

Part 6 – By Faith, Elders Obtained

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

Hebrews 11:11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so *many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

- Knowing that nothing we do can produce anything worthwhile.
- Knowing that faith is the key to the supernatural power of the Almighty.
- Knowing that faith, real faith produces some action in the life of the believer for the glory of the Object of faith.
- As we go through the Hall of Faith and look at the images set before us
 - We want to truly see what their faith produced with the knowledge that the creation cannot create
 - only the Creator is truly producing anything.
 - God is not giving them glory for anything other than trusting Him as He produced unbelievable things.

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- Sara laughed the first time...why?
 - She was past menopause.
 - She had hoped for a child for decades and that hope had been destroyed and replaced with cynicism.
 - This is often my reaction when God expects the impossible in me.
 - I'm so glad that God is patient with a cynical heart.
 - Sara did have a son.
 - She may have started cynical, but God had been too faithful and had been too good to Abraham and her.
 - She allowed the Word of God to break down her walls of doubt and replace it with the Foundation of Faith!
 - Why?
 - God's Word said that she and Abraham would be the start of something WORLD changing!

- So, when the doubt would creep in, she would no doubt return to the promises of God's Word to her.

- I love that when doubts and fears arise in my cynical heart I can run to the Word!
- While the Word never changes, its impact on me does.
- It is alive and powerful and remains as relevant today as it was for Sara.
- When I go to the Living Word, God's Spirit speaks to me where I am...
- and when I laugh at the impossible task, God reminds me that I'm not doing anything but trusting Him and obeying Him...He will produce the fruit.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

- By faith these Elders, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sara, died in faith...
- let's look at that for a moment.
 - Able did die knowing that the way he had chosen to give his life to God was the righteous way made so by God's Word.
 - But wouldn't it be safe to say that Able died to himself first, in faith, in order to go against what his older brother was trying to persuade him to do?
 - Able was persuaded greater by God's Word than Cain's wrath.
 - Enoch never tasted physical death,
 - so is this contradictory to what we just read?
 - Of course not.
 - Enoch died to self in faith that if he was going to know real life it would be by walking as closely to his Creator as possible.
 - He was persuaded that walking with God would be better, so he forsook who he was to walk as Christ would.
 - He did this for 300 years!
 - That's looking down the road isn't it?

- He saw at age 69 that if he trusted God's Word more than Enoch's Will, life would be better.
- Noah received his promise didn't he?
 - So again is this a contradiction?
 - The death that these chose was IN FAITH.
 - Noah had never seen rain, yet he died to all he was to cling to what the Word had instructed him to do as ridiculous as it may have seemed.
- Abraham and Sara too had to die to who they were IN FAITH,
 - trusting that God's Word was far greater than their situation, their feelings, their desires...
 - these all died in faith,
 - knowing that what God promised was not about the now,
 - but about Who was promising...that's faith.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

- Faith is to be so resolute that it removes whatever might cause a detour
- Faith is blind in that it cannot see what is **not IN faith**
- Yet faith is not blind to the presence of what is not IN faith.

- Abraham lived by faith
 - yet even IN faith chose to go another direction when famine was made to be bigger than faith.
 - Faith would have told Abram and Sara to wait on God to provide for them in the middle of what seemed impossible.
 - This detour brought them dread, fear, and turmoil that was far greater than possible hunger.
 - Plus they picked up a hand maid named Hagar that would lead to further poor choices in lack of faith.
 - Abram was so concerned with what was before him he could not see what was before him.

- We might have resolute faith, but we cannot walk so blindly in it that we walk into what is not faith.
- Yes faith will always move us forward when it moves us
 - but sometimes faith will stand us still.
- We cannot be so afraid of the dark, quiet times that we seek for any light that may exist.
- Peace only comes when the Spirit produces it IN Faith.