

Cadet Shannon Rogers

“Leaving a Lasting Legacy”

Scripture Reference: Hebrews 11

Background Information: The writer of Hebrews was writing to Israelite people to show them how the way that they were living before has been impacted by the coming of Christ. The writer uses Old Testament examples to bring in the truth of Jesus and their need for Him.

Introduction: Stephen Christian, a writer and singer writes, “One’s faith should be like DNA. No matter what they are involved in, no matter what career choice, no matter who they encounter it simply should be ingrained and a part of them. My faith is simply a part of me. I can no easier remove my belief in Jesus than remove my cells or heart.” Hebrews Chapter 11 Verse 1 says, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance for what we do not see.” Confidence, hope, and assurance are all a part of having faith.

I. Division Statement – v. 1- 38 – Examples of Faithfulness

(Sub Points)

(A) Explanation

- a. Chapter 11 in Hebrews is called the faith chapter and highlights some of the accomplishments of ancient Biblical characters in light of the New Testament. Verse 4 says, “By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offering.” I know some of you are sitting there thinking, “But, Shannon, Abel’s offering is what led him to be killed.” This is true. This chapter never promises that acting on faith is going to be easy. All of the greats mentioned here went through hard times. We all know the story of Cain and Abel. Cain, a farmer, and his brother Abel, a shepherd were called upon to give offerings to God from their gifts. Abel brought the fattest portions of his firstborn of his flock and his gift was looked well upon by God. By faith, Abel gave the best. Abel didn’t give the skinniest little sheep, the runt of the litter. He gave the fattest and the best. By faith, do we give God our best, our firstfruits? Or do we give him the leftovers? Is our offering pleasing to the Lord? We see no mention of Cain in the Hall of Faith Champions, but Abel, whose story seems so small and insignificant is forever immortalized as one of God’s most faithful followers

(B) Argument

- a. Verse 7 says, “By faith, Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an Ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and

became the heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.” Noah took a huge step out on faith, which made him quite unpopular in his community. If someone came up to you and said, “Cindy, God wants you to start building a spaceship because a volcano is going to destroy the world and He will help you establish you and your family on the moon.” You would think this person was on some sort of drugs or had a mental problem. I’m sure Noah probably struggled with the idea of building a huge boat in the middle of the desert, but he did it. Stepping out on faith isn’t easy. A lot of the time we think what God is asking us to do is insane. Like when God said, “Hey Shannon, I want you to leave your comfortable life that you have planned for yourself, your family, your plans and I want you to be an officer and go wherever I lead you.” ...Excuse me... what? You mean you want me to move every 3-4 years to a new place where I probably won’t know anyone AND lead people? Stepping out on faith is never easy or comfortable. If it was, it wouldn’t be called stepping out. So here was Noah, building a boat amongst the jeers of his neighbors who thought he was a lunatic, because he had faith that God was going to do as He promised. This was no quick task, it took him quite some time. There were probably times where Noah wondered why he was doing such a crazy thing and wondered if God was really going to reward him for his efforts. And then imagine what Noah was thinking when animals started coming to him from all over. Noah’s faith was rewarded in a very extreme way, but the preservation of his life as well as the lives of his family. Sometimes we may not get to see all the rewards of our faith in this lifetime, but sometimes we get to be like Noah and see that faith comes to fruition. Stepping out on faith isn’t always easy and it’s not always comfortable, but it is always, ALWAYS worth it.

(C) Application

- a. Abraham is probably one of my favorite people in the Old Testament. He was an incredibly faithful man to the word of God, even when all seemed lost. Abraham was promised descendants as many as stars in the sky, but his wife was barren. God gave them a child even though she was way past childbearing age. But one test wasn’t all Abraham had to go through. While Isaac was still young, God asked Abraham to sacrifice him, proving his devotion to God and his willingness to follow His commands. Abraham climbed a mountain, built an altar, and was moment away from sacrificing his son he thought he would never have when God sent a ram. Abraham proved himself faithful once again. Because of Abraham’s faithfulness a whole nation was made, God’s chose people. If Abraham had not chosen to follow God, the whole timeline of history would be different. Abraham was willing to give his all. God doesn’t call us to be mediocre. God calls us to be great. Ephesians 3:20 says, “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.” We don’t have to do it alone. Because of our faith, we have God working within us. Goals are always easier to accomplish when you have accountability. Abraham was not alone. You are not alone either.

(D) Illustration

- a. Norman Geisler, as a child, went to a DVBS because he was invited by some neighbor children. He went back to the same church for Sunday School classes for 400 Sundays. Each week he was faithfully picked up by a bus driver. Week after week he attended church, but never made a commitment to Christ. Finally, during his senior year in High School, after being picked up for church over 400 times, he did commit his life to Christ. What if that bus driver had given up on Geisler at 395? What if the bus driver had said, "This kid is going nowhere spiritually, why waste any more time on him?" -Max Lucado, *God Came Near*, Multnomah Press, 1987, p. 133.

(E) Transition Statement

Because of these great cloud of witnesses, we have an example of the faithfulness and the legacy that it can lead to.

II. Division Statement – v. 39-40 – God’s Promise of Faithfulness

(Sub Points)

(A) Explanation

- a. The rest of the chapter mentions Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, and so many others. If this chapter was continued through the years, would you find your name in this Hall of Faith Heroes? All of these people, plus many more mentioned later in the chapter, are a part of the hall of fame for faith heroes. They are noted for living BY FAITH and passing this faith on down the line to their children, grandchildren, and many generations on.

(B) Argument

- a. These two verses say, “These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.” All of the people mentioned in the previous verses, with all their achievements and accolades still did not have what had been promised. This something better that God had planned for us was the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The ministry of reconciliation that draws a lost and dying world full of sinners back to God.

(C) Application

- a. This passage encourages us to live BY FAITH as good examples of Christian living to the next generations. I am where I am today because of my faithful grandmother and other faithful members of the church where I grew up. They modeled Christlike behavior and how to live a godly life so that I knew exactly what it looked like and could follow in the way myself.

(D) Illustration

- a. I recently read about an old man, walking the beach at dawn, who noticed a young man ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Catching up with the youth, he asked what he was doing. The answer was that the stranded

starfish would die if left in the morning sun. 'But the beach goes on for miles and miles, and there are millions of starfish,' countered the man. 'How can your effort make any difference?' The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to safety in the waves. 'It makes a difference to this one,' he said." - Hugh Duncan, Leadership Journal.

(E) Transition Statement

The legacy that we should leave is that of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To tell others and to show them with our lives what Christ has done and what He can do.

Summation:

What kind of faith legacy are you leaving for the next generations? I'm sure many of you are responsible for more than a few changed lives in some way or another. The people mentioned in this passage were not necessarily the best people, the prettiest, or the strongest, but they were immortalized in this chapter for future generations because they did one thing: they lived by faith.