

Heb 11:1-6

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

3 By 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.

4 By 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.

5 By 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. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 11 is commonly known as the faith chapter.

**We follow Jesus by faith.**

Heb 11:1

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

**The Greek word for substance is "hypostasis"**

- with one of the meanings being "title deed."

Faith is the title deed to God's promises.

And faith treats God's future promises as present realities.

**OT believers demonstrated their faith**

- before God's promises were fulfilled.

**NT believers during the time of Christ believed**

- since they witnessed Christ and His works.

How do we develop faith today?

Rom 10:17

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

**We develop faith primarily thru the message,** thru the gospel of Christ and thru the testimony of eye-witness accounts.

**In fact, John said in chapter 20 that the many signs in the gospel**

- were written so that you may believe
- that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
- and that believing you may have life in His name.

### The Holy Spirit plays a role in us coming to belief

- and to a saving knowledge of God.

1 Cor 2:12-14

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

As we learn the things of the Spirit, our faith is strengthened.

John 16:8

8 And when He (Holy Spirit) has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

### It's the Spirit of God working in the heart of the person

- which awakens them to their sin and
- shows them their need for righteousness.

Notice the progression of faith in the believer, it goes from worship, to walking, to working.

### With that said, I believe God placed these names in order

- or as a pattern for us to learn.

We'll see in verse 4 that it was by faith that Abel offered.

- That's his worship.

In verse 5 we'll see that Enoch walked with God.

### Then as we'll see, Noah moved with godly fear.

- He worked. His faith became action.

So, you first come to God in worship, thankful to Him for saving you.

Then you begin your journey with God by walking with Him.

Then He sends you out to work for His kingdom by faith!

Heb 11:4

4 By 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.

Abel (a shepherd with flocks)

Cain (a farmer growing vegetables)

**They were raised in the same family,** same surroundings, but different in many ways.

**This verse doesn't say much about Cain,**

- but we can surmise from it
- that it serves as a warning to believers
- about drifting into outward religion without inward trust.

**Faith begins by how we approach God.**

- It's one thing to acknowledge that He exists,
- but it's another to trust and obey Him.

**Cain had an opportunity to repent but he chose not to.**

Gen 4:6-7

6 So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

**God asked Cain two questions,** Why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen?

God left room for Cain to repent.

**He didn't close the door on him.**

- "If you do well, will you not be accepted?"

**God was giving him a chance and a warning**

- before his sin became worse.

**He then told Cain,** if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.

**Cain had a choice, and he's told,** "but you should rule over it."

**This says to me that sin was ready to control Cain,**

- and it was his responsibility to resist it.

**Each individual has the same decision to make,**

## 4

- do I rule over it
- or does it rule over me.

In verse 4 of Hebrews, it's implied that Abel acted by faith whereas Cain did not.

“by faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.”

**In Gen 4, Abel trusted God's way rather than his own way**

- by bringing the very best of his flock.

**The first born represented priority,**

- honor and trust in God's provision.

**By offering the fat portions of the animal,**

- he was offering the richest
- and best parts of the animal.

**The text in Gen 4:3 does not say Cain brought the *firstfruits*, only that he brought “an offering of the fruit of the ground.”**

**Notice what is said** regarding the offering and the person.

Gen 4:4b

4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

Notice the order. First the person then the offering.

**Verse 4 does not say that the Lord loved the offering and respected Abel,**

- no, He respected Abel and his offering.

**The problem wasn't the offering itself, but the heart attitude of Cain.**

Genesis tells us what happened and Hebrews tells us why it happened.

Hebrews says it was by faith that Abel offered.

**How are you approaching God, is it thru humility,**

- with an attitude of worship,
- with a heart trusting God.

**Are you bringing your very best to God**

- or are you giving Him the left overs.

**Abel obtained witness that he was righteous. Abel was right with God**

- and not because of the sacrifice he brought,
- but it was the faith behind the offering.

Notice the first person mentioned was martyred, he was killed.

**Abel was killed for his faith,** yet we're told to live a life of faith.

**There were a lot of firsts with Abel,**

- and being the first martyr is one.

**He was murdered because of his worship towards God**

- and the jealousy in his brother's heart.

Matt 23:29-34

29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'

31 "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. 33 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? 34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,

**Jesus was pronouncing judgment on the religious leaders of Israel,**

- namely the scribes and Pharisees,

Jesus called them hypocrites.

**See, they claimed to honor God and the prophets**

- but they continued in the same pattern as
- their ancestors in rejecting and killing God's messengers.

Matt 23:35

35 that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

**He says,** from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah.

**Abel represents the first righteous person murdered in scripture** and Zechariah represents the last person murdered according to 2<sup>nd</sup> Chron 24 which is the last book of the Hebrew scriptures.

So Jesus was giving them the entire history of them persecuting God's righteous people.

**There is a price to pay when you're a person of faith.**

- It may not come in the form of death,
- but ridicule and mocking
- are certainly not out of the picture.

Verse 4 closes by reminding us that although Abel was dead, his faith still speaks out.

How is your faith speaking out?

**Will your commitment of faithful prayers reach the hearts of your loved ones**

- after you're gone or are they non-existent?

James 5:16

16 The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

**When we pray, and our prayers are aligned with God's will,**

- they will have power which produces results.

**Elijah prayed and fire came down from heaven,**

- then all of the prophets of Baal were seized.

Moses, David and Daniel all prayed.

**It was their faithful prayers that changed circumstances**

- and nations were influenced.

Corrie Ten Boom is a great example of someone's prayers making a lasting impact.

Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

**Worship begins with a trust in God.**

**I believe that is why Abel is mentioned first in the list**

- because he demonstrated the foundational principle
- that worship acceptable to God begins with faith.

Heb 11:5-6

5 By 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. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

**Enoch is found in Genesis 5:21-24.**

**Interestingly, Enoch is one of the few people in the Scripture who did not experience death.**

- The scriptures say that it is appointed once
- for man to die then the judgment.

There will be a group of people in the future that will never taste death.

1 Cor 15:51-52

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

Enoch is known as a man who walked with God.

**Genesis 5 says Enoch walked with God 300 years.**

- This means that Enoch had a close relationship to God.
- It would mean he was obedient to God.

**Notice the testimony Enoch had, “that he pleased God.”**

Gen 6:5

5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

**Enoch lived several generations before the flood but during a time when wickedness was increasing:**

- Moral corruption was becoming worse.

Jesus said that the last days would be similar to those days of Noah.

**Enoch lived during a time when wickedness was great,**

- and still, he walked with God.

He didn't allow himself to fall into the same trap of sin as others in his community.

And he spoke prophetically about God's coming judgment.

Jude 14-15

14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

**Gen 6:13 gives us an indication of the times Enoch lived in as well as Noah.**

Gen 6:13

13 And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

**In the book of Amos 3 we see a series of rhetorical questions**

- with each showing that
- events don't happen without cause.

Amos 3:4-5

4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey?

Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing?

5 Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no trap for it?

Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all?

**In verse 3 Amos asked,**

Amos 3:3

3 Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

**God had entered a covenant relationship with Israel,**

- but Israel broke the covenant.

**When a covenant is broken the relationship is broken.**

**Because Enoch understood that God sets the rules and Enoch walked with God,**

- then his life aligned with God's will.

**The Hebrew word for walking in Genesis**

- carries the idea of a continuous way of living,
- not simply for the moment.

**We'll see the phrase in the bible, "walked before God."**

In Gen 17 the Lord told Abram, "walk before me and be blameless."

**That carries the idea of living under God's careful watch whereas,**

- walk with God is more intimate
- meaning companionship and a close relationship.

When Jesus returns for the church, will He find faith on the earth. Luke 18.

Will you be found faithful when the Lord returns or when He takes you home?

**Are you pleasing God as verse 5 says Enoch did.**

- So, in Genesis he walked with God,

- in Hebrews he pleased God
- and Jude he prophesied.

Heb 11:6

6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

It pleases God when we trust Him by placing our faith in Him.

Luke 16:10

10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

**Things we may consider to be small might be something like honesty,**

- commitment, kindness, daily obedience, faithful service.
- Are we faithful in those areas?

Think of this, **David carefully cared for his sheep before becoming king.**

**Joseph was faithful as a servant and as a prisoner**

- prior to being placed over the affairs of Egypt.

**Moses tended sheep** for 40 years before leading Israel.

**Faithfulness in ordinary people eventually led to them**

- becoming extraordinary.

**God doesn't measure our faithfulness by the size of the task at hand,**

- but by our trust and obedience.

**Heb 6b,** "he who comes to God must believe that He is,"

Believe He is what!

**All that the scriptures say He is. He is God, He is the creator,**

- He has no beginning and no end.

**Psa 90:2 says** He is from everlasting to everlasting.

God is Spirit therefore we must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

**God is Holy, Isa 6:3, He is completely separate from sin.**

- John 4:8 says God is love, that's His nature.
- Deut 32:4 says He is righteous.

**He has all authority and reveals Himself fully in Jesus, Heb 1:3.**

Heb 1:3

3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

God clearly reveals Himself when Moses was called to lead Israel out of Egypt

Ex 3:13-14

13 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."

**Moses was asking, "who are you?"**

- God's response, "I AM WHO I AM"

**John 8:58, "Before Abraham was, I AM"**

When Jesus asked the question, who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?

Some said, John the Baptist, Elija, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

**Then Jesus made it personal, "But who do you say that I am?"**