people of old received their commendation [approval].** // What follows in this chapter are examples of people from long ago who lived by **faith**; God gave them their **faith** – *in the Promised Messiah and in His other promises*; then those people lived by that **faith**, *AND that living is recorded in the Bible!*
- Faith – what it DOES:**
 - ³ **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 [see Gen. Ch. 1].

// While many are embracing the foolish guesswork of evolutionists, those with **faith** know that God *created out of nothing* and *continues to sustain the universe!*

- b. ⁴ **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** [see Gen. 4:3-5]. **And through his **faith**, though he died, he still speaks.** // Both Cain and Abel sacrificed to God, but Abel's sacrifice was accepted because he *had **faith** in the Promised Messiah and offered his sacrifice from his **faith**.*
- c. ⁵ **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** [approved] **as having pleased God** [see Gen. 5:22-24]. // By God's grace Enoch believed in the Promised Messiah AND, *from that **faith**, lived by God's Word, so God chose to take him to heaven without experiencing death!* ⁶ **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.** // Enoch is an example of someone who – *by God's grace* – had faith and drew near to God, and then, *knowing that God rewards people who seek Him and please Him*, Enoch did those things and was taken to heaven without dying!
- d. ⁷ **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**** [see Gen. 6:8 – 9:29].

// Because of Noah's God-given and God-sustained **faith**, God warned him about the flood; then – *over a period of decades*¹ – Noah constructed a HUGE ark on dry ground! As people mocked Noah, *so unbelievers mock us for believing in Jesus' saving work and return!*

- e. ⁸ **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** [see Gen. 12:1-4]. ⁹ **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.** ¹⁰ **For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.**

// Even though it didn't make sense, when God called Abraham to go, *he went "not knowing where he was going"; that is living by **faith**!* Abraham left his father's house to live in tents, and later his son and grandsons did the same. But they all believed that God would keep His promise for this life – *the earthly Promised Land, Canaan*, and for eternity – *with God in heaven!*

- f. ¹¹ **By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.** ¹² **Therefore from one man [Abraham], 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** [see Gen. 18:9-15]. // In Genesis 12 God promised Abraham that he would have many descendants, *but then 24 years passed by... and Abraham at 99 and Sarah at 89 had not yet had a child.* Even though most would have long given up, *by God's*

¹ <https://answersingenesis.org/bible-timeline/how-long-did-it-take-for-noah-to-build-the-ark/>

grace Sarah believed and conceived! Paul wrote these words about Abraham: “In hope against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations... And without becoming weak in **faith** he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in **faith**, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform” (Rom. 4:18-21 NAS). // ¹³ [Many of the descendants of Abraham] **...died in **faith**, not having received the things promised** [*the land of Canaan— pointing to heaven, and the Promised Messiah*], **but having seen them and greeted them from afar** [*with the eyes of **faith***], and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out [*when Abraham left his father's house*], they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ 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. // This is the attitude of **faith**: “We do not look at the things that are seen but at the things that are not seen, for what we see lasts only a while, but what we do not see lasts forever” (2Co. 4:18 NET).

This Week's Challenge: Regarding WHATEVER God has told us in His Word, let us – by His grace – BELIEVE it and ACT UPON it!!

Let Us Pray: Dear Father in heaven, please keep us believing in Jesus and taking action according to our **faith**!

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Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230