

## Faith Understood

Hebrews 11:1-40

I'm glad you could join me once again today for "It's a Good Life." Today, we'll be looking in the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, "Faith Understood." Next week, Lord's will, we'll be starting a series of studies about "Supernatural Contact." Now, this is not speaking about outer space or the paranormal. It is supernatural in the sense that it's prayer, in the sense that it is speaking directly to God, the Creator, our Creator, our Savior. And, Lord's will, next week, we'll be starting that series on prayer, "Supernatural Contact."

Today, we want to look into the book of Hebrews, chapter 11. And it says, *<sup>1</sup>Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. <sup>2</sup>For by it the elders obtained a good report. <sup>3</sup>Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

Is it any wonder that people look at a Christian and say, "That guy doesn't have very good sense. You know, he believes things that he can't see." Is it any wonder that people scoff at a Christian who believes God? Now, to me as a saved person, it's not hard for me to believe God, because I've received proof that He is God and that He is my Lord, that He is my Heavenly Father. How did I receive proof? It's by faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. Faith is the assurance of a future event. Faith is the title deed to property. It's something we own. Faith is certain, the conviction or the proof of the invisible. Faith believes the invisible is real.

Now, as we look at Hebrews chapter 11, we see three points that the Holy Spirit wants to make to us in this chapter. The first point that He wants to make to us is obedience. If you'll read chapter 11, verses 4 through 16, you'll see this in several different areas in several different people's lives.

We're not going to read all the verses, but we'll read a few.

In verse 4, the Bible says, *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain....* Well, Abel offered a better sacrifice. Now, it wasn't acceptable to Cain because Cain killed him because he offered that sacrifice, but it was a sacrifice that was made to God. It was a better sacrifice and it was accepted by God. I would rather be accepted of God than any man living on this Earth. God is the One who gives us the approval. He is the One who is important. He is the One we need to look to for approval today in our lives. Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain.

And then in verses 5 through 6, we read about a man by the name of Enoch. Enoch was pleasing to God. Once again, I would rather please God than man.

And then in verse 7, we read about another man. In verse 7, it says, *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; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

This chapter is known by many as the Faith Hall of Fame. All through this chapter, we see men and women who obeyed God and God blessed them for their obedience. Now if we read on, we find that many of these people died not having received the promise, but we know that they know the promise came through now, because they're with the Lord and they've seen that it did come true. They may not have seen it during their lifetime on this Earth, but by faith, they believed God and we know that, because of their obedience, the things that God promised them did come to pass.

We read about another person in verses 8 through 10. Abraham obeyed God by leaving his country and living in an alien land. How many of us would give up our homes, would give up our livelihood, would give up the things even to the extent of leaving behind family for God? Abraham did and God blessed him for it. Many people of God will leave family and wealth and many things behind to serve God, and I think of those people who go to the mission field, the field of this world, to spread the Word of God to a lost and dying world. These people are like Abraham who believe God, who trust God to take care of them. And God does take care of His own.

And then in verse 11, we see another act of obedience. The Bible says that Sarah conceived a son. Sarah believed God and through obedience she had a son. And we understand that it was through this son that the lineage was carried on of Abraham and the promise to Abraham that, "I'm going to give you a seed. I'm going to make you a great nation." We see how that this was conveyed, and this went on in through the son of Sarah.

Every illustration makes the point that real faith is marked by obedience. Well, that's the first thing the Holy Spirit wants us to see in this chapter.

The second thing the Holy Spirit wants us to see is in verses 17 through 31. He wants us to believe God. The Spirit shows that real faith believes what God promises about the future. Abraham believed God, according to verses 17 through 19. And here we see that Abraham offers his son Isaac because he trusted God to fulfill His promises by raising his son from the dead.

In Genesis chapter 22 and verse 8, the Bible says, *And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.* Now, his son Isaac didn't see the sacrifice. He didn't understand at first. We often look at Abraham and say he was a great man

of faith, but what about Isaac? Isaac was also a person of faith, a man of faith, because he trusted God. He trusted not only his earthly father, but he trusted God. Abraham told him, he said, "Now, son, you don't see a sacrifice here, but God will provide himself a sacrifice. It says, *God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.* And I believe this is in reference once again to the Savior who would come into the world hundreds of years later who would take upon Himself the sin for you, for me, for this lost and dying world so that we, mankind, could go to Heaven.

But Isaac had faith because he went with his father. His father said, "God's going to provide." And I see that familiar term, *Jehovah-Jirah*, "The Lord will provide."

Well, we read on in verse 20 about another person. Isaac blesses Jacob and Esau. Now Isaac blessed Jacob, trusting God for a future fulfillment, according to verse 20. Now, the Holy Spirit is referring to Genesis 27, verses 27 through 29 where Isaac blessed Jacob with a blessing that looked to the future. In Genesis 27, verses 27 through 29, it says, *<sup>27</sup>And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed: <sup>28</sup>Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: <sup>29</sup>Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.*

When I pray, I pray for the nation of Israel. I pray the blessings upon Israel. I pray that God would send peace to Jerusalem. I pray for the peace of Jerusalem and the blessings upon Israel. Why? Because God promises in His Word to bless those who bless Israel and to curse those who curse Israel. I, for one, believe that Israel is God's chosen people. They are God's chosen people and

they are the ones that we see that we were grafted in as Gentiles into the family of God. They rejected the Savior Jesus Christ, but there is coming a time when they will receive Him as their Savior when they see Him come back physically to this Earth. And the Bible tells us He will touch down on the Mount of Olives, and as He touches down as they look upon Him, they will recognize Him as the Savior, as the One they crucified.

Well, we see that there's obedience taught here in this chapter. We see that we are to believe God. And then, as we look on, we see that real faith is willing to suffer. In Hebrews chapter 11, verses 32 through 40, we read about suffering.

First of all, it says kingdoms subdued. This means they were brought under control. We see that righteousness was wrought, or worked, and we see the promises obtained, or possessed. The mouths of lions were stopped; they were closed. And these things didn't come about by simply sitting back and watching. These people suffered for the cause of the Lord.

And then we see that obedience and believing and suffering did not immediately bring the promises. In verse 39, we read about this. Now, God has something better for us. When? Well, it's not over until it's over, according to verse 40 in the last part of that verse.

Now, we may ask: What then is faith? Faith is looking to God to forgive. Faith is having no doubt you are a sinner. Faith is no doubt Jesus existed. Faith is saying there is no doubt that Jesus is God. Faith says there's no doubt that Jesus died for your sins and returned to life. Faith says that there's no doubt that Jesus will take you to Heaven in the future once you've trusted Him as your Savior.

Believe God. Obedience to God. Willing to suffer for God. And as we look to Jesus, we say depend on Him, rely on Him. Now, that is faith.

It's been good being with you today, and let me remind you that you can ask Jesus into your heart at any time. If you've never trusted Him as your Savior, may I invite you to do so right now by simply saying, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive you as my Savior. Save me, Lord. In Jesus' name."

Next week, remember, the Lord's will, we'll be starting a series of studies on prayer, "Supernatural Contact." In the meantime, look at our website, [www.LRWM.org](http://www.LRWM.org). On the website, there's a place for you to leave prayer requests. I want to pray with you and for you. You may have someone on your heart that you would like to see saved. Maybe someone's sick you'd like for me to pray with you about. I'll be glad to do that. Go to the website, [www.LRWM.org](http://www.LRWM.org). Or you can write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731.

Well, as usual, it's been good being with you today, and I look forward for you to be with me again next week, when you'll hear me say, "It is a good life." May the Lord bless you richly in my prayer.