

By Faith, Abraham Obeyed
Hebrews 11:8-10

INTRO:

Whenever we come to **Hebrews 11** and the hall of faith, we need to keep firmly before us the context of the chapter. The writer of Hebrews wrote in chapter **10:35-39** about the Hebrew believers' need of faith. ***“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: ‘For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.’ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.”*** The Hebrew believers had been faithful. They even suffered the loss of their possessions. Now they were waiting for the blessing of God. The writer is concerned that they might lose their confidence before the blessing comes. So, he is telling them, *“Keep the faith.”* But what does “keeping the faith mean?” This is what Hebrews 11 is all about.

Verses 8-10 introduces us to the man who is the epitome of faith, Abraham. We learn three things about faith in these verses.

I. Faith Obeys (v. 8)

II. Faith Sacrifices (v. 8b, 9)

III. Faith Looks Forward (v. 10)

I. Faith Obeys (v. 8)

Hebrews 11:8 ***“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”***

A. The first thing faith did in Abraham's life was to obey when God called. We find this call in **Genesis 12**. God initially called Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees. We know this from Stephen's sermon in **Acts 7**. The same call was repeated in Haran when Abraham's father died.

Genesis 12:1-3 ***“Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family And from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”***

B. God's call involved two things. First, it involved a call from idolatry to a relationship with the true and living God. This was salvation.

Joshua 24:2-3 ***“Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. Then I took your father***

Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac.”

We know from this that Abraham was not always a believer. God called him to faith before Abraham could exercise faith. He had to be a child of God before he could respond to God’s call.

C. Second, God’s call involved investing everything in the promise of God. The Lord said, ***Genesis 12:2-3 “I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”***

If God told the truth Abraham would prosper. If God was lying, Abraham would lose everything. Abraham chose to invest with God rather than this present world.

D. What about us? Do we know anything of these kinds of commitments because of our faith?

II. Faith Sacrifices (v. 8-9)

Hebrews 11:8–9 “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.”

A. How did Abraham obey? He went out not knowing where he was going. Have you moved somewhere like this? When Abraham climbed into his U Haul, (In Abraham’s day it was a camel painted orange) he had no idea what the destination was. God said, *“You just drive, Abraham, and I’ll tell you when we get there.”* By faith, Abraham was willing to give up control of his life to God

1. Abraham believed God was wiser and smarter than he, Abraham, was. I am convinced that sometimes our biggest problem in life is that we think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. We are convinced we should be able to dictate to God what He ought to do with His Universe. We also think we know how God should have written His Bible. And we also believe we ought to be able to tell Him what He can do with this life. The fact is, God is much wiser than we are. We would be smart, if we just listen to Him and do what He says to do.

2. Abraham also was convinced God knew the way to the destination. I never used to worry when I was young and went on trips with my parents. I always knew parents knew the way to where we were going. We need to have this same confidence in God. When God is directing our lives, we need not fear. He knows the way and He will get us to the destination.

B. Not only was Abraham willing to sacrifice control of his own life and destiny. He was willing to live out his life in the Promise Land with less, in order that he might enjoy greater future blessings.

III. Faith Looks Forward (v. 10)

Hebrews 11:10 *“For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”*

A. Why was Abraham willing to do all of this? What was his faith focused on? It was first focused on God. He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.

B. It was also focused on the promises God had made. ***“He looked for a city.”*** In contrast to a temporary tent with stakes to keep it in place, Abraham ***“waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”*** Abraham was willing to live as a sojourner in this present life because he looked forward to something much better in the life to come.

C. What was this city Abraham looked forward to and waited for? This verse always makes me think about two passages.

Titus 2:11-13 *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

The second passage is at the end of all things. The Apostle John wrote:

Revelation 21:2-3 *“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.”*

The question is: Are we looking for the city?