

## **The Roll Call of the Faithful**

Hebrews 11 has been called "the roll call of the faithful." What can we learn from their examples?

### **Abel**

God said *through [his sacrifice Abel] obtained witness that he was righteous. Although his life was cut short by his brother Cain, God [testified] of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.*

Jesus eliminated the need for the kind of sacrifice Abel gave because of His substitutionary death on the cross. God still wants our sacrifice. *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased* (Hebrews 13:15-16).

What will others remember about what you said and did after you die? Is God well pleased with your sacrifices to Him?

### **Enoch**

Enoch is mentioned a total of ten times in the Bible. He is only one of two people who did not die. *He did not see death, "and was not found because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.* God never mentioned what Enoch did. What He wanted us to know about Enoch is that his faith pleased Him for *without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Is your faith pleasing to God?

### **Noah**

Each time we see a rainbow, we are reminded of Noah, the ark, the flood and God's promise not to destroy the world again by flood. *By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household...*

When God gives you an assignment, do you proceed with godly fear? Do your actions match your words?

### **Abraham**

A good part of Genesis is dedicated to God's dealing with Abraham. Twice the apostle Paul uses Abraham as an example of the doctrine "justification by faith alone." James calls Abraham "a friend of God." All believers are called "children of Abraham" (Galatians 3:7). *By faith Abraham obeyed...by faith he dwelt in the land... he waited...by faith...when he was tested he offered up Isaac ... concluding that God was able to raise him up.*

James says the life of Abraham is an illustration that faith without works is dead. Who was right - Paul who uses him as an example of "justification by faith alone" or James who uses him as an illustration that "faith without works is dead?" They are both right. Abraham was justified by his faith; his faith was proven by his works. God expects us to trust Him and do what He asks us to do.

Do you consider yourself a friend of God? Do your works testify to your faith?

### **Sarah, Isaac and Jacob**

Abraham's wife Sarah, his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob are also mentioned in Hebrews 11. Although Sarah laughed when she heard she would bear the promised child in her old age, it was

said of her that *she judged Him faithful who had promised*. God said Isaac *blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come "by faith"*. Jacob, as well, was commended for blessing each of the sons of Joseph upon his deathbed.

How do we, by faith, bless others? It is really only God who can bless. As Christians, we are His ambassadors and can bring His blessing to others. We are carriers of His blessing. Can God use you as a channel of blessing for others?

### **Joseph**

Jacob's favorite son was not a favorite of his brothers. In fact, they sold him into slavery. Patient and faithful to God, Joseph was wronged, forgotten and finally put in a place of leadership where he could either seek revenge on his brothers or bless them. He chose to bless: *But as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive* (Genesis 50:20).

In the midst of trials and tribulations, can you trust God to make it right?

### **Moses**

Moses' parents had faith that God would take care of him. Moses had faith that God would lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and He did. *But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face* (Deuteronomy 34:10).

I counted at least 159 times the Bible said, *The Lord spoke to Moses*. With one exception that we know of, when the Lord spoke, Moses obeyed. Do you know God face to face? When He speaks to you, do you obey?

### **Rahab**

*By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe...*

Rahab, an inhabitant of Jericho, had heard about the miracles God had performed for the Israelites. When the spies came to check out the city, she hid them and asked them to swear by the Lord, *the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath* (Joshua 2:11) that they would spare her and her family. She is mentioned three times in the New Testament; in Matthew 1:5 (she was the great-grandmother of King David); in Hebrews 11:31 and in James 2:25 - *Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them another way?*

Rahab was not of the promised line of Abraham and she was a harlot but God included her in this list because she believed in Him and she acted upon that belief.

We who are in Christ are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise no matter what our race, gender or status in the world. How does that reality help you share Christ with a lost world?

*Now faith is the substance of things hope for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony* (1-2). *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* (13-14).

When your life is over, will those who knew you be able to say that you died in faith? Jesus said he was going to prepare a place for us. Are you looking forward to it?