

Faith Works

Part 5

Steve Berger

June 3, 2018

Review — Faith Works, it produces *and* it needs to be worked/exercised!

- *Anchor Verse in Hebrews 11*

- **Hebrews 11:1**

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Defined

- **substance hoped for** — faith is the **foundational, concrete, assurance** that what you **hope for will happen**... substance and hope must be rooted in the word, ways, and works of God!
- **evidence of not seen** — faith is the proof, conviction that the **unseen** and **not yet** will become the **seen** and **enjoyed**!

Today — more on Abraham and Sarah — what contributed to their faith successes — what we should imitate. “Imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises of God.”

First — describes Abraham so well...

- **Psalm 84:5**

Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage.

- Abe’s strength was in God, he was on pilgrimage, moving from one spiritual experience to the other
- never tiring of believing, growing, moving, expanding his tent stakes!
- What an example to imitate!

QUESTION — What made Abraham and Sarah’s faith journey so exemplary?

1. They don’t let comfort keep them.

- **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.

- Genesis 13:12 — very rich in livestock, silver, gold... servants — comfort and ease doesn’t keep him!
- Didn’t need all answers before he would set out on pilgrimage.
- Wasn’t so rooted and held by known that he wouldn’t venture into unknown.
- Didn’t let present *blessing* keep him from God’s *inheritance* — there was more!
 - two objects — *altars* and tents, *priest* and worshiper, *pilgrim* and wanderer.

FACT: Abraham didn't let comfort keep him from God's inheritance.

2. They don't let promise paralyze them

- **Hebrews 11:9-10**

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; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

- Abe didn't let his fulfilled earthly promise become his eternal focus.
- *Abe's present tents kept him from living in the past tense! Abe is living in journey NOT memory! Abe doesn't let fulfilled promise paralyze him from journey!*

LISTEN — comfort and promise both, the American Dream, can keep you and paralyze you from God's inheritance for you — *don't get so settled you miss out on pilgrimage, growth, adventure!*

3. They don't let delay defeat them

- **Hebrews 11:11-14**

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.

- Sarah is past the age, Abe's as good as dead — judged Him faithful to do it; He'll do it in His sovereign time!
- *They died in faith before seeing promise fully realized — they never saw descendants like stars in sky or sands on seashore — they died believing it would happen!*
- Saw promises from afar, assured of them, embraced them... confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on this earth... if my promise is delayed on earth, it will be fulfilled in heaven, this world does not have the final word over me — EVER!
- God's eternal promises may out-live our earthly pilgrimage — don't let the delay defeat you!

4. They don't let the past persuade them

- **Hebrews 11:15**

And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.

- They didn't look out over their blessing and get kept and paralyzed by it.
- They didn't look down at delay and get defeated by it.
- They didn't look back at their past and get persuaded by it!
- Abe remembers what happened to Lot's wife as she looked back with desire for Sodom and Gomorrah, she turned into a dead, immovable pillar of salt!
- **Luke 17:31-32** — Don't turn back — remember Lot's wife

UNDERSTAND THIS —

- ~ **comfort doesn't keep**
 - ~ **promise doesn't paralyze**
 - ~ **delay doesn't defeat and**
 - ~ **past doesn't persuade**
- BECAUSE...**

5. Heaven had them

- **Hebrews 11:16**

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

FRIENDS — without question their desire, focus, pilgrimage was heavenward! This world had very little for them — although they were very rich in this world's goods.

FASCINATING — in Abraham's time, next to nothing is recorded about heaven, and yet heaven and eternity is the longing desire of his heart! **Ecclesiastes 3:11** *God has put eternity in every man's heart! Abe's heart is captivated by heaven!*

- verse 10 — waited patiently and steadily for a city with foundations, that was worthy of permanently securing himself to; a city whose builder/craftsman and maker/artisan is God.
- verse 13-14 confessed stranger, pilgrim on earth, seeking a true homeland.
- verse 16 desired, stretched for, reached out, coveted a heavenly country.

**FACT — they weren't going to let any earthly thing keep them
from fulfilling God's heavenly plan.**

Not comfort, not promise, not delay, not past...

**they were so heavenly minded that heaven's agenda was going to be fulfilled
in and through their lives. PERIOD!**

THEREFORE — God is not ashamed to be called their God — God affirms a life of faith that looks past all of earth's trappings and desires heaven above all! He has indeed prepared a city for those whose heart is set on pilgrimage!

Close

- “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”¹
C.S. Lewis

“The past will persuade you best when you only remember the good parts of it.” S.B.

“Stop coasting — start faithing.” S.B.

“More than retirement — re-firement!” S.B.

**FACT: We were made for another world,
let’s live for it now,
like Abraham and Sarah,
set your heart on pilgrimage,
don’t let comfort keep you,
don’t let promise paralyze you,
don’t let delay defeat you,
don’t let the past persuade you—
make sure Heaven has you!**

Discussion Questions

1. What made Abraham and Sarah’s faith journey so exemplary?
2. Has there been a time when you followed God’s leading, not knowing where it would go?
3. Has there been a time when you knew God wanted you to do something, but you were too comfortable to want to move?
4. Once one part of the journey has been fulfilled, how easy is it to stop there — instead of continuing?
5. Do you have a promise that you believe will happen, but have not seen yet?
6. Is there anything that is paralyzing or defeating you today — keeping you from fulfilling God’s plan for you life?

¹ C.S. Lewis. *Words to Live By: A Guide for the Merely Christian* (Harper Collins, Apr 17, 2007) 162.