

## Message Summary

The great “hall of faith” (Heb. 11) begins with a bold claim: without faith it is impossible to please God (v. 6). Faith is essential for obedience in all aspects of life, in our worship, walks, and works alike. God desires us, moment by moment, to draw near to Him through faith like a baby trustingly resting on a parent’s chest. We can’t save ourselves. God can, will, and does save us through faith in Christ. Thus, the recurring Scriptural commands to not be afraid, to draw near to God, to seek Him by faith, find their fulfillment in this great statement of faith’s central role in pleasing our heavenly Father. Faith is assurance, a settled disposition of certainty in the God who made and redeemed us. Faith is also conviction of the things unseen by human eyes.

The chapter begins by securing God’s right to rule over the heavens and earth, for he created them by His very word (v. 3; cf. Gen. 1-2). Within that creation, Hebrews’ author cites three more examples from Genesis of the faith the Father seeks: Abel’s faith-filled worship (v. 4), Enoch’s faith-filled walk (v. 5), and Noah’s faith-filled work (v. 7). Cain and Abel, Adam and Eve’s first sons (Gen. 4), both worshipped, sacrificed, and gave offerings to the Lord. Abel offered what the Lord commanded: the firstfruit of the flock. God accepted Abel and his offering by faith. But Cain, in his unbelief, went only through religious motions, giving God the wrong offering from unbelief. Cain was enraged at God’s rejection, and slaughtered his brother out of jealousy and anger. His blood foreshadowed the greater blood shed by Christ on behalf of our own sins.

Enoch walked as one gazing at God, the only one that matters. Just as God was pleased to take Cain’s worship by faith, God took Enoch in his walk by faith, removing him from the natural and physical death (Gen. 5:21-24). Only those whose hearts likewise crave to walk with God by faith will God accept and be pleased by. Noah worked as a blameless man for 120 years, without seeing any direct impact of his work (Gen. 6:9-8:22). It had never rained, and those around him mocked Noah as one wasting his time with delusions. Nevertheless, Noah walked in reverential fear of God rather than man, and his work by faith saved him and his household. His brother in faith, Habakkuk, who rejoiced in the Lord and not life’s circumstances (cf. Hab. 3:16-19), would later join Noah in teaching God’s people to walk by faith. What’s more, Noah pointed forward to a greater Noah, whose resurrection offered a place of safety and rest not by our works but His.

## WHY IT MATTERS

### *Digging Deeper*

Why is faith such an essential component to please God (v. 6)? Why is it completely impossible to please God without it?

What sorts of realities is Hebrews referring to when it envisages faith as “the conviction of things not seen” (v. 1)? How does faith open our eyes to these realities?

Why does Heb. 11 start with God’s creation of the world (v. 3)? How does this set the context for the rest of the chapter?

What does faith provide before God that our works never could (cf. Rm. 5:1-11; Gal. 2:15-21; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 Pt. 1:3-9)? How does this truly saving faith in turn impact the works of our lives, especially our worship, walk, and work?

## NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

### *Group Discussion & Application*

*Use the following questions to examine what the sermon and its text mean, to apply the Word to your life, and to guide how you pray. Please note that you don't have to use all of the questions. These are just options (along with the digging deeper section) to help you frame the family/small group discussion.*

1. Do you truly have faith in God, or, like Cain, are you just going through religious motions (cf. Gen. 4:1-7)?
2. Are you living by the faith you profess, or are your eyes more drawn to feelings, fears, circumstances, or emotions?
3. Are you faithfully asking God for more faith (cf. Mk. 9:24), or for more worldly things or favorable circumstances?
4. Are you prone to anger toward God and/or those around you? Are you finding acceptance in God through faith, or are you more prone to look for acceptance by worldly virtues?
5. Do you walk in the fear of people rather than God (Prov. 25:29)?
6. Do you see your vocation as an opportunity to express your faith in God? How can you use your vocation this week to live in faith as Noah did?

## **Prayer**

- Pray for Our Church:
  - Thank God for Christ's faithfulness as the greater Abel, whose blood covers our sin, and the greater Noah, whose work provides eternal refuge for those with faith.
  - Pray that the Lord would give our church great faith, and great endurance in asking God for more faith. Pray that the Lord would protect us from
- Pray for Our Community:
  - Pray that people in the Gadsden area would have real faith in Christ, and not religious motions that imitate faith
  - Pray that the Lord draw the people of Gadsden's hearts to the things unseen, and remove the distractions of this present world.
- Pray for Our World:
  - Pray for Sunday night prayer meetings, that our prayer through the book of Acts would use our prayers for gospel advancement, locally and abroad. Pray also that this would be a time of equipping and calling for more laborers to the harvest field (Acts 13:1-3)
  - Pray for Greg Johnson and his family in the Central Asia Project. Pray specifically that the Lord would, by 2025, establish a church in every town in Kyrgyzstan of more than 10,000 people, and from these plant churches in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. Pray also that the Lord would open doors to push south towards Iran and Afghanistan, "*where Christ has not been named*" (Rm. 15:20).

Recommended Resources:

David Powlison, *Good and Angry* (New Growth Press, 2016)