

BIBLE STUDIES

SERIES: HEROES OF FAITH – Hebrews Chapter 11

Lesson #5

NOAH

Hebrews 11:7

“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”

The first two Heroes of Faith that we studied were **Abel**, whose faith is evidenced in worshiping God, and **Enoch**, whose faith is seen in his walking with God. The 3rd person in this list is **Noah** who is an illustration of faith **working for God**. The record of Noah’s ship building venture is in Genesis, chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Belief affects behavior; faith shows itself in its work. It is useless to say that we have faith in God if there are no works in our lives giving evidence of such faith. James reminds us that *“Faith without works is dead.”* (James 2:20) Noah had faith in God, which resulted in the amazing work he did in building the ark and in proclaiming God’s Word.

Before we continue with the Noah story, let us get Luke 1:37 firmly in our minds: *“For with God nothing shall be impossible.”* Therefore, when we set the story of nautical Noah in the context of faith, we are not surprised at the outcome.

As we analyze the Noah story, let us research Noah’s Work of Faith and then let us review Noah’s Witness of Faith.

NOAH’S WORK OF FAITH

(1) Noah began by listening to God’s voice.

Hebrews 11:7 *“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen....”* Noah, by faith, tuned in to God and heard God speaking to him on several occasions:

Gen. 6: 13 *“And God said to Noah”*

Gen. 7:1 *“Then the LORD said to Noah”*

Gen. 9:8 *“Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him”*

Gen. 9:17 *“And God said to Noah”*

Romans 10:17 reads: *“faith comes by hearing the word of God.”*

If we are to hear the voice of God we must obey the command of Psalm 46:10 to: *“Be still, and know that I am God.”* In the midst of all the clamor and confusion of the sin-loving world of Noah’s day, he listened for the voice of God.

In Psalm 81 God says concerning Israel:

“I, the LORD, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. ”But My people did not listen to My voice, And Israel did not obey Me. And, “Oh that My people would listen to Me.”

God speaks to us in and through His Word. Are we hearing Him? Are we listening? We've heard it repeatedly said, "Silence is golden." As our society has become more noisy, silence has become even more golden than ever. The phrase, "a quiet time with the Lord" is used to describe a time of Bible reading and prayer. We need to "shut down", "shut up", "shut out", and "shut ourselves in" with God and His Word in meditation and prayer, in order to receive orders from Headquarters! Faith begins by listening to and obeying the voice of God in a noisy world.

(2) Noah obeyed God's orders in detail.

In Genesis 6 we read: *"And God said to Noah Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it....."* (Gen. 6:13-15) In the following verses God gave explicit details about how to build the first ship.

Who had ever heard of an ark, or a flood! It had never rained. Surely there must be some mistake! No, for Noah's attitude was that God had said it and that settled it! The work of faith is to accept and act upon the revelation which God has given, however contrary to human reason it may appear to be. Notice the words in Genesis 6:22 - *"Noah did everything just as God commanded him."*

Noah did not have the option of altering the design of the ark or of modifying his message of coming judgment. He was to work strictly according to God's plan and preach a non-compromised message. God's work, done in God's way, wins God's approval. Let us follow Noah's example and do *"everything just as God commanded."*

(3) Noah did the will of God even though he was in the minority.

In the U.S. Congress there is the position of the Leader of the Minority party. Noah was the first Leader of the Minority party! At first he stood alone – later seven members of his family joined him. But what are so few against so many?

God's people have always been in the minority. Do you remember Gideon and his 300 against a huge army? What about Samson, who empowered by the Spirit of God, killed one thousand men with a donkey's jawbone! (Judges 15:14,15)

There is a clique that you probably have heard: "God plus one is a majority." Are you the only Christian on your block, in your home, office, etc.? Remember Noah and keep living and working by faith, for Faith does the will of God even though you may be in the minority.

(4) Noah was faithful to his task even though opposed.

There is no doubt that Noah endured ridicule and often suffered opposition from the unbelieving citizenry. What cruel taunts he would have borne from the godless crowd around him!

The ark was 450 feet long, 75 ft wide and 45 ft. high, that means that it was nearly one and a half times the length of a football field and more than four stories high, it could hardly be hidden from the ridicule of the scoffers. A huge ship on dry land will surely attract criticism. On the other hand, what better way to get attention and an audience to which to preach!

Can you imagine the mockery and jeering that Noah and his boys must have faced on a daily basis as he built this huge ship? It was a hundred miles from the nearest ocean and far to big to move. No doubt they thought Noah a fool. They were too busy having their “good times” and living their lives of self-indulgence. They had no time for a “crazy old prophet.” After all, it had never rained before. There had never been a flood before. All things have been like they are for many centuries. Why would we believe this old gray-haired preacher now? Here is one man and one family that could truly say, “Everyone is against us.”

The Big-Boat-Builder story is a favorite object of scorn by skeptics. They are quick to dismiss “Noah’s ark as a lark.” Try to imagine the scorn and ridicule that Noah and his family must have endured by the citizens who watched and jeered as the ark was being built. He and his family had to have a strong faith to continue in the face of contemptuous and consistent criticism. But,

“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees
And looks to God alone;
Laughs at impossibilities and cries,
‘It shall be done!’”

Paul said, “*A great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries*” (1 Cor. 16:9) “The doors of opportunity swing on the hinges of opposition.” Faith keeps doing God's work even though ridiculed and opposed.

(5) Noah warned of coming judgment.

2 Peter 2:5 tells us that Noah was a “*preacher of righteousness.*” Here is a description of the people to whom he preached: “*the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*” (Gen.6:5) While he built his ship, Noah to preached to those around him, warning them that the flood was coming and that they needed to repent and enter the ark. I’m certain that Noah was not popular!

Jonah preached to wicked people in the city of Nineveh and we read that he “*cried out and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.*” (Jonah 3:4,5)

Some heed the warnings of God, some ignore them to their eternal shame and destruction. There are those today who say “God is too good to send anyone to Hell.” Perhaps in Noah’s day there were those who said, “God is too good to send a flood.” However, God had said in Gen. 6:13 - “*The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*” God never leaves Himself without a witness. Noah was God’s witness in the pre-flood days. No one who lived in that time can say at the final judgment, “I did not know.”

Hebrews 11:7 tells us that Noah “*prepared an ark to the saving of house,*” and that he “*became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*” As Noah and his family sailed

along in the ark, I am sure he looked around at his family and said, "It pays to live by faith!"

NOAH'S WITNESS OF FAITH

What about Noah's faith helps bolster our faith? All of those cited in Hebrews eleven are included to demonstrate that one can live, worship, walk and work by operating on the principle of faith in any era, surrounded by any circumstance and faced with immense opposition. Notice several lessons we learn from Noah's faith that encourage us to live by faith:

(1) Noah did not waste God's grace; neither should we!

Gen. 6:8 "*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*" The story of Noah highlights the marvelous grace of God, in saving believing Noah and his family. Why Noah found grace in the eyes of God we are not told. God's grace is the selective and elective prerogative of God alone.

We live in a day of grace, when God's offer of salvation is still being made. Titus 2:11,12 tell us about God's grace for us today: "*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....*"

And, I Cor. 15:10 in Eugene Peterson's paraphrased translation, *The Message* reads as follows: "*.....because God was so gracious, so very generous, here I am. And I'm not about to let His grace go to waste.*" Noah's witness to us is: "Don't waste God's grace!

(2) Noah was an overcomer; we can be also!

Noah teaches us that we can be victorious in violent times. Genesis 6 describes the degenerate state of society in pre-flood days: "*The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.*" (Gen 6: 5, 11)

In Luke 17:26-27 Jesus said, "*And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.*" Also, Paul warns Timothy and us about "*terrible times*" in the last days in 2 Timothy 3:1-9.

The story of Noah teaches us that the person of faith can be an overcomer in any environment: "*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*" (1 John 5:4)

(3) Noah built according to God's blueprint; so should we!

Two times we read of Noah's complete obedience. Gen. 6:22 – "*Noah did according to all that God commanded him*" and Gen. 7:5 "*And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him.*"

No wonder the boat floated! Noah was a good shipwright – he was not a shipwrong! Why?

- He didn't argue about God's blueprints for the construction of the ark;

- He didn't alter God's blueprints;
- He adhered strictly to God's blueprints.

This was God's project - God was the architect, Noah was just the contractor. He knew that his and his family's salvation depended upon getting it right, therefore, he obeyed in every detail the Architect's plans.

God has a plan for our lives – let us follow Noah's example and be obedient in every matter. Romans 12:1,2 admonishes us in these words: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

(4) Noah trusted God completely; so should we!

Noah practiced what he preached. He responded to God's invitation to come into the ark. *"Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household" (Gen. 7:1) "So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark." (Gen. 7:7)*

For approximately 100 years Noah and his family has been preparing for this day. Now the "dead-line" (pun intended!) was near. What would they do? Linger and re-think moving into their new temporary home? No! There is no halting between two opinions; there was no hesitancy – they went into the ark.

Try putting yourself in Noah's sandals:

- the first and greatest cataclysmic event in the history of the world is about to take place;
- the only hope for him and his family to survive was to get into this huge box that had not been tested on a maiden voyage;
- He must share it with numerous creatures of all kinds;
- God has not told him how long they were to remain in the ark;
- The water was going to be deep;
- Noah had no assurance from God that it would not leak;
- They had no flotation devices such as life vests, life buoys or life boats;
- There were no navigational systems on board;
- Noah had no anchor;
- Noah had no steering apparatus to control the vessel or compass to indicate direction;
- Noah could not see where they were going.

They were in the ark for one year and ten days. It was a good thing that Noah and his family were not claustrophobic! Talk about faith - talk about trusting God!

Noah's faith was demonstrated when he entered into the Ark with his family. He was so confident about God's promise and power that he did not hesitate to enter into the Ark. It is one thing for Noah to obey God by building the Ark according to God's strict stipulations, but is quite another for him to walk into the Ark, entrusting his life and that of his loved ones to God's protection and provision.

Please notice a phrase you may have missed. In Gen. 7:1 God said, “*Come into the ark.*” God was already aboard that big boat! “*Come*” God said! God was the Captain of this ship; He steered the ark and kept its occupants safe and dry. Noah knew that every moment was an experience of grace and demanded faith.

Noah knew better than anyone the sovereign control of God over life and death. Just like Noah, we find our safety and eternal security in God, Who daily preserves and sustains us as we sail the sea of life. What a lesson in faith Noah teaches us!

Do you remember the song, “Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me”? Here is the first verse:

*“Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me,
Over life’s tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal.
Chart and compass come from Thee;
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.”*

- Words, Edward Hopper

Noah did not know the song but he knew the Pilot! Do you? The Noah story is about salvation not only for Noah, but for us! The ark becomes a parable of salvation. There was only one door into Noah’s Ark and there is only one door into salvation today. That door is Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth and the life and no one can enter except through Him! Jesus is our only hope of life. He rescues us from eternal death.

Simply knowing there was an ark saved no one in Noah’s day. It is being in the ark, in Christ that saves—we have to get on board. We can know about Jesus, but to be secure in Him we must know Him as our Lord and Savior. We don’t have to drown in our sin! We can accept the invitation into the Ark of Salvation through Jesus Christ!

CONCLUSION

There is a well-known book titled, “Everything I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten” by Robert Fulgrum. Let me suggest another: “Everything I Need to Know I Learned from Noah.” Here are just some of the lessons we can learn from Noah:

1. Don’t miss the boat. “*Prepare to meet your God.*” (Amos 4:12) If you go with the crowd you will miss the boat!
2. Build your life and ministry according to God’s blueprint.
3. Don’t listen to critics who say, “It won’t work!”
4. Keep faithful to the truth and your God-given task, even though you are in the minority.
5. Make it a priority to get your family on board the Gospel ship!
6. Christians are all in the same boat – get along with each other – don’t rock the boat!
7. No matter the storm, when you are with God, there’s always a rainbow waiting and you will end up on higher ground.

“WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD”

Hebrews 11:6

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