

im-POSSIBLE – Noah: Unsinkable Faith

5/24/20

Hebrews 11:7 | Genesis 6:9-22

Sunday AM

A few weeks ago, we started a series on **faith** looking into the lives of the great men/women of the faith as remembered in Hebrews 11 in what's affectionately known as the *Hall of Faith*. I believe that thru these lives we're given a unique opportunity to discover the **many different facets of faith** to assist us in living a faith that works/matters.

As we've previously discussed, the dictionary defines faith as a *complete trust/hope in someone/something*, yet the writer of Hebrews says this idea is incomplete as – *Faith is the assurance of things we hope for and the conviction of things we cannot see*. Hebrews 11:1

Thus, faith is when our minds believe/trust in someone or something even though we might not have all of the information to see it – and even though we can't see it, we know it is true and that it'll come thru for us.

YET – The key to faith is the **OBJECT** of our faith – b/c whatever we put our faith in must be **FAITHFUL**.

Example – How many of you remember the I-35 bridge collapse in Minneapolis back in 2007? It was a frightening tragedy where 13 people lost their lives and 145 people were injured when cars, trucks, and even a school bus, plummeted into the Mississippi River when the bridge suddenly collapsed.

Originally built in 1964, for 43 yrs, people put their faith in the I-35 bridge. They put their faith in architects, engineers, and builders who designed/built it. Yet ultimately, it didn't matter b/c the object of their faith was unfaithful and couldn't stand the test of time.

Point – Whatever you put your faith in must be able to stand the test of time - yet there's only ONE who's truly faithful. One who'll always be there and who can stand the test of time – and that's God. Why? B/c only He is the embodiment of faithfulness. **2 Timothy 2:13**

Here's a truthful saying... if we're faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot disown himself.

IOW – God is **incapable** of being unfaithful b/c He is faithful. He's faithful even when we're faithless – b/c being faithful is His very nature/character.

As we continue our study today, we find another **faith hero** who too knew God to be faithful, so he placed his trust in God alone – and his name was **Noah**.

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's in keeping w/ faith. Hebrews 11:7

To understand the unique aspects of Noah's faith, we need to take a deeper dive into his story – **Genesis 6**

This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully w/ God. Noah had (3) sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So, God said to Noah, "I'm going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled w/ violence b/c of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So, make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it w/ pitch inside/out. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high. Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. I am going to bring flood-waters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant w/ you, and you will enter the ark – you and

your sons and your wife and your sons' wives w/ you. You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male/female, to keep them alive w/ you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that's to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them." Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Genesis 6:9-22

So far in our study of faith, Abel has taught us about what it means to have a faith that's **worthy** of the Lord. Then last week, Enoch taught us about having a faith that **walks**. Today we're going to learn from Noah what it means to have **an unsinkable faith that works**.

It's interesting that Noah's name means **rest/comfort** b/c his life seems like he experienced anything but rest and comfort as he spent some 70-100 yrs building an ark and defending his belief in a God who the world had long forgotten and turned their backs on.

Still, Noah's Ark is a familiar story most of us have known since we were kids. We've seen the movies, sang the songs, and even had our nurseries inspired by it. Even today, in KY, you can visit a full-size replica of the ark built to the exact specs God gave to Noah.

But just to make sure, let me give you a quick recap – God had had about all He could take from man's sin and rebellion, so He decided it was time to start over. But b/c Noah was a righteous man, God spared his life by having Noah to build an ark. So, for 70+ yrs Noah cut, sawed, and hammered until he'd built the ark. When the boat was ready, God had Noah to gather his family and all of the animals 2 x 2 into the ark. When everyone was on board, God shut the door and sent a flood to destroy the world. For 40 days/nights, Noah **arked** until God's holy justice was satisfied. Then, when it was over; God caused the waters to subside and the ark to land on dry ground.

Well, there's much to learn from this story; but the real lessons of the ark are about faith/trust in God. Today, I'd like to share (3) faith lessons I see from the ark.

I True Faith is **VICTORIOUS** Over Sin

The Lord saw how great the wickedness of mankind had become on the earth, and how every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that He'd made mankind on the earth, and His heart was deeply troubled. So, He said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created – and w/ them the animals, birds, and creatures that move along the ground – for I regret that I've made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Gen. 6:5-8

From the Fall until Noah, things had gotten pretty rough – sin was so rampant God took note that *the inclinations of the heart were only to do evil...* w/ the exception of a few people including Noah/family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully w/ God. 9

What does this mean? It means that while the world was going to Hell in a handbasket, **Noah resolved in his heart to not go w/ them**. It means, he chose to believe/follow God just like his great, grandfather Enoch, grandfather Methuselah, and father Lamech – so, he chose to walk in their faith footsteps.

It also means that when temptation came calling, while Noah wasn't **sinless**, b/c he chose to trust in God – he sinned less. He chose to live victoriously over sin.

This is what true faith does in the face of temptation and sin – it chooses God more than it chooses the flesh.

James explained it this way in **James 1:13-15** – *When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God can’t be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they’re dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

James is explaining that neither the Devil, nor anyone else, causes us to sin – and no matter how deplorable and sinful the world around us might be – ***all sin is a choice we make to satisfy the desires of our flesh***. James is explaining that one of the primary marks of genuine faith is that when temptation comes (it will) we don’t have to give in; we can choose God instead.

Paul also spoke about this in **1 Corinthians 10:12-13**: *If you think you’re standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to man; yet God is faithful; He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear. Still, when you are tempted, he will also provide a way of escape so that you can endure it.*

Paul is saying that when we place our trust in Christ, He equips us w/ the H.S. and w/ Scripture to overcome the schemes of the enemy. He gives us everything we need to overcome. We just have to use them. Meaning w/ true faith, **we can have victory over sin.**

II Faith is **VALIDATED** by Obedience

Look again at **Hebrews 11:7** – *By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear **built** an ark to save his family.* Also look at **Genesis 6:22** – *Noah **did** everything just as God commanded him.*

IOW – Noah’s faith resulted in obedience to God.

when warned – who warned Noah? **God did!** How did God warn Noah? He **spoke** to Noah. But how did He speak? Audibly? Possibly, but personally, I think God spoke to Noah like He speaks to us today – thru His Spirit, by His Word, thru His providence/people, thru circumstances/miracles – ultimately, God speaks w/ **rhema** (revelation) w/ *an expectation of obedience.*

I also want you to consider what was asked of Noah. God asked Noah to build an ark based on a judgment He was going to levy upon mankind that’d never been seen or heard of before called **rain**. But this rain wasn’t going to happen for a number of yrs into the future after Noah had finished the ark. **Any takers?**

But notice his response – ***Noah in faith obeyed God.***

Point – faith/obedience go hand-in-hand. You can’t have one w/out the other. Faith always trusts/responds w/ active obedience. Even more, when we obey, we’re showing our trust in God. **Here** – Noah believed God and did exactly what God called/convicted him to do.

It reminds me of what Jesus said in **John 14:15** – *If you love (believe in) Me, you will keep My commands.*

Question – **Why was Noah’s obedience so critical?** It’s b/c the ark is a picture/foreshadow of Jesus and salvation. You see, not only did Noah proclaim God’s grace, the ark provides us w/ a **picture** of salvation too.

(1) Many scholars believe cypress wood, one of the hardest, most dense woods in the world, is a picture of the **incorruptibility** of God’s salvation/grace in Jesus.

(2) The ark was completely sealed w/ pitch, which btw is the same Hebrew word for **atonement** in the O.T. Just as the pitch sufficiently covered the ark to get it to safety, so too the blood of Christ us sufficient to save.

(3) The ark had only **ONE** door, just one way into God’s salvation – just as Jesus is the one/only way to salvation/forgiveness by grace thru faith. **John 14:6**

Imagine – what if Noah had said, "You know, a hearty pine would be much easier to find/work w/ than cypress wood. And pitch? That stuff is way too sticky! Surely, we can use w/ something else. And I'm going to at least two doors to get these animals on board."

What if Noah had done all of that? I'll tell you what would've happened. He would've drowned.

Listen – We will too if we abandon God's way for our own way. B/c when God tells us to do something, He doesn't need our suggestions/spin – just our trust and obedience – which is more vital than our ingenuity.

III Faith is **VERIFIED** by a Concern for the Lost

By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that's in keeping w/ faith. 11:7

by faith he condemned the world – this doesn't mean Noah went around condemning people. It means that by his faith/obedience, his life was a **warning** to the people of his day of God's coming judgment. His life was a testimony and message of God's grace. **DYK – 2 Peter 2:5**, called Noah a *preacher of righteousness* referring to his calling to proclaim God's truth as he built the ark – which btw – was/is no easy task. I like what MacArthur said – *Hard jobs are always easier to deal w/ than hard people.*

NTL, Noah was a *preacher of righteousness*. For 70+ yrs, as he built the ark, he shared God's love/grace.

Can you imagine what that was like? Can you imagine how challenging it was for his kids when they went to school or went over to a friend's house?

I can imagine Noah's conversations... "What's that?" "An ark." "What's it for?" "Well, God isn't too happy w/ what's going on in the world and how wicked mankind has become; so, He told me to build this boat b/c He's going to send so much **rain** the world is going to flood and anyone not on this ark is going to die. Will you repent and start living right so you can ride thru the flood w/ me?" We can imagine their response – "Rain... What's rain? Hey everyone, Noah has lost it! He's cuckoo for cocoa Puffs!"

BTW – Humanity's attitude hasn't changed much since Noah? People today are still scoffing at the notion of God and His holiness. Now they say, "Those crazy Christians, for centuries they've been saying God is going to return. Don't pay any attention."

BIG LESSON – Whether the world is listening or not, Christians must continue to warn people while God's patience is in effect. Until then, God has placed us in a wicked/corrupt culture to do what Noah did – gently proclaim the mercy/grace of God. Lovingly/directly explaining the reality of God's patience, that He wishes **no one would perish, but all would come to repentance**. This is the reason Jesus became flesh and gave His life on the cross – to rescue all who'd believe/receive His grace **by the ark of the cross**.

But **DYK** God has always been *patient not wanting anyone to perish but for all to come to repentance* – even in Noah's day. Don't believe me? Watch this...

To fully appreciate the flood, you have to understand just how patient God is w/ humanity. There's a reason He didn't just send a fireball to instantly destroy mankind – it's b/c **He is loving/patient, slow to anger**. And the proof of this is found in **Genesis 5:27**.

Altogether, Methuselah lived a total of 969 years, and then he died. Genesis 5:27

I know what some of you are thinking – you think I've lost my mind. What in the world does this verse have to do w/ the patience/grace of God?

Well... **thru Methuselah's life** we discover that God patiently gave humanity 969 yrs to repent! Now Methuselah was the oldest person in the Bible who lived to a ripe old age of 969 yrs. His father was Enoch, the 1st prophet in the Bible. Apparently, Enoch must've known God was going to send judgment, b/c he gave his son an unusual name, **Methuselah**, which means - *when he is gone, IT will come.*" History proves **IT** was the flood. So, if we fast-forward a few 100 yrs, we find the grandson of Methuselah – Noah!

Watch – In **Genesis 5:26f** – when you add up the ages of Methuselah, his son, Lamech, and the age Noah was when the flood came, you'll see that Methuselah died the **very year** the flood came. Just look at the numbers.

- **187** – Methuselah's age when Lamech was born
- **182** – Lamech's age when Noah was born
- **600** – Noah's age at the time of the flood

These 3 numbers **equal 969** – meaning Methuselah died the same yr the flood occurred.

Point – the reason God allowed this man to live longer than any other human, 969 yrs was to give humanity 969 yrs to repent – and to remind us so that every time we hear **Methuselah's** name, we should be reminded that *God is loving/patience wishing no one would perish but that all would be given a chance to repent.*

What does your faith say about you? How much does your faith effect the details/actions of your life? Thru Noah, we see a faith that regularly experiences victory over temptation/sin – we see a faith that obeys and is moved to action – and we see a faith that has a genuine concern for the lost, unsaved, and carnal – ***we see an unsinkable faith that works.***

What good is it, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds (no activity of obedience)? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother/sister is w/out clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith w/out deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. James 2:14-18

Point – An unsinkable faith is a faith that results in an activity of obedience seeking to please/proclaim God.