

Characteristics of Faith
A Faith that Gives Appropriately
Hebrews 11:1-4

Introduction:

- A. The subject of the unforgivable sin
 - 1. Started back in chapter 6
 - a. Applied to certain ones who at one time accepted the g_____ message as true but later denied it even though they knew it to be true.
 - b. From other scriptures we learned that those who commit this sin know the truth but make up a lie and promote their own r_____ system to their own gain (2Pet 1:1, 20-22; Matt 12:24-32).
 - 2. Required the writer to show how Jesus effected the New Covenant and r_____ the Old Covenant (7-10)
 - 3. The writer returned to the subject of the unforgivable sin (10:26-31)
- B. The assessment of the writer of his immediate readers (10:32-38)
 - 1. That they had not committed this sin
 - 2. That they had a genuine faith as evidenced by the p_____ that they endured.
- C. The characteristic of genuine believers
 - 1. Do not shrink back to d_____ - do not withdraw from the Christian faith and return to the road of condemnation.
 - a. Those that do this never had true f_____
 - b. 1Cor 15:1,2 – those that do this have a v_____ faith (useless, empty, not real)
 - 2. The writer then lists characteristics of genuine faith (chapter 11)
- D. The lesson of Hebrews 11 reviews the heroes of faith
 - 1. Many of these “heroes” had moments where they w_____ in their faith and some of those instances are recorded.
 - a. This was not characteristic of their lives but when they were out of character.
 - b. We too will have wavering moments
 - 2. The examples of faith are listed to encourage genuine believers not to waver but to demonstrate faith (e.g. Peter denied Christ but later died for Christ).
 - 3. Today’s lesson is about the faith of Abel who demonstrated faith in his g_____. How will you demonstrate faith when situations call for you to g_____?

How faith gives – not arbitrarily but with excellence

- A. The occupations of Cain and Abel
 - 1. Cain was a farmer of c _____
 - 2. Abel was a farmer of s _____
- B. An unknown situation arose where both brought a sacrifice to the Lord but Cain's offering was r _____ by the Lord.
 - 1. Some conjecture that God did not accept it because it was not a b _____ sacrifice.
 - a. This assumes that the offering was for s _____
 - b. But Leviticus 1-5 explains many kinds of offerings (burnt offerings, g _____ offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings).
 - 2. All offerings required the b _____ of the crops or of the herd.
- C. Gen 4:4 describes the offerings of Cain and Abel
 - 1. Abel's offering
 - a. Of the f _____ of his flock (these were often the choicest animals)
 - b. Sacrificed the f _____ portions (refers to the best part – see Gen 45:18; Ps 81:16)
 - 2. Cain's offering
 - a. From the f _____ of the ground
 - b. No description is given as to the quality showing that Cain was just arbitrary in his giving – he g _____ some and went to offer it.
- D. What are some situations we might face that will try our faith in the area of giving (requires us to give of ourselves or from ourselves)?
 - 1. Example #1 – giving of our resources to meet a genuine need (Jms 3:14-16)
 - a. Will you be like Cain and give an arbitrary response (e.g. throw them a few d _____ just to get rid of them)?
 - b. Will you be like Abel and do your b _____ to meet that need?
 - 2. Example #2 – giving of our t _____ to meet a genuine need (e.g. someone needs a listening ear)
 - a. Will you be like Cain and give them l _____ time?
 - b. Will you be like Abel and give them your p _____ time?
 - 3. Example #3 – giving of our talents or abilities
 - a. Will you be like Cain and make your giving all about y _____?
 - b. Will you be like Abel and make your giving all about G _____?

Why faith gives – not for a reward but out of love

- A. Cain's m_____ made his offering unacceptable
1. Why did Cain become angry?
 - a. Cain became so angry that his countenance f_____ (he wore his anger on his face! – Gen 4:5)
 - b. God confronted Cain with his s_____ of anger (Gen 4:6,7)
 - 1) God told Cain that if he did w_____ he would not be angry.
 - 2) This tells us that Cain did not do well. He did evil.
 - c. 1Jn 3:12 states that Cain was angry because his d_____ were evil (not because God disregarded his offering).
 2. There was nothing wrong with the gift but with the m_____
- B. What makes a deed evil or good is the motive behind it
1. Some deeds are a_____ evil (e.g. worshipping other gods)
 2. Most deeds are not evil in itself but become evil because of w_____ motives.
 3. Abel's deed was a deed of f_____ (Heb 11:4)
 - a. It reflected no ulterior motives, unlike Cain
 - b. It reflected a t_____ that he had a genuine faith.
- C. What will your motive be in giving when the situation demands it?
1. Giving of your time
 2. Giving of your talents
 3. Giving of your finances
 4. Giving of your (you fill in the blank)
- D. Give out of unconditional l_____ for God and for the people to whom requiring your giving.

Challenge:

1. This week God will call you to give an offering of faith
 - a. It certainly will happen at least once this week.
 - b. It more likely will happen at least once every day.
 - c. It probably will happen several times.
2. Give with excellence and out of unconditional love.
 - a. God will accept this sacrifice
 - b. God will use this sacrifice to touch lives.