



RESILIENT

SESSION 1-5



RESILIENT

SESSION 1

READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

DISCUSS

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.

RESILIENT

BIG IDEA

We know that in Sunday’s passage (Acts 12:1-7), the chains that came off of Peter were literal chains. But in life—there are times that we are in bondage to spiritual chains, emotional chains; chains of pride, or self-imposed chains.

OPENING

Today’s study will look at two examples from scripture that involve being chained and shackled. One has a bleak outcome and the other crescendos in liberation! The first passage that we will look at is Luke 8:26-40. In this passage we see multiple types of ‘chains and shackles’. First, we can see that the man possessed by demons had been physically chained & shackled. Second, we can see that man was spiritually shackled and controlled by demons. And third, we see that the demons are shackled and in chains also...to satan. Have you ever thought about that? Take a few minutes and discuss this as a group?

What jumped out at you from the message this week? What led you to really think or even better, to change your actions?

WATCH

What jumped out at you from the video?

READ

As a group, read Luke 8:26-39. What can we notice about the demon's interaction at the beginning of v28 when they say, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?”

This is a unique interaction. The demons are recognizing that Christ is the son of the Most High God. That is, they are recognizing His authority—His earthly authority to drive them out of the man, and also His eternal authority to make their torment full— on the day of Judgment!

Writers note: Notice v26 specifically mentions where they sailed to and from for that matter. This is very important. As a group, read Matthew 8:29 and compare it to Luke 8:28. There are two important specifics in the demons question to Jesus in Matt 8:29. They ask Him, ‘why have you come here?’, and 2) to torment us before the time? JVN

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Why do the demons ask specifically about Jesus coming 'here' to Gerasenes?

Gergesenes, is a heathen country. The demons thought they were safe here. It is like they are saying, you've already kicked us out of Judea and Samaria—now you are chasing us here, in a heathen country...leave us alone.

What do the demons mean when they say, 'before the time'?

They are asking Jesus, "what have you come here for...why now? It isn't the time for you to condemn us to Hell and torment—we know it's coming—but it isn't now. The time has not yet come for the end of our reign and empire!

What is important about the demons knowing that Jesus will eventually prevail over them?

Answers will vary.

What evidence do we see in Luke 8 and Matthew 8 of the demons being shackled and chained in their service of Satan?

We see this in v28 where the demons beg Jesus not to torment them. Leave us alone. If you drive us out, we might have to return to real prison... Hell!

This passage is worded very intricately, but look closely at Luke 8:31. This passage clearly tells us that the demons DO NOT want to be sent back into the abyss or Hell! They know they are enslaved to satan and they dread it.

Writers note: This is what the demons mean when they beg Jesus not to torment them...They are asking Jesus not to cast them out because nothing would cause them more pain & torment than for Jesus to forbid them to inhabit his creation & remand them back to hell with satan!
JVN

Now the age-old question...Why do the demons ask to be cast into the pigs?

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This is further evidence of the demons being shackled and chained to the nature of being and doing of evil!

If they can no longer haunt the people by possessing humans—they will at the very least hurt them by ruining the food assets on the way out!

Look at v 34-37. What is the ultimate result of the demons being cast into the pigs and running off the steep bank to be drowned?

By doing so, they further turn the people against Christ!

The witnesses saw what happened and instead of rejoicing—they were further enslaved into their sin and they asked Christ to leave!

Ultimately, what is the outcome of this story in Luke 8:26-39?

On the surface, this story is sad. There is only one immediately recognized beneficiary and is it the man who was loosed of the demons!

BUT if you continue reading, v39 shows us GOD's plan. He freed the man possessed by

legion—so that he could become the minister to his own people.

They may have rejected Christ the person, but one wonders if they ever came to know him through the man formerly known as the Gaderen Demon!

DIVE DEEPER

Now, let's turn to Acts 16:16-34. Here we see a very similar story. Read this passage aloud and discuss the similarities as a group.

Who in this passage, most favor the man possessed by legion from Luke 8:26-39?

The possessed slave (spiritual shackles)

Who in this passage, most favor the Gergesene people from Luke 8:26-39?

The slave owners. Concerned only with what the lost—they were further enslaved and shackled in their sin and unbelief. (Shackles of Pride/Selfishness)

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Who in this passage, most favor the herdsmen people from Luke 8:26-39?

The crowd in v22

With all the similarities between Luke 8:26-39 and Acts 16:16-34, there is one main difference—who, in Luke 8:26-39, most resembles the Jailor/Jailor’s family?

It has to be the Gergesene people!--yes, crazy huh?

Although we do not know the spiritual outcome of these people, like we do the Jailor/Jailor’s family—we do see that Jesus intentionally left behind the man rescued from the demons. This man was commissioned as a mouthpiece for God’s Glory and for redemption.

Christ’s aim was to save the Gergesene people!

Closing thought: Both passages from tonight show us the evil power of shackles in our life! But both stories also have something else in common—the theme, whether direct or subtle, of the Power of GOD through Christ to break our chains & shackles. Whether it is the possibility of

salvation for the Gergesene people or the certainty of salvation for the Jailor/Jailor’s family—we love the story of redemption. The hope of liberation for the lost from their slavery and bondage is the heart of the Christ-follower! So the next time you feel enslaved and shackled, reflect on this study and know that even in the bleakest storyline of life—just like with the Gergesene people—God always has a plan for salvation!

LET'S PRAY

Consider the following questions as you pray together as a LifeGroup.

- What chains in your life do you need freedom from?
- What habits might you be putting yourself back in bondage to?
- What is the key to breaking the chains in our lives?
- The next time you feel enslaved and Shackled, reflect on what you have learned today. That, even in the bleakest storyline, just like with the Gergesenes people, God always has a plan the restoration!





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SESSION 2

READ

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DISCUSS

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BIG IDEA

In Romans 8, Paul is talking about two categories of people; those who live according to the flesh and those that live according to the spirit. This passage points out two important things in regards to the Spirit of God: our shared obligation and our assurance, in the Holy Spirit, of our standing with God.

OPENING

As we talk about the missional church and the importance of the Holy Spirit it's worth pointing out about the Holy Spirit that although the doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most certain truths in the Bible, the Holy Spirit is often the most underrated and understated person of the trinity. The Holy Spirit is not merely an influence that comes from God; the Holy Spirit is equal in every way to the Father and to Christ!

What jumped out at you from the message this week? What led you to really think or even better, to change your actions?

What jumped out at you from the video?

WATCH

READ

As a group, read Romans 8:12-17 In this passage, Paul is talking about two categories of people; what are they?

those who live according to the flesh and those that live according to the spirit.

Writers note: This passage points out two important things in regards to the Spirit of God; our shared obligation and our unending assurance.

When we see our shared obligation, what is Paul reminding us?

Paul is reminding us that we are NOT under an obligation to the flesh any longer.

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When Christ died on the cross, what did He do for us?

He released us from our enslavement - our obligation - to the flesh. We are no longer indebted to our sinful desires, the chains that were impossible to break before Christ are now broken!

If Paul says we are no longer in debt to the flesh then, what is the inference here?

It is left for us to infer the positive side of what he is saying; if we are NOT under obligation to the flesh then we should be under obligation to the Spirit. That is where our duty lies. Our obligation lies with the Spirit and what He wants to do in our lives.

When Paul continues in verse 13 he gives a warning; what is the nature of his warning?

Paul warns that if we live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if we live by the Spirit we will live! When Paul talks about death here, he is not talking about physical death. He is talking about spiritual death for the one living according to the flesh.

Writers note: It's important to note that Paul is not saying that spiritual death occurs if you are STRUGGLING with the flesh. He made it very clear in Romans 7 that a struggle with the flesh will be the experience of every believer. And so he is not talking about one who is struggling with the flesh, but rather one who is LIVING according to the flesh - an ongoing, present tense experience. MB

What is the term for putting to death the deeds of the flesh?

The term for what he is talking about here is mortification. Mortification is the process of putting to death our sinful patterns and habits so that we are increasingly free from sin.

What does Paul say will happen to the one that puts to death the deeds of the flesh?

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He says that one who is doing this WILL live, which refers to eternal life.

What should we remember about mortification?

Mortification is not the condition for eternal life, but rather the result. Paul is not saying that we earn eternal life by putting to death the deeds of the body. Putting to death the deeds of the body does not EARN salvation, rather it is that PROOF that we are living according to the Spirit and that we are indeed saved.

So what is our shared obligation in the Spirit?

This ongoing act of mortification is our obligation in the Spirit. The one who is genuinely living according to the Spirit will put to death the deeds of the body. He will work hard at this.

What do we need to remember about mortification?

Mortification is never accomplished by mere self-effort, because Paul says that we do this by the Spirit. We can't just have a "let go and let God" approach to this. Effort must be applied. But it is effort energized by faith and trust in God. It is effort BY THE SPIRIT who empowers us to fight this battle.

Read verses 14-17. What is our assurance that comes from the Spirit of God?

Verse 14 tells us that "All those led by God's Spirit are God's sons."

What does it sound like when we all collectively allow the Spirit of God to lead us?

The missional church!

What is the second assurance that the Spirit of God gives us?

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The assurance that Paul offers to us is the miracle of adoption!

Why is adoption such an important comparison in the new testament?

In the Roman world adoption was a legal act whereby a person could adopt a child giving that child all the rights a natural-born child would have and there is great assurance in knowing that this is our standing with God!

Writers note: Paul says that we can cry out “Abba, Father!” Imagine that! We can approach God as a Father in our prayers! When Jesus prayed in the Garden, this is exactly how he addressed his Father. There is a kind of intimacy that is expressed in this address. This term communicates closeness. Paul is saying that just like Jesus, as the Son of God, addressed the Father with the intimacy of a son, so too do believers because of our adoption as sons of God.
MB

Paul goes on to say in verse 16 “The Spirit Himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children.” Why is this significant?

Paul uses the term, children, instead of son here. Sonship emphasizes our legal standing, but being a CHILD stresses the family relationship.

How does the Spirit testify with our spirit that we are God’s children?

He gives us a kind of inner conviction in the deepest part of us that we are actually in the family of God.

What does it mean to be fellow heirs with Christ?

Because of our adoption, there are things we experience in the present, but there are also things we look forward to in the future. HE is the true heir of all that God has promised (Heb. 1:2), but through our union with him we too are heirs!

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At the end of verse 17, Paul gives a conditional statement; what is it?

That we will be fellow heirs with Christ on the condition that we suffer with Him.

What is Paul's point in this condition?

Paul's point is that if we are truly sons of God, participating in the life of Christ, we WILL suffer with Christ in this world.

Closing thought: Suffering for Christ is an idea woven throughout the New Testament (Phil 1:29; 3:10; 2 Cor. 1:5). Paul is NOT saying that we earn our inheritance through suffering, but rather that sonship and suffering go together - suffering is also part of our inheritance. If we are true children of God, we can expect to suffer. But, suffering for Christ also brings the assurance of the promise of being glorified with Him!

LET'S PRAY

Consider the following questions as you pray together as a LifeGroup.

- Are you making an effort to put to death the sinful deeds of the flesh?
- Are you living out this obligation of life in the Spirit?
- Are you taking assurance of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?





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SESSION 3

READ

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WATCH

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DISCUSS

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.

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BIG IDEA

Sunday's message highlighted the importance of God's Word for our identity, discipleship, and outreach. It is the means by which we are to know our creator! The Word of God, though, elicits many different outcomes within individuals depending on how they receive it.

OPENING

Take a few minutes and discuss as a group some of the ways in which the word of GOD can affect people. did anyone mention that the word of God is confrontational and offensive to those who are living in sin? The word of GOD can bring conviction which leads to repentance or hardness-of-heart, which leads to condemnation. Today's study will look at scripture to learn how the Word of GOD affects people differently.

What jumped out at you from the message this week? What led you to really think or even better, to change your actions?

What jumped out at you from the video?

WATCH

READ

As a group, read Matt.13:1-9. What is the purpose of a sower? How does he use the seed?

The sower's job is to scatter/throw the seed.

Is there anything that lies outside the scope of the sower's job? What can he not do?

The sower cannot "make" the seed grow.

READ

For a quick parallel, read as a group, 1 Cor. 3:6-7. How does this passage drive us to have faith?

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Because we are not responsible for the growth—only the sowing. We are to sow faithfully and pray faithfully but we do not possess the ability to ‘cause/ or ‘create’ growth.

To some people, this truth is liberating to others is depressing. How does 1 Cor. 3:5-6 make you feel about sharing our faith?

The fact that we cannot ‘cause’ or ‘create’ growth should take all of the pressure off. Whether someone hears the Gospel and embraces it or rejects it—we are responsible for neither—that is GOD’s job!

What are the types of seed/growth that we see in Matthew 13 and what is the result for each?

- Along the path > birds at it
- Rocky ground > little soil, scorched by sun
- Thorns > thorns grew up a choked them
- Good soil > reproduction to 30, 60, 100 fold

Now turn to and read Matt. 13:18-23. What does each type of seed mean?

- Along the path > hearing not understanding, satan snatches away
- Rocky ground > hears and receives with joy, no roots, grows quickly but folds and falls away
- Thorns > hears the word, but cares about the world choke out the word
- Good soil > reproduction

DIVE DEEPER

Turn to Mark 8:31-38, describe some of the things that this passage ascribes to believers.

- Setting mind on things of GOD
- Deny self, take up cross, follow Christ
- Lose life for Christ’s sake

These characteristics are important because of what Jesus said in v31. What makes this verse so important?

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This is where Jesus tells them that they can expect as followers of CHRIST, suffering and rejection.

Writers note: look closely at v32. Jesus said this plainly, meaning, not in parable—so Peter knew exactly what Jesus was saying. So, why was Peter rebuking Jesus—telling Him that He could not die. Many think it was because Peter loved Jesus so much that he was saying, you are too important...too special to suffer/die. This can't happen to you. But this is not the case. Jesus had just told the disciples plainly that he was going to suffer, be rejected and die—and that is the same thing that they, as His followers can expect. JVN

So what is Peter really doing when he rebukes Jesus?

Peter is being selfish! He is trying to talk Jesus out of this because he knows and understands what Jesus just said, if it happens to me, it'll happen to you also, and Peter doesn't want to suffer

Of course we know that Peter had a change of heart—but had he not and this been is final interaction with Jesus, According to Matt.

13:18-23, what type of seed would Peter have been?

Had Peter not gone on to spiritual maturity and growth—he would have been a seed amongst the thorns. In this passage, Peter was caring more about himself and the world, than Christ.

READ

Now turn to Phil 3:7-9. Let's contrast Peter with Paul. It is obvious from this passage that Paul valued GOD above everything else. Above any other type of gain—Paul valued knowing CHRIST. He was willing to suffer and have nothing to know Jesus. What about Paul, in this passage stands out to you the most?

Answers will vary. Obviously, Paul would have been the type of seed that reproduced and multiplied!

Finally, turn to 2 Tim. 4:9. Compare Demas, in this passage, to Paul from Phil 3:7-9. Why did Demas leave Paul?

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He was ‘in love with this present world”

What type of seed do you think Demas was?

Demas was more than likely a seed among thorns, or maybe, he could be a seed among the rocky road. Either way, he abandoned Paul in exchange for the pleasures of the world.

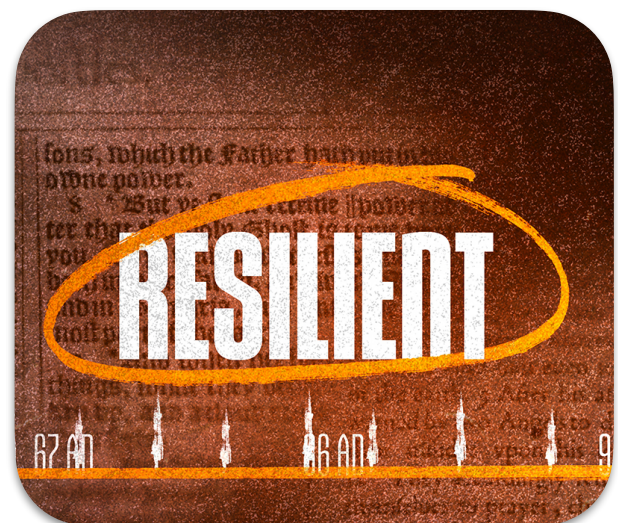
Closing thought: We looked at three different examples for today’s study. I was strategic in picking these verses because, while we are not always defined by our most recent actions, they do reveal a great deal about us. And, at one time or another, I feel that we all act like Peter, like Demas, or like Paul, sometimes. Here is the takeaway—at one point, Peter looked like a seed among the thorns—but look what he turned into! The difference between Peter and Demas is that Peter let his knowledge of Christ lead him to repentance—whereas Demas walked away with a hardened heart toward the Gospel and toward God’s word. So, if you feel like you are being a Demas, you are only a repentant heart and

embracing of God’s Word from becoming a Peter or Paul!

LET'S PRAY

Consider the following questions as you pray together as a LifeGroup.

- In what ways do we act like Peter?
- In what ways do we act like Demas?
- In what ways do we act like Paul?
- The difference between Peter and Demas is that Peter let his knowledge of Christ lead him to repentance—whereas Demas walked away with a hardened heart toward the Gospel and toward God’s word. So, if you feel like you are being a Demas, you are only a repentant heart and embracing of God’s Word from becoming a Peter or Paul! God’s word is essential for your identity, your discipleship, and outreach!





RESILIENT

SESSION 4

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Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

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DISCUSS

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RESILIENT

BIG IDEA

Daniel chapter 6 is possibly the most loved story in the Old Testament. Daniel's story is such a great story - you've got an old godly man, hungry powerful worldly leaders, corrupt jealous officials, supernatural preservation and the bad guys getting what they deserve!

OPENING

To give a little context, in the previous chapter, we saw the end of the Babylonian empire. In a single day, the Medes and Persians took the city and killed the Babylonian king, Darius the Mede had been appointed by King Cyrus over Babylon and Daniel is now an old man somewhere in his early 80's. But, as we shall see, Daniel is still an extraordinary man... a fact that will raise the envy and jealousy levels amongst his peers and leave Daniel in a very precarious position with some very hungry lions.

What jumped out at you from the message this week? What led you to really think or even better, to change your actions?

What jumped out at you from the video?

WATCH

READ

As a group, read Daniel 6. As we read this passage what is evident about Daniel?

Daniel was different and the evidence of God's presence in his life was clear for all to see.

What happened to Daniel as he lived in captivity with the Medo-Persians?

Daniel soon found himself in a position of authority within the Medo-Persian kingdom, just as he had been within the Babylonian kingdom.

What happened as Daniel rose in power?

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Through no fault of his own, he soon had some pretty powerful enemies.

What was the plan of Daniel's enemies?

Daniel 6 says 'they could find no charge or corruption, for he was trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was found in him.' So Daniel's enemy's only option was to change the laws of the land to be in opposition to God's law.

Daniel 6:7 says that his enemies passed a law requiring everyone in the kingdom to pray to the king. What did Daniel's enemies hope would happen when they created this law?

They knew they could get him if they put his devotion to God at odds with his devotion to the king and laws of the land. They would force him to have to choose which he would do. To disobey God would ruin his testimony and integrity. To disobey the laws of the land would get him prosecuted as one who would not be fully loyal to the king.

What is ironic about this strategy?

This is not just something that happened 2600 years ago. This is the tactic of today as well where Christian businesses and believers are specifically targeted to try and cause persecution and prosecution.

Upon hearing of the new decree what did Daniel do?

Daniel immediately goes home and purposefully disobeys the new law! Not because he's a rebel... far from it. But God came first in his life and there was nothing that he would let come before his relationship with the Lord.

When Daniel prayed to God what was absent from his prayer?

he doesn't go home to moan at God about his predicament. No, he kneels and gives thanks to God! He also asks God for His help.

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What happened to Daniel when he violated the law of the land?

Even though the king is sorrowful when he realizes that the law that he agreed to is now being used to condemn Daniel, the law of the Medes and Persians must be upheld and thus Daniel was thrown into the lion's den!

What happened to Daniel as he was thrown into the lion's den?

We know that Daniel's faith and God's grace shut the mouths of lions!

What is missing from the Sunday school versions of this story?

the judgement that was carried out upon the men who had falsely accused Daniel. They got to spend a little bit of time with the lions themselves but there were no angels to guard and protect those that didn't fear the Lord!

What is the ultimate result of Daniel's faithfulness?

We see king Darius issued a decree to all peoples that the God of Daniel must be feared and revered! When we are down and are wondering what is happening we must trust that God knows what He is doing if we are asked to endure such a trial it is for a good reason!

LET'S PRAY

Consider the following questions as you pray together as a LifeGroup.

- Is your faithfulness in God causing others to see you differently?
- Are you standing against the culture of this world even if it invites difficulty?
- Are you trusting God to deliver you from your enemies?





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SESSION 5

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DISCUSS

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BIG IDEA

The purpose of today's study is to show us that faith is not always the absence of sin—it is turning to God in the face of sin...and importantly, after sin! Everyone, in Hebrews 11 cataloged as the hero's of our faith—had a sin record—because they are all human and are born in sin.

What jumped out at you from the message this week? What led you to really think or even better, to change your actions?

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READ

As a group, read Read Heb. 11:1-6 What is Heb. 11 known as?

The Faith Chapter. Or the 'Hall of Faith.'

What two (2) distinct things do we see about faith in v1 and v3?

V1 – faith is putting all our Hope in God's promises

V3 – faith is being sure that an invisible God does exist and they He created the universe

What does v2 tell us about how we know these things about faith?

We know them because we have seen them played out in the lives of Old Testament Hero's. These O.T. saints were worthy and approved by God...because of their faith.

V2 uses the word 'commendation' (ESV). This is the greek word martyreo, which is where we get the word "martyr" from. Discuss the relationship between 'faith' and martyrdom.

That one would actually give their life as a statement of faith!

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V4 says that Abel was “commended” as righteous. What made him worthy of this commendation?

The giving of his gifts “by faith”. Abel literally left a legacy of faith...because even though dead...his faith still tells a story! God commended Abel as worthy/righteous by accepting his gifts.

Why does v5 say that Enoch was “taken up”?

Enoch was taken straight to Heaven—without dying! He was taken because he pleased God. He was commended & approved as worthy by God.

Writers note: So we see two men who the bible says pleased God. But how does the author of Hebrews arrive at his premise in v2, that they please God and were commended as worthy through their faith? Nowhere in the original accounts (Gen.4:2-8; Gen.5:21-24) of these stories is “Faith” mentioned. JVN

Look closely at v6 as a group! Summarize what the author of Hebrews is saying here?

The author is saying that God cannot be pleased with us unless we have faith... or that you MUST have faith in order to please God! He is also saying that ‘Faith’ is the prerequisite to drawing near to God and to being rewarded.

So the questions are now...did Abel/Enoch please God? and were Abel/Enoch rewarded?

Both Hebrews and the original passages affirm the answer to these questions as YES! Because God was pleased and because God rewarded them, we can correctly conclude that Abel and Enoch did indeed have faith!

So, from this passage, what is the determining factor in our being presented as a ‘good’ servant?

FAITH

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DIVE DEEPER

As we prepare to conclude, let's look at a few other characters in today's passage. As a group, discuss these characters and what they were known for.

Noah:

- Known for being a righteous and blameless man (Gen 6:9), known for being obedient (Gen. 6:22) and being chosen to build the Ark.
- But Noah was also the man who got drunk and disgraced his family. (Gen. 9:18-28)

Abram/Abraham:

- Was the first to know God personally. He was known as the Father of Faith. In Hebrews 11, the faith chapter, 12 verses are dedicated to Abram/Abraham!
- Yet, Abram/Abraham was also known for being a liar and a coward when he was scared of Pharaoh and told Sarai/Sarah to lie and pretend to be his sister. Basically bartering his wife,

Sarai/Sarah, for his own life (Gen. 12:11-13) which brought a curse on Egypt (Gen. 12:17)

Jacob:

- Chosen by God (Rom. 9:9-13) and Blessed by God (Gen. 32:29)
- But he was also the coward who stole his brother's birthright. He was a con artist, a liar, and a manipulator. (Gen. 25:29-34)

Can you think of any other characters in the bible who were known as heroes of our faith but also had a notorious sin nature?

Answers will vary.

Closing Thought: despite how much we revere and respect the hero's of our faith—there is no pure, sinless legacy—EXCEPT that of Christ. It is in Him, that we must be steadfast and faithful as we encounter the hurdles and obstacles that we will face. It is in Christ and Christ ALONE that we can be saved from our sin through faith.