

June 23, 2019 - Hebrews 11: 10 - 22 - "When Faith is Most Needed"

Introduction:

On Thursday, Nov. 30, 2017 a beautiful rainbow arched over northern Taiwan for nearly nine hours - eight hours and 58 minutes, to be exact, making it the longest lasting rainbow on record. The most spectacular light show observed on earth is displayed by the "Rainbow". This colorful sight stretched through the sky from 6:57 a.m. to 3:55 p.m. it is officially recognized by the Guinness World Records for being the world's longest-lasting rainbow. Somewhere every-day this awesome art of God is on display somewhere. The traditional description of the rainbow is that it is made up of seven colors - red, orange, yellow, green, blue, sapphire, and violet. Actually, the rainbow is a whole continuum of colors from red to violet and even beyond the colors that the eye can see. Sir Isaac Newton discovered that sunlight is made up of the whole range of colors that the eye can detect. The rainbow is an awesome creation of God. But it has greater significant. God set a rainbow as a sign or reminder of His covenant to Noah who we talked about last week. This covenant was for all generations to come (9:12), and God set a rainbow as a sign or reminder of the covenant. I am sure Abraham remember that story past down from generation to generation as He considered the Covenant God made with and his heritage.

His faith was in the God of this wonderful covenant. Without faith it is impossible to please God; but we also need faith as a practical, daily part of our lives. We need great faith at certain times more than others in our lives. What about those times we are required to wait? To wait for that test result, that loan from the bank that job that you really need. God calls us to trust.

I. Trust in the Waiting (11:9-19)

1. Faith that pleases God waits on God. 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 afterwards receive for an inheritance, Abraham obeyed (11:8a; Gen. 12:1). The last two phrases of Hebrews 11:8 records that he went out, not knowing whither he went.

2. 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!**

3. 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) (11:9). So when he came to the land and he stood on Bethel, the center of the land, God said, "Look to the north, the east, the south and the west as far as you can see, Abraham. I am giving you this land unto your seed forever. It's yours." And so he journeyed through the land. He went down to Hebron and back up to the area of Shechem. But he was as a stranger and a pilgrim there. He lived in tents. He didn't

build any cities. He didn't build any homes. He just lived in tents, though the whole land was his by the promise of God. Yet, he dwelt in it as a stranger. Though he never received the Promised Land, Abraham died looking forward to heaven and that heavenly city. He also waited on God's

II. Promise of a great nation

1. He waited not only for the earthly Promised Land but also something else. When his wife Sarah was barren and too old to have children, Abraham believed God was faithful and would keep what He promised.

---12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable (11:11-12).

2. God promised Abraham a land and a son, but after waiting over twenty years, he had neither. Finally, when Abraham was 99 and Sarah was 90 (Gen. 17:1 & 17), God gave them the promised child, whom they named Isaac. **By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called (11:17-18).**

3. Abraham was willing to obey God and sacrifice Isaac because he trusted God to raise him from the dead to keep His promise. (11:19a) God cannot lie. Abraham was the first person recorded in the Bible to believe God has the power to raise the dead. Abraham knew it was God's responsibility to fulfill His promises; it was his responsibility to be obedient.

4. Through the seed of Abraham would originate a people, the promise of a land, and, most importantly, a seed through which God's redemption would be provided? No, God had not forgotten His promise made in Genesis 3:15; He had not left mankind without hope; He would fulfill His promise to the world. God had not failed. Through this one figure, etched upon the history of humanity, would come the one who would fulfill all of God's promises.

Application:

You may be facing a problem that seems impossible. It may be a financial problem, a relationship problem, a career problem, an education problem, a health problem, etc. You need a miracle. If so, you need to follow the advice in Proverbs 3:5, 6! We need great faith at certain times more than others times like when God gives a great challenge and...

III When It's Time to Die (11:20-22)

1. When he was dying, by faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau [his two sons] concerning things to come (11:20). Because of his faith, Isaac had full confidence God would, in the future, keep His promise to Abraham. God chose Isaac's younger son, Jacob, to continue the fulfillment of His promise (Gen. 12:2, 15:18). God later changed Jacob's name to Israel (Gen. 32:28). Jacob had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel.

2. Then, by faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff (11:21). Jacob tells his son Joseph he is about to die, but God will bring Joseph and his descendants to the Promised Land (Gen. 48:21). As they were dying, both Isaac and Jacob were examples of the truth found in 2 Corinthians 5:7--

For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

Isaac and Jacob revealed the kind of faith we need when it comes time to die. However, like us, sometimes they walked by faith and at other times they stumbled by sight.

3. Next in "**Faith's Hall of Fame**" is **Joseph**, to whom God devotes over one third of the book of Genesis (chap. 30-50). It was by faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones (11:22). The Bible does not record any instance of Joseph faltering in his faith. When it comes time for Joseph to die, he gives instructions concerning his bones. Though it seems impossible, Joseph believes God will lead His people out of Egypt to the Promised Land.

When he is dying, he tells his brothers God will lead them out of Egypt (Gen. 50:24). He also takes an oath with the sons of Israel that they will take his bones out of Egypt (50:25). Some four hundred years later, Ex. 13:19 records' "**And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.**"

Application:

Folks, we will need our faith most when it's time to die. When that time comes, there will not be any comfort in possessions, position, or prestige. The only thing that will matter is what kind of faith we have. When it is time for us to die, by faith we say with Paul (2 Corinthians 5:8---
to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

For this God [is] our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide [even] unto death. ---Psalm 48:14/ 116:15

Hebrews 11:11-22 emphasizes the faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph at the end of their lives. Each faced death with a confident faith that pleased God. They all died in perfect peace because by faith they believed God's promises.

Conclusion: