



August 7, 2022
Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16
“Living On God’s Promise”

1Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2This is what the ancients were commended for.

3By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

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8By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. 9By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. 12And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

13All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

1. Hebrews chapter 11 gives examples of men and women who heard God's promises and knew for certain that they would come true. Their faith shaped their lives. It determined how they dealt with their problems, how they obeyed God's commands, and how they faced death.

Verse 7 "By his faith he condemned the world." Noah believed God's Word about the flood. He put his faith into practice and was no doubt ridiculed by the people of the world. Yet their mockery of his faith only served to condemn them.

2. What is the writer's definition of faith? Contrast this definition with the more common definition: "Faith is trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins." Can you see how the writer's definition fits with the context of this book? Faith is being sure of things we do not see. Christians pursue the hope held out to them in the gospel. We do not have this hope in hand, but we are waiting for it. The writer will now offer examples of other people who were sure of what they did not see and let their unseen hope dictate how they lived their lives
3. When God commanded Abraham to move his household and live in Canaan, he obeyed. Why did his faith make it possible for him to be content to live in tents? (verses 8,9) Abraham was content to live in tents because he knew that the land in which he lived would someday be the permanent home of his descendants.
4. Like Noah's faith, Abraham's faith in the Promised Land was linked to his faith in something more long term. What was that? (verse 10) Abraham's faith extended further into the future and embraced more of God's promises than just the promise of Canaan. Abraham knew that he would have an even more permanent home, a "city with foundations" in which he would live with God eternally. This passage shows clearly that the Old Testament saints believed in the resurrection from the dead and looked forward to heaven.
5. Why was Abraham able to become the father of Isaac and the father of many nations? Because he believed God's promises to be true. Abraham did not reject God's promises but considered him to be faithful. In this sense, Abraham was enabled to become a father of many nations.

6. Abraham could have returned to Haran and lived in comfort with his relatives. Yet he obeyed God and became a tent dweller in Canaan. Do you think he ever wanted to return to Haran? He may have. After all, in Canaan he was living in a rather hostile environment. And a nice home in Haran would have been much more comfortable than a tent in a foreign land. Apply 5. As Christians, of what country are we citizens? Our citizenship is in heaven.
7. What have you left behind in order to be a citizen of heaven? Do you ever long to go back to these things? We have given up this world with its pleasures. Ask the class for specifics. Perhaps we too feel the pull to go along with this world and enjoy its allurements.
8. How does verse 16 help us when we are tempted to return to the spiritual country we left? God has prepared a home for us. If we hold on to our faith, God will not be ashamed of us on the Last Day but will greet us with open arms in the city he has prepared for us.
9. It has been said of Christians that “they are so heavenly minded that they are worthless for anything important on this earth.” How would you answer such a false charge against the Christian faith? Christians who are heavenly minded are the most important people in this world. They are the salt and light of the world, helping lead others to eternal life. Abraham was content to live in tents.
10. Faith is being sure of what we do not see. Such faith shaped the lives of God’s saints. By faith he saw his eternal, permanent home.