

Hebrews 11:7

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[0 : 00] Turn your Bibles to Hebrews chapter number 11.! He's basically preaching this really big sermon on how Jesus is better than everything that they have experienced in life.

It's better than the Jewish law that they had. And it's better than anything that they could possibly turn to. And as we study this chapter on Hebrews 11, the author here is giving us examples of what it looks like to have faith in Christ.

And how this faith is worked out in people's lives. And we see this is the common theme throughout scripture, especially when it comes to the people who are mentioned here.

Of just showing how faith in and of itself is not really enough. I'm sorry. Faith in and of itself, if we just say that we have faith, doesn't really mean a lot.

Faith is always worked out. We see that through James when he is talking to the believers. And saying that, hey, you know what? If you say that you have faith, that's not enough.

[1 : 33] Faith is always worked out. Our faith is shown by our works. And so as we look at this passage today, we get to see examples of people who worked out their faith.

And so if you're in Hebrews chapter number 11, we're going to be looking at the account of Noah today. So it's Hebrews 11 and verse number 7. And the author says, And so as we see here in this account of Noah, we're first going to be looking back at Noah's life.

So if you want to turn your Bibles to Genesis chapter number 6, which is where the account of Noah is, we're not going to look at each individual verse. I'm just going to walk through the story.

And then I want in our minds to think about what the author is trying to demonstrate from Noah's life. So he's pointing to Noah's life, and he's drawing out three important things.

I believe that he is drawing out God's warning to Noah, as seen in the first part of verse 7. And then Noah's working for God.

[3 : 00] And then finally Noah's witness for God. And so as we look through here, we see, and I want us to remind ourselves of this important truth, that as we look at these people's lives, as we look at the life of Noah, it's really easy to elevate these people a lot of being like, hey, you know what, these people are a part of scripture.

So they're almost like superhumans. You know, there's somebody who's another level from us. We would never be able to do what these people did. But the important thing to remember is that these people are just like you and I.

And these ordinary people were ordinary, but they served an extraordinary God. And because of that, God worked through them in mighty ways to be able to bring about his work.

So if you find yourself in Genesis chapter number 6, I want to kind of walk through the story of Noah with you guys just as a good refresher. And so we see at the beginning in Genesis chapter number 6, starting in verse number 5, that God looks down on the earth and he sees an abundance of wickedness.

He looks down and he sees that there is pretty much no one on earth who is doing the will of God, nobody who is following after God. And so he just saw an incredible amount of wickedness that was just raining on the earth.

[4 : 26] And so we see as he looks down, he determines that he's going to judge the world. That because of the wickedness of the world, it deserves judgment.

And this is such an important reminder of the fact that God treats sin seriously. I think that that is something that we overlook today in modern evangelicalism, of viewing God as a mere loving God, which he is, but in that neglecting God's wrath and God's judgment for sin.

And we see that as he looks down, he sees the wickedness of mankind and determines to destroy it. And so maybe in our minds, I think we kind of revolt against that idea of being like, man, I'm sure

that these people were doing bad, but certainly not worthy enough to have the entire earth destroyed.

But I want us to remember the depths and the depravity of sin. You know, it was just with Adam and Eve, we think in our minds just eating a piece of fruit that cursed humanity for the rest of all time until Christ ultimately returns to set up his kingdom.

And we look at it and say, that's not really that big of a deal, right? You know, it's not like Adam and Eve went out and murdered somebody. They just ate a fruit. But that's the thing, our brains tend to categorize sin and we begin to justify the sin that we see or the sin that we have in our lives of thinking, ah, it's not really that bad.

[6 : 01] But when God looks down on sin, no matter what the level of what we determine sin to be, all sin is deserving of God's wrath and God's judgment. And so as we look at this account of Noah, we see that God is clearly justified in what he is about to do in destroying the earth.

The people deserve to be destroyed because they were sinning against the holy God. I think back to a quote that I read from R.C. Sproul describing what it is like for sinful mankind to sin against the holy God.

And I can't remember the exact quote word for word, but it had the basic idea of basically dirt spitting back at the face of its creator. And when we think about it, you know, we are the dust of the ground.

And what makes us significant is the image of God, but God creating us and us in our creation saying that we know better than God and that we know how to live our lives better than God.

And we are not going to follow God's commands. But yet we see that God takes his commands very seriously and views sin in a very serious manner. And so should we. And so we see how the destruction was impending for the world, but God had mercy through this.

[7 : 18] And that's what's so good. That's what's so good. That God did not, it was not as if God looked down at Noah and saying, oh, Noah doesn't deserve to die. You know, Noah was still just a sinful human, just like everybody else.

But God looked down on Noah and had mercy on him and found favor with him. And so it says in the account that God looked down and saw Noah that he was righteous, that he was following after God.

And we know from an understanding of the New Testament that that is also by the grace of God, of God working in our lives, of God changing our hearts and giving us a desire for him.

So Noah found favor in God's eyes. And so we see that the destruction is impending. Noah finds favor. And now God commands Noah to build an ark.

And so he comes to Noah and he says, no, I'm about to destroy the earth with a flood, but I'm going to save you and your family and the livestock.

[8 : 23] And we will create a new world basically through you. And so Noah obeys the command of God and he spends time building the ark, which, you know, I think a lot of times we kind of take that for granted, right?

Because if you grew up in church, you know, you've probably heard the story of Noah's ark ever since you could probably remember. And so I think we just kind of take this story for granted.

But if we really think about it, you know, Noah has never seen anything like this as far as a worldwide flood. It even says here in our predominant passage, you know, that Noah was working through this idea of faith that was unseen.

And so he had never seen anything like this take place before. Yet he depended on God and trusted in God and followed after God through that.

And so we see how Noah builds the ark. He prepares this gigantic boat that is going to store not only his family, but also a representation of all of the animals across the world.

[9 : 28] And so it takes him, I believe, 120 years just about in order to be able to build this. So it was 120 years from the time when God commanded this to the time that God sent the flood to the earth.

And so Noah prepares the ark. He builds the ark. And it's a massive, it's a massive ark. I don't know if you guys have ever been to Kentucky and you might have seen the ark encounter. But so that would give you a good visual of what this thing looks like.

But basically, if you've never been, it's super big. I believe the size of the ark is just about the size of one and a half football fields in length.

And so this thing is just a massive structure. And if we think like this is built, you know, roughly, I think about 4,000 years ago, you know, it's not like they had the equipment that we have today to be able to do something like that.

So this is a big undertaking. This is not Noah one day being like, oh, yeah, I'm just going to go out and build an ark really fast. Like, this takes an incredible amount of time, an incredible amount of dedication.

[10:36] And it's not like he's receiving a lot of support from this, right? You know, when we look at the text, we see that Noah and his family is the only one who boards the ark. And as far as we know, the text doesn't give us an exact account of this, so we can't know for sure.

But it looks like Noah or no one really helped Noah during the course of this, that it was him and his family who was working on this. He might have hired additional help, you know, to be able to help out with this.

But certainly no one was supporting him in this endeavor. But he worked on it because he trusted in God and he knew that God had commanded it and it was something worthy to be followed.

So Noah builds the ark. And as we go into chapter number seven, we see that God commands Noah then to board the ark. And so it is now time the ark is completed.

It is finished. And God is ready to pour down his wrath and judgment on the earth. And so we see that Noah and his family boards the ark along with all of the animals.

[11:41] And when the ark is closed, it says that the door was, I don't know if it says in the exact passage or maybe somewhere in the New Testament, but that God closed the door of the ark and then rained out his punishment and his judgment on the earth and punished the wickedness of the earth but spared Noah and his family.

And so we see how the author of the book of Hebrews looks back to this account of the story of Noah and draws from it what he is trying to teach us as far as what faith looks like.

I think it's important to remember the context of everything that goes on here, of realizing that from the very first part of chapter 11, that he is basically building a case on the sentence that faith is the assurance of things hoped for and for the conviction of things not seen.

And so this is kind of the topic sentence. This is the sentence that everything goes now underneath of the examples given of showing how faith is worked out in this way, the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen.

And throughout this whole account of this whole story, I think Noah probably describes for us the greatest account of these words being so true in his life.

[13:05] You know, Noah did not have the assurance or he did not see before this worldwide flood of really maybe even understanding what was going to go on, but he had the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen.

He had an assurance of God in his word and a conviction that even though he hadn't seen it and maybe didn't even quite understand it, that God was a man of his word and that he was giving Noah the truth.

And so I want us to go back to our primary text now of Hebrews chapter 11, and I want to break down for us what the author here of Hebrews draws from Noah's life and gives it as an example for us of what faith looks like.

And so we see back in our text of Hebrews 11, 7, it says, And so we see God's warning to Noah. And as I said before, this is really just a great example of what the author of Hebrews is drawing from this topic sentence of, faith is the assurance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen.

[14:22] So God commands Noah and God warns Noah of this impending judgment. And so as I have said before, you know, Noah might not have necessarily understood everything God was explaining to him and telling him as far as what the, how this worldwide flood was going to take place, but yet he knew that God was telling him the truth and followed after it.

And so we see, as I said before in our, in the story of Noah, that God's wrath and God's mercy is clearly seen through this passage.

And, and that's the beauty of, of God. The fact that each one of his attributes do not work in opposition of one another. I think we have a tendency to do that of thinking that we have to emphasize one and de-emphasize the other.

But when we do that, we end up creating a God in our own image of what we think God should be rather than what he has expressed himself and what we understand from his word.

And so we see God's wrath and God's mercy being poured out in this text. And we see that it is by Noah that God choose, chooses to work out his mercy here on earth.

[15 : 37] And so God warns Noah and then Noah receiving that message, then works out what he has been given from God.

And so once again, this describes so perfectly for us what James preaches to us in his book, you know, and, and here's the thing, like Noah had faith in God, but what if Noah just believed that God was correct in what he was saying, right?

That he was going to destroy the world, but did nothing to prepare for it. So he understood it and, and, and, um, knew what God was commanding from him of saying, go build this gigantic boat and you're going to save your family and all the livestock and all the creatures of the earth.

Noah says, you know what? Like I get it. That's really good. And, and he studies it out. Well, he can articulate God's message to him super well, but then doesn't go out and do it.

You know, then it would be absolutely useless, right? Like the knowledge that Noah had didn't really mean anything, that it wasn't, um, worked out. And that was the purpose of the knowledge, that knowledge in and of itself is not good enough to be a good follower of God.

[16 : 49] In order to be a follower of God, you must follow what he has commanded. And so we see, um, that that is a very clear example of kind of, uh, you know, like, of course that doesn't make sense.

You know, if Noah didn't build the ark, you know, he would be destroyed just like everyone else. But how often in our lives do we kind of use that same logic?

Where we study the Bible, we know a lot of what God has commanded for us and what God says. But a lot of times we just leave that in our life where we feel that we are close with God because we study after him.

I know I had such a tendency of this in seminary and, and seminary is a really easy place to do this because you're taking a lot of Bible classes. You're learning a lot of scripture and you're learning a lot about God and you feel really good about yourself.

You know, you're like, man, I know more, you know, than say like 70% of the people in my church, you know, just being a very prideful seminary student, not being reality. And, and you begin to think, oh man, my job in life is to learn as much as I can about the Bible and to tell other people how to live what the Bible has to say.

[18 : 04] But it's not really too important for me to follow the commands. It's not really important for me to go out and evangelize and to witness to people and to work out my faith. My call, my command is to study the Bible and to show other people and to tell other people how to do it.

And then they're the ones responsible for working it out. And, and I think that that, um, that really has a lot to do with our culture today as well, where we focus so much, you know, I was talking through church history and looking at church history and, and seeing the development of the Christian thought and understanding where we are today with technology that we have and resources and information that I bet in this room, we know more about theology.

We know more about the church and know more how to please God than probably any generation that has ever existed on the planet. Like we know more, um, because of the information that we have of, of knowing scripture and, um, knowing great theological truths that people of, of previous generations would have been super envious of knowing.

But yet, with that knowledge, are we known as the generation that serves God the most of any generation? I would say probably not. I would say that a lot of times we tend to find our satisfaction in knowing and not really our satisfaction in doing and working it out.

And we see how Noah didn't do that. Noah took the message of God and believed it and worked it out. And here's the thing, Noah's, um, day is so much like our day as well.

[19 : 41] So if we put ourselves in Noah's shoes, Noah is building an ark in the middle of this gigantic land mass. You know, it's believed that he was right around kind of that middle Eastern area.

And so there's not really, you know, and he's not building it right on the coast of an ocean of going onto the ocean, right? Like he is building it on land. And if you were to look at that and just think with a natural brain, you'd be like, no, what are you doing right now?

You are building a boat that is one and a half football fields in the middle of this land. And you're going to say that the whole earth is going to be flooded with water and that, and that you are going to survive on this boat.

And then I have to follow you in this. Like if you're, if you're just going based on logic, this sounds crazy, right? Like if somebody in Dahlonga were to start building this massive boat and say, Hey, the whole world is going to get flooded.

You should come join me in my boats. Like you're probably not going to join them in his boat, right? You're going to be like, this guy is crazy. What is he talking about? And, and because that's just natural, right?

[20 : 46] And, and that's, um, what these people must've been thinking as well. And, and when we look at Noah, Noah faithfully worked on what God had called him to do, no matter what culture said, and no matter what culture tried to influence Noah in it, you know, in the new Testament, I believe it's Peter who looks back to Noah and says that Noah was a preacher of righteousness in his day.

That as he was working on this boat, as he was working on the ark, he was preaching to the people of, of showing that God's judgment was coming on earth and that they must prepare for God's punishment and God's judgment.

And Noah did not care about blending in to society or what other people thought he was faithful to God's message. And how true is that for us today?

That as we are called to live out God's commands, if you've noticed, that's not really too popular. A lot of times it'll often cause us to be unpopular with people around us for people to make fun of you or to people to not understand why you live the way that you do.

You know, why do you come here on Sunday when you could be sleeping in and getting a lot of rest? You know, why not just relax by the lake or do something different? Why do you come to church to worship God?

[22 : 13] You know, why do you live the life the way that you do? Why don't you cheat in school? Why don't you do whatever it takes in order to be able to get what you want? Why don't you look for yourself as number one and do whatever you can to climb up the ladder and to be as popular as you can and as successful as you can?

You know, that is the world's thought, right? Like that's what culture teaches you to do, to look out for yourself. But when we are following after Jesus, we don't live a life that way.

We live a life that to the world seems crazy. To the world seems like, man, you are wasting your time. What are you doing right now? You are missing out on all of these things that you could be experiencing.

And it's not just culture that is telling us. That is, that is also our sinful flesh as well too. You know, there's a lot of times where I understand what the commands of Christ are, but yet I don't follow them and I don't live them.

And why is that? Because I think that my way is better. I think that I know more and that I know what brings about my joy and satisfaction more than what God does.

[23 : 20] And we see how Noah in his life demonstrated for us this perfect example of someone who desired to please God more than pleasing himself.

And this was such a long endeavor. You know, most of us probably aren't going to live to be 120 years old. You know, most of us are going to be lucky to make 70, 80, 90, maybe 100.

But to think that for over 100 years, Noah every single day is facing a culture that is completely opposite of the direction that he is going.

And he's constantly having people come up to him saying, Noah, what are you doing? Why are you wasting your time building this massive boat? Why not enjoy the world that you have been given? Why not do these other things? But Noah remains faithful to God. And how encouraging that is that we can look back and say, hey, you know what? We maybe only have 70 or 80 years to be able to do that.

[24 : 24] And for most of us, I believe that would be even less as far as following after Jesus. And so we have this short amount of time. And we get to see an example of Noah who lived a life like this.

That's probably double our time span of following Jesus. And yet he remained faithful. And he remained true to the message that God had given him. How important that is for us. And this leads us into our third and final point of Noah's witness to the people around him.

And so we see back in our text, by faith, Noah being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, and reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household.

By this, he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. So how did Noah condemn the world? Noah condemned the world because of the fear that he had for God.

That he feared God more than he feared man's opinions and man's ideas. And because of that fear, he obeyed what God had commanded him to do.

[25 : 34] And as Noah went out and he was a preacher of righteousness, as Peter refers back to him as, and as he daily worked on that ark, daily he was condemning the world of their rejection of God's message.

And that as he followed after God, his example of faith condemned the world of their lack of faith. That as Noah built this ark each single day, that these people rejected God's message of love and mercy and grace each day.

You know, the ark wasn't just big enough to be able to contain just Noah and his family and the animals. There was plenty of room to be able to house anybody who would have wanted to come and be on that ark.

But no one wanted to come and be on the ark. Everyone rejected the message of God. And as we look at that, we see that example being given to us in the New Testament as well.

When we look at the world today, we see that apart from the spirit of God working in people's lives, everyone will reject the message of God. And everyone will not respond to the message of God.

[26 : 47] They will be presented the message. These people were presented a way of salvation, of the destruction that God was about to bring. Noah was preaching the righteousness of God and following after him.

But they rejected that message. And in that, they were condemned. And in the same way today, you who are sitting in here, get to hear that same message of righteousness.

That God is commanding you to follow after him. To quit living a life of trying to earn your own salvation. Or to fulfill your own desires. Or to live the life that you want to live.

But God is calling you today to follow after him. And to obey his commands. And to put your faith in the work that Christ has done for us.

And in that same way that Noah preached the righteousness of God, we today preach the righteousness of God. And that God is the only way to salvation. He is the only way of the destruction that is coming.

[27 : 50] You know, we look back to Noah's day and we see God's destruction. But we also look forward to another day. When Jesus Christ will return. And he will set up his kingdom.

And those who are not following after him will be destroyed and will be punished. And just as Noah preached in his day that this coming judgment was coming, we in our day preach the same message that the judgment of God is coming.

That God is not a different God from the Old Testament to the New Testament, where we look at God as being this judging God in the Old Testament. Now in the New Testament of God accepting everyone no matter what they do.

And that all will eventually be forgiven. And that God's love supersedes his justice. But we see the exact same God being presented in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

And we see that God is going to return. He will set up his kingdom. And he will judge those who are not followers of him. And so I encourage you today and I plead with you today that if you have not followed after Christ, if you have not repented of your sins and turned to him, that you would not let a single day go by.

[28 : 59] Just as when Noah was preaching, there was one day when God shut the door and the flood came and God judged the world. So it will be with us that there is one day where Christ will return.

And we don't know when that day will be, but it is going to happen. And in that day it will be too late. And so I pray for you and I pray that you would turn to Christ today.

That you would not let a single day go by of living a life that is against him, but rather experience his love and mercy that he has for you and depend on him. So as we see here in this chapter 11, verse 7, account of Noah, that we see Noah being warned by God.

We see Noah working out what God has commanded. And we see how Noah witnessed to the world of God's message.

And as we look at Noah, I want us to once again be reminded that Noah is not some superhuman. He's not somebody who is on a different level than us, but it is just the same as us of a sinful, ordinary man who is saved by the grace of God to serve an extraordinary God.

[30 : 18] And as we look to this, we don't necessarily look to Noah as being the ultimate example, right? I'm sure if Noah were here today, he would not want you to like have all the focus on Noah.

Rather, he would be pointing the focus back to Christ. And I love how I don't want to steal from future messages coming, but if you look at Hebrews 12, after the writer gives us all these examples of people who follow after Christ, he says in Hebrews 12, verse number one, Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking not just to these people, but to Jesus, who is the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

And I want us to focus on this last verse here. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted.

And it is so encouraging to know that Jesus has already walked this path, that Jesus is calling us not to something that he has not experienced, but rather he has experienced it for us, that when we go out from here and we live the commands that we see in this text, and we live the commands seen in the Bible, that it is going to be something that is uncomfortable, that it is going to be something that is so counterculture, that people will try to get us to fall off that path, to do anything that they can.

Why? Because they feel condemned in their sinful nature, and they feel uncomfortable. And so in doing that, they want us to compromise the way that we live and the way that we follow. But as we go out from here and we obey these commands, it is not something that we do in our own strength and our own power, but we look to the ultimate example, that being in Jesus Christ, who endured for us the sufferings, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

[32 : 32] And our motivation is for worship to him, that we look to fear God and not fear man, and that we look in our lives to worship and serve Christ, and nothing else matters.

When we stand before the throne of God, and we give an account for our lives, it will not matter what your neighbor thinks or what your co-worker said. It will only matter what you did.

And as we look to James, who says that, you know what, it is not good enough just to have faith.

When we stand up before Christ, it won't be good enough just to say, hey, you know what, like, I believe this.

I didn't work it out in my life, but I believed your message. No, rather, it is going to be, I believed your message, and I depended on you for your strength to work it out. And these are the works that you have demonstrated in my life.

And as we have the crowns placed before us, we set it at his feet because we realized that it wasn't us, it wasn't our own strength that did these great things, but it was Christ, because we looked to Christ, and we focused on Christ, and we depended on him.

[33 : 36] So I pray for us today, that as we look at this account of Noah, that we would understand the fact that it's not going to be easy to follow after Christ, but it's certainly worth it to follow after Christ.

Let's pray. Amen.