Lesson 19 – Hebrews 11:1-16 Biblical Examples of Faith – Part 1
English Standard Version (ESV) Bethel Bible Resources

(1) Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

(4) By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

(5) By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.

(7) By faith Noah --- being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen --- in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

(8) By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

(11) By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful who had promised. Therefore, from one man --- and him as good as dead --- were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

(13) These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city.

<u>Think on these things:</u>

1) Define "faith" as explained in v. 1. Of the four terms used --- assurance, hope, conviction, things unseen --- which one comes first? Let's be clear: Christian faith is not some willy-nilly wish for the unseen future, but a settled conviction about God's promises related to the future.

   Definition – **Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. It's not about the now, but believing in and trusting God about things that are future. A settled faith and conviction impacts how we act and think now as we trust God and His promises.**

   What comes first? **Hope is step 1. Our hope is in God and His answers. Faith is our response.**

2) What did "the people of old" receive for showing faith (v. 2)? Did they always receive what they, in faith, sought or prayed for in their lifetimes (v. 13)? How can this truth help people today?

   **The people of old were "commended" by God for demonstrating faith in action. V. 13 says many did NOT receive the 'future' promises in their lifetimes, but that they could see it coming**

**in the distance. It is foolish for people of today to expect all God's prophecies and promises to be fulfilled in our lifetimes. We must be alert, but also patient and steadfast.**

3) According to v. 3, what is one of the first truths we settle about God? Do you believe this? Skim Genesis 1-2; John 1:1-2; and Colossians 1:15-16. How do you deal with skeptics?

**Our world was created by God speaking the Word. Everything seen and unseen exists by the power of God's Word. He is THE Creator. (Also, the Trinity of God is revealed in creation.)**

4) Faith pleases God and allows us to draw near to Him (see Hebrews 10:19-22). Building on question three above, what else must become a conviction of people of faith (v. 6)?

**We must believe that God exists, and that He rewards those who seek Him. Without faith in the existence of God we cannot possibly please Him.**

5) As a child of God, what should be our perspective on life in the here-and-now? Consider these verses in your answer: Hebrews 11:9-10 and 13b-16.

**Earth is not our home. We are strangers and exiles here, desiring and waiting for the better, promised, heavenly city built on the foundation of Christ, whose designer and builder is God.**

6) Hebrews 12:1 begins, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" as it looks back to the heroes of faith listed in chapter 11. Let's look at a few from today's passage. For each person, identify why God "commended" him/her in the 'Hall of Fame' of faith. By faith, Abel (v. 4, Genesis 4:1-10) – **He offered a better, more acceptable sacrifice to God than Cain, and was declared righteous.**

Enoch (v. 5, Genesis 5:18-24) – **He was commended as having pleased God, so God simply "took him" and prevented him from experiencing death.**

Abraham (vs. 8-10, Genesis 12-18) – **He obeyed God and set out for the promised land he was to receive as an inheritance (with Isaac and Jacob), living in tents as in a foreign land.**

Sarah (vs. 11-12, Genesis 17, 21) – **Her faith in God's promise allowed her to conceive and bear a child well beyond child-bearing years, and, through this child, give Abraham descendants too numerous to count.**

7) If the opposite of "God is not ashamed" could be "God is pleased," what is God pleased about regarding people of faith, and what is He doing for them (v. 16)?

**God is pleased that His children desire their heavenly country and home that He promised to them, and He is preparing the city for them.**

People and situations I want to pray for this week: