

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

Obeying Begins with Believing

Hebrews 11:7-10

February 17, 2019

Main Point

The lives of Noah and Abraham remind us that faith is expressed in obedience. So, whether we understand the plan, we are always called to obey.

Getting Started

Faith and Obedience go hand-in-hand, but they are not the same things. Faith is a trusting assurance in God's character and promises. Obedience is a believer's life response to God through faith. Faith fuels biblical obedience. Consider this: it is possible to obey God from misguided motives such as pride, fear and manipulation. Any acts of 'obedience' that stem from these misguided motivations do not honor God and actually hurt the cause of Christ. Only faith in God's character and promises fuels biblical obedience. Furthermore, believers who practice biblical obedience obey God first and fast. They don't delay or debate with God when God tells them to do something. Such believers respond quickly and often to God by faith-fueled obedience. Watch for these qualities of biblical obedience in the heroes of the faith portrayed in Hebrews 11. These men and women obeyed God from a heart of genuine faith and obeyed first and fast. May we by the power of the Holy Spirit follow their examples!

Observation

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 11:7-10.

What did Noah do by faith that pleased God? How does verse 7 contrast Noah's faith with the disobedience of the rest of humanity? What does it mean that Noah became an 'heir of the righteousness that comes by faith'?

Noah took seriously God's warning about events he had not yet seen. He obeyed God though he could not see him. Noah followed God's designs to build an ark that would hold his entire family and many animals. All that Noah did to obey God sprang from his faith in God's warning. That's why the writer of Hebrews celebrated Noah's faith in God in this passage.

Sometimes God gives enough light for a person to see the details of God's plan, like He did with Noah. God gave Noah very detailed specifications for the ark, and he told Noah how to build it. Visit www.arkencounter.com to learn more about Noah's ark. This site will introduce you to a life-sized replica of the ark Noah built.

Read verses 8-10. How did Abraham demonstrate his faith in God? How was his experience similar to that of Noah's journey of faith? How was it different from Noah's experience? Abraham left his hometown of Ur. Where did he go, and in what kind of house did he reside? Who went with him? What does the Bible say Abraham looked forward to seeing?

Read the account of God calling Abram in Genesis 12:1-7. What did God tell Abram to do? Who did Abram take with him on his journey of faith? What promises did God give to Abram if he obeyed? How many times did God repeat the promises He gave Abram?

God did not give Abram the same detailed plans that he gave Noah. He commissioned Abram to go and promised to bless him and his descendants. Sometimes God gives us the details of his plans and sometimes he does not. Either way, both Noah and Abraham demonstrated faith in God through their obedience, and they obeyed first and fast.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Read the passages below that use the phrase 'by faith' and answer the following question: 'Why is faith a necessary part of walking with God?'

*For we hold that one is justified **by faith** apart from works of the law.
Romans 3:28*

*Therefore, since we have been justified **by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Romans 5:1*

*For we walk **by faith**, not by sight.
2 Corinthians 5:7*

*For through the Spirit **by faith**, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.
Galatians 5:5*

Spend some time in your group praying for one another. Ask God to strengthen your group's faith in God's character and promises. Ask God to grant repentance from unbelief and doubt. Ask God to empower the group's resolve to obey God first and fast. Ask God to fuel your obedience by biblical faith and not by selfish motives.

Prayer

Dear God, I want to obey You first and fast! Grant me repentance where I need it and give me a desire to obey you, trusting wholeheartedly in your character and promises. May the examples of faithful men and women from Hebrews 11 become my story as I diligently seek You.

Commentary

11:7 A visible example of God's salvation is seen in the life of Noah. The phrase 'condemned the world' means that Noah's righteous obedience to God showed by contrast how sinful the world was to reject Noah's message and God's moral standards. The word 'World' in Hebrew usually signifies all of creation, though here it particularly pictures sinful humanity. Noah is called righteous after he faithfully builds the ark to God's specifications.

11:8-9 God called Abraham to leave Haran and go to Canaan. Abraham obeyed though he did not have details like Noah did. Faith leads to obedience to God's promises and calling. Abraham had faith in what He could not see because he knew God was faithful to provide and guide.

11:10 Abraham is portrayed as yearning for the heavenly city. This great patriarch lived like a stranger in a land he would later receive as his inheritance. So also, would the readers of Hebrews inherit if they, like this forefather, kept looking forward to the heavenly city with foundations, a reference to the heavenly and eternal Jerusalem.

Adapted from www.smallgroup.com.