

June 16, 2019 - Hebrews 11: 4-9 - "The Right Kind of Faith"

Introduction:

Today is Father's Day and I wanted to wish a "Happy Father's Day" to all our dads. Father's Day is a special day to honor and appreciate fathers... This special day did not become a national holiday until 1972, when President Richard Nixon signed the congressional resolution permanently establishing the 3rd Sunday in June as Father's Day.

Fathers have a very important role in the family both biblically and culturally. Dr. James Dobson and Gary Bauer in their book "Children at Risk" articulated the importance of the father's leadership and his role in the children's emotional development and moral education. I quote, "Fathers must be there to tame adolescent boys, to give a young son a sense of what it means to be a man, and to explain why honor and loyalty and fidelity are important. For daughters, a father is a source of love and comforts that can help her avoid surrendering her virtue in a fruitless search for love through premarital sex."

Children living in homes where fathers are absent are far more likely to be expelled from school or drop out. Many develop emotional or behavioral problems, commit suicide, and fall victim to child abuse or neglect. Men who grew up without dads currently represent 70 percent of the prison population serving long-term sentences. We must ask ourselves what impact or lack thereof have we as fathers contribute. We are trying to raise a generation of young people that will change the moral climate of this nation. We need fathers to nurture their sons and daughter to do that.

Fathers, I can say without a doubt that being a good father & a good husband is the most challenging responsibility we can ever face. If you're like most men you want to be a good father even those you may have had a poor or harmful experience with your own father.

We sang the song 'Faith of our Fathers' and we note by kindly words and virtuous life. If you and I are to please God we must be men of faith. Chapter eleven of *Hebrews* is called "Faith's Hall of Fame." Because it contains stories of men and women who pleased God as they lived by faith. Living by faith is a great example to children & there are three requirements for this.

I The Right Worship (11:4)

1. The first person listed in this chapter is Abel, who is an example of right worship. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain (11:4a). Abel was the second son of Adam and Eve. This incident from the lives of Abel and his older brother Cain reveals the right way and wrong way to worship God. God has always sought people who worship Him the right way. Jesus say the Father seeks worshippers in John 4:23... shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

Worshipping God in spirit means we come with the right attitude. In truth means we worship Him according to the truth of His Word (Jn 17:17). His word is truth!

2. Abel offer God a better sacrifice than Cain. Apparently, God had given instructions concerning the proper time, place, and type of sacrifice. Cain brings fruit of the ground and Abel firstlings of his flock (Gen. 4:3-4a). Cain's offering is certainly more pleasant than Abel's. He probably beautifully arranges the fruits and vegetables on the altar. On the other hand, Abel's is not very appealing; it is a bloody, morbid sacrifice. Genesis 4:4b-5a describe how God looked on the two sacrifices as we note: And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

3. God accepts Abel's sacrifice because it involves blood, testifying his sins require the death of a substitute. Abel knows what God requires, and by faith he acts upon it. Cain's offering is totally different. It is more like a "salad bar" and represents Cain's good works. Many good, hard-working, moral people come to worship God, offering their "salad bar" of good works. Cain's problem is in his spirit. Like many people today, in his pride Cain thinks his good works are enough. Isaiah 64:6 declares in Hebrew this truth in graphic language.

4. The writer of Hebrews sums up Abel's offering by writing: Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: *and by it he being dead yet speaketh* (11:4b-d). Though not one of Abel's words is recorded in the Bible, he has been eloquently speaking for millennia about the right way to worship God. He tells us worshipping God requires the right sacrifice for sin. Our sins once separated us from God, but we have been made nigh to Him by the right sacrifice, the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:12-13). To live by faith, the next requirement is the right worship. Next is...

II. The Right Walk (11:5-6)

1. God doesn't want us to have religion; He wants us to have a relationship with Him. A great example of this is Enoch, who was taken to heaven without experiencing death ... because God had translated him (11:5a). The word translated means "taken up" or "transported." God transported Enoch from earth to heaven without him dying because he pleased God (11:5b). Enoch was the father of Methuselah. Enoch's life is summed up twice, using the same words in Genesis 5:22a & 24 whereby it declares: And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him.

Enoch was in constant contact with God through prayer and communion. He may have been the original prayer walker. The most famous phrase in Hebrews eleven connects with the life of Enoch: But without faith it is impossible to please God (11:6a).

2. What kind of faith pleases God? First, it believes God is (11:6b). However, faith that pleases God involves more than just believing He exists. The devils also believe that (Jas. 2:19c). Faith that pleases God also believes He rewards those who seek to walk, or fellowship, with Him by living in harmony with His Word.

III The Right Works (11:7-9)

1. Faith that pleases God reveals itself in obedience-the right works. Perhaps the greatest biblical example of this is the third hero in "Faith's Hall of Fame"-Noah. By faith *Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house (I 1:7ab)*. Noah was just a farmer and had probably never seen a boat. Yet, he obediently worked with reverent fear and in faith constructed a gigantic ark that measured 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet, or four stories, high (Gen. 6:15). Noah built it all exactly according to God's instructions.

2. By faith Noah also condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith (11:7c). Noah preached for 120 years without one convert. This is an excellent example of the fact God doesn't call us to be successful; He calls us to be faithful. However, a life that pleases God always has a faith that reveals itself through works, or actions. James 2:26 expresses this truth to us as well.

There is an old saying: "It is faith alone that saves, but a faith that saves is never alone." Saving faith is always accompanied by good works. Requirements for are: the right worship, the right walk, the right works, and

3. Faith that pleases God waits. The Bible is one story after another of people waiting on God. One great example is Abraham. At seventy-five years of age, by faith when God called him to leave his home and go to a land he should after receive for an inheritance, Abraham obeyed (11:8a; Gen. 12:1). The last two phrases of Hebrews 11:8 record that he went out, not knowing whither he went.

4. Finding God's will for your life is like steering a car. You can't steer a car unless it's moving, and God won't "steer" you until you get moving. Remember, "The way to see far ahead in the will of God is to go as far ahead as you can see." When you get there, God will show you what's next. Do your best and leave the rest to God! Abraham didn't live long enough to receive the land God promised as an inheritance; he was a nomad all his life, dwelling in tabernacles (tents) Abraham never received the Promised Land, he died...

Conclusion:

A time of doubt doesn't have to become a life pattern. Allow God to lead you into a deeper understanding of His reality. Renew your faith.