

**HEBREWS 36
(Hebrews 11:3-6,7)**

**THE OPERATION OF FAITH PART II
By Ron Harvey
(May 2, 2012)**

INTRODUCTION

We are in the faith chapter of the book of Hebrews (Hebrews 11). And we considered last time the operation of faith in the life of Abel and the operation of faith in the life of Enoch. And tonight we will consider the operation of faith in the life of Noah.

Now of course faith is central to the concept of salvation. Everywhere in the Bible, salvation is by faith. All of the Old Testament saints were saved by faith. And all of the New Testament saints were saved by faith. And all saints everywhere are saved by faith.

And since faith is so critically important to salvation, we have tried to define faith. We have seen that:

(1) Faith is not mere visualization of some desired end.

God has not ordained that we should have anything of which we can conceive. If this were so, then we would all be lying on the beach somewhere and enjoying our beachfront property.

And we saw that:

(2) Faith is not a causing power.

Faith is not some strong force that can bring about whatsoever we desire. Faith does not compel God to action. God is always the moving force behind all things and our faith is not.

And,

(3) Faith is not meritorious.

Works puts others in debt. If you work for someone, then he owes you something. But, there is no merit in faith. Faith is not a work by which we put God in debt.

But,

(4) Faith is believing what God has said.

So, we defined faith as believing the testimony of God. Faith is the receiver of the revelation of God. It does nothing more than receive. Faith doesn't reach out and grab God and dictate to Him what to do. But, faith receives His words.

But we also suggested that faith is the distinguishing characteristic of the regenerate. Only the regenerate have godly faith. The unregenerate do not have it. And we find here in Hebrews 11 that all the great saints are honored because of faith. All of them believed God.

Faith is, after all, indispensable if we are trying to please God.

But without faith it is impossible to please him . . . (v.6)

But this evening, our text calls attention to the fact that godly faith never stands alone without works.

For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (v.7)

Now, the Scriptures often proclaim and we often preach that we are saved by pure grace. And so we are. God saves by grace. It is an unmitigated gift of God. We were lost and he found us. We were dead and he made us alive. And furthermore, the Scriptures plainly state that we are saved by grace.

For by grace are ye saved by faith. (Eph.2:8)

Ephesians 2:8 nowhere says that we are saved by works. In fact, it says,

Not of works, lest any man should boast.

But then we have certain verses like Hebrews 11:6 that says God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Now we think of a reward as something that is given to us because we earn it. And yet, our text says,

He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (v.7)

Furthermore, it says in verse 7 that Noah was saved because he prepared an ark.

And, it says he became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith, by preparing an ark.

And so, tonight I want to discuss the operation of faith in the life of Noah and in particular the relationship between faith and works.

Let me state unequivocally that we are saved by faith. But we are saved by the kind of faith that inherently produces godly works.

All faith produces a certain kind of action. If you believe that Kroger is giving away groceries, then you go to Kroger. If you believe there is a burglar in your house, then you call 911. And if you believe that Jesus died for sins and that he graciously died for your sins, then you act a certain way in your life.

There is no such thing as faith without works for your works will show what you believe. Your faith will have corresponding works.

See James 2:14-26

Godly faith and godly works are the flip side of the same coin. They are so closely related that they can be viewed as the same entity.

Now, many have adopted the idea that one can believe in God and therefore be saved, and yet never produce any works that would give evidence of salvation. Just as long as you walked the aisle or said the

prayer or in some other way acknowledged God, it is ok if you have no works because we are saved by faith. You can go ahead in your old lifestyle. It is not necessary to your salvation that you give up your sins or your old habits. It is advisable but not necessary that you obey God, because salvation is by faith.

Now isn't that a salvation of convenience. We don't have to do anything. We are saved by faith. And the pretenders to the faith love such a salvation.

Example: Look at the two men in James 2:18. One man says he has faith, but he has no works. I suppose that he never goes to church. He never observes Christ's command to observe the Lord's Table. He does not submit to baptism. He makes no departure from sin. He is not merciful to the poor. He is not kind to widows. He does not spread the gospel. He is not afraid of final judgment.

The other man has works. And in this passage, which man is Righteous. Why it is the man with works.

The man who claims to have faith but who has no works is not righteous at all. But the man who has works, proves that he has faith.

So, the obvious truth of salvation is that we have faith and we have works. Works tags right along behind faith like a dog's tail follows the dog.

Example: Now wouldn't it be funny if the dog jumped up to chase a squirrel and his tail stayed behind on the front porch.

And it is just as impossible that we should jump up in faith and leave works behind. The two are connected to the same body. Faith comes from God and our works come from God. And the two do not disagree.

But it seems to me also that the tail follows the dog. The dog does not follow the tail. And so it is with us. We don't believe whatever our works do. In other words, since I never go to church, then I think I will be an atheist. No, that is backwards. I am an atheist, therefore, I don't go to church. What we believe dictates what we do.

So, perhaps you see the two necessary parts of salvation in verse 6.

For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

That is why the Scriptures sometimes state that God will judge us according to our works. And why? Because our works are an accurate reflection of what we believe.

Who will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath. Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, or the Jew first and also of the Gentile, But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

Romans 2:7-10

While it is true that heaven cannot be earned by the sinner, it is equally true that heaven is not the place for those devoid of works. God is to be diligently sought. (v.6) Doesn't this imply hard effort. You must diligently seek him. Diligence means that you apply yourself to something and you keep at it until the job is done. And it says that,

God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. (v.6)

Jesus put it this way,

Strive to enter in at the straight gate. (Luke 13:24)

And in another place Jesus said,

Labor for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life. (John 6:27)

And in our very own book of Hebrews we were told to,

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest.

In all such verses, we are encouraged to consider not only our faith, but also the works that are the opposite side of the coin.

Now let's consider,

The Operation of Faith in the Life of Noah

Now it is clear that the events surrounding Noah are a type of the events that will occur in the last days.

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

The deliverance of Noah from the flood is a picture of how God will deliver the elect from the wrath to come.

And the question that arises here is, "Did God save Noah by faith or by works?" Was not Noah saved because he labored for 120 years in making the ark?

And the answer is that in one sense Noah was neither saved by his faith nor by his work. He was saved obviously by the sustaining power of God. But if you want to ask what part faith and works played in his salvation it is not incorrect to say that he was saved both by his faith and by his work. He believed God and he worked to build the ark because he believed.

I. It seems to me that the overriding principle that resulted in Noah's deliverance was faith.

The first two words of the verse say, "By faith." Noah was saved first and foremost and principally by faith. And what is faith? It is believing the testimony of God.

God came to Noah and told him that he was going to destroy the world by a flood. And Noah believed God. This was the spring from which all of Noah's work flowed. God told Noah about the flood and gave him the specs for the ark and Noah picked up his hammer and went to work.

You see how faith operates. It works. Noah didn't sit around saying, "I believe God." Rather, he got up and went to work.

Now it might be noted that Noah was saved by grace before he ever

picked up the hammer. But picking up the hammer demonstrated his faith and so our verse says that Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house.

II. Noah was warned of things not seen as yet.

Now it is likely that Noah had never seen rain. Remember that God watered the earth in the time of Adam and Eve with a mist that arose from the ground. And perhaps this was still the mechanism for watering the ground in the time of Noah.

But at any rate, the world had never seen a flood the likes of which were coming. And Noah latched onto the testimony of God and he believed it. Although he was told things hard to believe, he believed.

III. Noah was moved on the inside.

Because Noah believed God, he was moved in the inward parts. And in this case, it says he was moved with fear.

God had just told him that he was going to send a devastating universal flood and every living creature that walks on dry ground would be drowned. And Noah was moved with fear.

This is a pretty good indication that Noah was a saved man because he bowed in reverential awe of God. He believed that God was a righteous God and that God was an angry God and that God was capable of drowning the world. And Noah was moved with fear on the inside.

All of us should be moved with fear when we consider that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Romans 1:18) and that he is coming once again to destroy the world.

I Thess. 1:7-9

II Peter 3:10-11

IV. Noah was moved to action.

Prepared an ark to the saving of his house.

V. The things which his work accomplished.

A. He condemned the world.

B. He became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.