

Sunday, 11 November 2007

Hebrews 11: 1-7

Heb 11:1-7 To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see. It was by their faith that people of ancient times won God's approval. It is by faith that we understand that the universe was created by God's word, so that what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen. It was faith that made Abel offer to God a better sacrifice than Cain's. Through his faith he won God's approval as a righteous man, because God himself approved of his gifts. By means of his faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. It was faith that kept Enoch from dying. Instead, he was taken up to God, and nobody could find him, because God had taken him up. The scripture says that before Enoch was taken up, he had pleased God. No one can please God without faith, for whoever comes to God must have faith that God exists and rewards those who seek him. It was faith that made Noah hear God's warnings about things in the future that he could not see. He obeyed God and built a boat in which he and his family were saved. As a result, the world was condemned, and Noah received from God the righteousness that comes by faith.

What is Faith ?

Faith is often a difficult concept to understand, as it refers to as a firm belief and trust in something we might not have yet seen or experienced. It is placing your trust in something that is maybe not tangible, or explainable. Yet, it is a need that most people have. We all need to believe in something more than ourselves, a "supernatural". In the search for this, many get lost, and despondent. We are all created by God, and our souls yearn for His presence, and guidance. We can only truly be at peace if we have found Him. But does our faith actually bring a change about in our lives?

We read about Enoch in these verses, and we read that his faith was something that brought him so close to God, that his life pleased God, and God took him away in life, and he did not have to die. It was his faith that transformed him, and resulted in him not having to die. How wonderful this must have been.

But, we also see that faith without actions is meaningless. Take Noah as an example. God told to him to build a massive ship, and this in a place where there was no water, nor even a sign of rain. He was the joke of the neighbourhood, everybody teased him and said he was mad. Could you imagine when he started gathering animals, and putting them in the ark. Even then there was no sign of rain. How much faith did this ask? But, his faith in God was also well rewarded, for God kept His word, and the rain did eventually come. Even when everybody was laughing at Noah, he kept to the word of God, and for that Noah and his family were saved.

But what is the difference between faith and trust? For faith without trust is meaningless. We read that even the devils believe in God, but that changed nothing for them. It did not transform them in any way. Let's look at an example. There is the story of an acrobat that walked the tightrope. He claimed to be the best in tightrope-walking ever, and wanted to prove it. So, he found the highest two buildings, crossing a road, and he placed a tightrope between the two buildings. Then, without a safety-net, he crossed it. Wanting to prove he was the best, he took a wheelbarrow and pushed it across. Wanting to prove he was even better, he took a pig, and placed it in the wheelbarrow, and while the pig was squealing and kicking, he pushed the pig across. When he came to the other side he asked the people if they now truly believe that he was the best. They all said yes. They truly believed he was the best, ever. He then said; "If you truly believe this, then you get in the wheelbarrow, and let me push you across. They believed, but did they trust him? God has given us promises. He will always be there for us, and he will take care of all our needs, if we have faith in Him, and if we should trust Him, but do we trust Him with everything? Is our faith a faith that transformed us, and made us walk so close to God that we are like Enoch, or is it just a knowledge that God exists, but without it having any substance when it comes to our day to day lives?

* Should you wish to write me, and are in need of someone who would listen and pray with you... Please do. david@davidniebuhr.com

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