



2/11/26

I am attending a biblical counseling conference this week... virtually. In one of the messages, Ed Welch talked about lamenting to the Lord from the Psalms. He said in every case, God has 3 questions for us... 1. What's bothering you? 2. What would you like Me to do about it, something that only I can do? 3. What do you believe about Me? I wonder how you and I would answer those questions. It's really pretty simple, isn't it? And yet it opens up a deep conversation and trust with the Lord.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Hebrews 11:8-16

In Genesis 15:6, when God promised Abram, not only of his future but also of the future of offspring that he didn't yet have, it says, "He believed the LORD Yahweh, and He counted it to him as righteousness." The LORD Yahweh counts our faith as righteousness. I don't easily count my faith as righteousness. I expect more from myself... which is totally ridiculous! Who am I to tell God that my opinions and expectations have more value than HIS??? O Lord, please help ME to live by faith!!!

As I look at Hebrews 11:8-16 where I'm going to read about the faith of Abraham, I need to be reminded of what faith truly means... starting with vs. 1 ~

- Faith is assurance of things hoped for... it is confidence that God will do what He says He will do.*
- Faith is conviction of things not seen... it is being convinced that even what I can't see will happen if God says it will happen (like when God promised Abram to be a nation as numerous as the stars before he even had a child).*
- Vs. 4 shows me that genuine faith follows with genuine worship... and genuine worship IS sacrifice. I give God my best because I worship Him.*
- Vs. 5 shows me that genuine faith seeks to please God... not SELF. Seeking self pleasure is self-sabotage.*

- *Vs. 6 shows me that it is IMPOSSIBLE to please God without faith. How much do I do that doesn't come from faith? Yikes!!!*
- *Vs. 6 also shows me that genuine faith draws near to God and seeks Him.*
- *Vs. 7 shows me that genuine faith follows with obedience.*

So... faith means I am confident in the Lord, convinced without needing to see the whole picture, truly worshipful, seeking to please God, drawing near to God, and seeking God. The beauty of faith in Him leads to His rewards for me. But I actually didn't do anything! I just believe HIM. He is so generous!!!

So what more can I learn about faith through Abraham, Sarah, and others' examples found in Hebrews 11:8-16?

Vs. 8-10 ~ Abraham's faith...

By faith, Abraham obeyed God when He told him to go to a place he would receive as an inheritance, not just for himself, but for all who would come after him. I think it's cool that Hebrews 11 refers to Abraham by the new name God gave him even though his name was Abram when God made the promise and the covenant with him. In Hebrews 11, God speaks of the wholeness of who He made Abraham to be... and He doesn't bring up his failures, only the things he did in faith. That gives me so much hope!!!

Abraham believed God, so he obeyed God and went not even knowing where God was sending him. Wow. That is huge. I so desperately want to have that kind of faith... first of all, the humble surrender to say, "Not MY will, but YOURS be done." I want to WAIT on God and not move until He tells me to move. And then I want to go WITHOUT RESERVATION, even if I don't know the destination!!! How much do I trust Him? O Lord, I want to trust You with everything I have... soul, spirit, mind, heart, strength... completely surrendered to You and to Your will. Please do this work in me and help me to cooperate with You!

God sent Abraham to a land of promise... and Abraham went by faith, living as in a foreign land, knowing that right now he was to live there in a tent. But someday it would belong to his descendants. He lived there with his son, Isaac, who was born to him 25 years after God promised he would have a child. He also lived there with Isaac's son, Jacob... who God eventually gave the name, Israel. Abraham lived 15 years AFTER Jacob was born. Abraham got to see glimpses of what God was going to do. That was a gift from God. Abraham had already believed God. He really only had to let him live to see Isaac. But He gave him glimpses of more. That's awesome. He does the same for me... if I'll just pay attention.

Abraham "was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God." This is NOT about looking forward to the nation of Israel in the Middle East. It's way more! Abraham was looking forward to the city to come (Hebrews 13:14), an eternal city... the NEW Jerusalem that God will bring when He brings the new heaven and the new earth. That's a

faith that goes far beyond the temporary.

2 Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This is the home I wait for BY FAITH... it is the assurance that God will do it, the conviction that I don't have to see it to believe it. My hope is NOT in making this temporary tent and jar of clay that I live in on earth to be like heaven. My hope is for the day when the Lord Jesus Christ will "transform my lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject ALL things to Himself" (Philippians 3:21.) O Lord, please give me the obedient faith of Abraham, to go where You send me even if You don't tell me all the details.

Vs. 11-12 ~ Sarah's faith ~

This is a great example to me of how God focuses on my faith and not my failures. Sarah really messed up. She got impatient when God had not fulfilled His promise after about 10 years, and she decided to take matters into her own hands... it did NOT go well. She gave her servant, Hagar, to Abraham, and they had a baby... Ishmael... He is considered to be the prophet of Islam... and things went bad. And yet, God still blessed Sarah with a baby over 13 years later... Isaac. When God told Abraham she would have a baby (at the age of 90), she laughed. Somewhere in there her laughter turned to belief. I know from 1 Peter 3:5-6 that Sarah put her hope in God.

This is really helpful and encouraging to me... Sarah didn't start out with faith as Abraham did. She learned to trust God over time. He was patient and merciful with her... just as He is with me. I know that MY faith has not been automatic. God has grown it over time, and I know He has a lot more to grow in me... AND He is faithful to do that. I pray that I will be faithful to let Him.

So... from the seed of Abraham who was "as good as dead" and from the barren womb of Sarah came descendants "as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore." Nothing is impossible with God.

Vs. 13-16 ~ All the faith ~

Every person mentioned in Hebrews 11 up until now died in faith... Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah... They did not receive the promise while on earth. They saw glimpses and they "greeted them from afar." They recognized that their life on earth was temporary, and they were "strangers and exiles." And that was fine with them because they trusted the Lord completely.

People who trust the Lord even when they can't see His promises with their physical eyes "make it clear that they are seeking a homeland." They are seeking their eternal home in heaven with Jesus. "If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return." If Abraham had been thinking of Haran, he could have gone back... but he didn't. He trusted the Lord and his reward was great! If Noah had refused to build the ark, he could have stayed... but he didn't. He trusted the Lord and his reward was

great. If Enoch had wanted to stay on the earth rather than to be taken home to heaven, maybe even he could have stayed... but he didn't. He trusted the Lord and his reward was great.

O Lord, I want to trust YOU like that... to be confident in You and to be convinced of who You are, of Your rewards, of Your promises even when I can't see what You're doing. Let my trust be so huge that NOTHING makes me waver. Is it really trust at all if I have to define the circumstances in which I'll trust You? Let me not look back, but only forward to "the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

Let me be like those in this Hall of Faith of Hebrews 11, "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." My desire is to be with You. My desire is to live the words of Paul in Philippians 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." A resolve like that cannot come without unwavering faith. Please make it so in me.