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19 He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.

We've been challenged in these summer weeks spending time considering this nebulous thing we call faith.

We throw that word around rather casually, but as we look into this Hall of Faith in Hebrews chapter 11, we're finding a faith that challenges our ideas of what faith is in 2018 America.

These heroes of faith are the models that we need to emulate, if indeed we are desirous of being a people that is not only pleasing to God, but people of whom He would say; I'm not ashamed to be their God.

And we're finding that our examples here in this chapter are all people who considered this world not their home, not their permanent city.

The folks who possess a faith that pleases God are aliens and strangers here in this world, in this time. Exiles is the word used to describe them.

They have separated themselves from this world and its cares and concerns, and they are waiting for a future time, when the promises

given to Abraham, promises not short of a reversing of the curse at the fall, a reconciling of God with His creation, are realized.

In all of chapter 11 of Hebrews, the gorilla in the room that is never mentioned by name is *waiting* on God.

We are to have a faith, based in words, promises spoken by God whom we cannot see, that cause us to live separately from this fallen world as aliens and exiles while we're in this life. By faith we wait for the time when the promises are fulfilled.

So I want to take just a minute or two in our introduction this morning to look at this idea of waiting. We are aliens and exiles, and we wait. vs. 13 says; *All these died in faith, without receiving the promises,*

The promises are good as gold, better than gold which will perish with this world some day. The promises are spoken by God. They *will* come to pass. But now, we wait.

I think one of my favorite biblical admonitions to wait is in Habakkuk chapter 2. In chapter one God tells Habakkuk that he's going to use the Chaldeans to punish dis-obedient Israel.

And Habakkuk basically says, are you nuts? They're twice as bad as even we are! And then, as if he knows he came on a little strong in his discourse with the ruler of the heavens, he begins chapter 2 with these words.

*I I will stand on my guard post
And station myself on the rampart;
And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me,
And how I may reply when I am reproved.*

*2 Then the LORD answered me and said,
“Record the vision
And inscribe it on tablets,
That the one who reads it may run.*

*3 “For the vision is yet for the appointed time;
It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail.
Though it tarries, wait for it;
For it will certainly come, it will not delay.*

Our instruction, in this life, as aliens and exiles, is the same as what God told Habakkuk. Wait for it. Though it tarries, wait for it. The promises indeed will come, and on God's clock, there is no delay.

Waiting on God is a theme that is repeated often in this book. And understanding that our faith is in promises that we'll never see in this lifetime, they are for another time, makes this idea of waiting a fundamental truth.

Our faith is based in waiting; Isaiah 64:

*1 Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down,
That the mountains might quake at Your presence—*

*2 As fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil—
To make Your name known to Your adversaries,
That the nations may tremble at Your presence!*

*3 When You did awesome things which we did not expect,
You came down, the mountains quaked at Your presence.*

*4 For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear,
Nor has the eye seen a God besides You,
Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him.*

Isaiah 40;

28 Do you not know? Have you not heard?

The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth

Does not become weary or tired.

His understanding is inscrutable.

29 He gives strength to the weary,

And to him who lacks might He increases power.

30 Though youths grow weary and tired,

And vigorous young men stumble badly,

31 Yet those who wait for the LORD

Will gain new strength;

They will mount up with wings like eagles,

They will run and not get tired,

They will walk and not become weary.

Psalms 37:9

For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.

DanIEL 12; 12,13

12 "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335

days! 13 "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

And 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10 I read to you last week;

9 For they themselves report what kind of welcome you gave us,

and how you turned away from idols to serve the living and true

God 10 and to await His Son from heaven, whom He raised from

the dead — Jesus our deliverer from the coming wrath.

We are a people who are separated out of this world, and who are waiting for God's son to come from heaven.

Our brand of faith is modeled for us by people who believed in God, believed His promises, and waited patiently for Him. And like the saints of old in this great hall of faith, we too are waiting for a Saviour from heaven to receive us, either in death, or perhaps even, the rapture, and we will enjoy the promises with all of the saints. Then. Not now. Now we wait.

Faith believes the words of God, and waits for them. And with that we will consider again, this man Abraham, who shows us what this faith looks like.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; 18 it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED."

God tested Abraham's faith. Why? Because he needed to know if it was the real thing?

Oh, heavens no. God knows that. He sees every heart. He doesn't need to test Abraham to discover if Abraham's faith is real.

God is the one who gave the faith to Abraham in the first place.

Abram was a heathen idol worshipper who lived in Chaldea. His father before him was a heathen idol worshipper, and so was Abram.

He was just as dead in sin as any other idol worshipper. Dead people don't seek God. God called him.

Paul tells us where saving faith originates in Ephesians 2:8,9. These vss. should be familiar to every one. 8 *For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God,* 9 *not by works, so that no one can boast.* 10 *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance as our way of life....*

God is the source of Abraham's faith just the same as He is the source of our faith. Our faith to seek and know God is the gift of God.

So God doesn't need to test Abraham to find out how good his faith is. But Satan the accuser doesn't know how real Abraham's faith is, and likewise, we need for God to test Abraham so we will forever have his example of faith getting transformed into actions.

Abraham's example of faith in action will forever go down in history as our example.

It's an interesting study to compare the two biblical author's who use Abraham as their example of saving faith.

Paul uses the Genesis 15 example of faith to show us that it is faith alone, not works of righteousness accomplished in the flesh, plus faith, that saves us. *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him as righteousness.*

And the reformers who jumped on Paul's version who came up with the slogan to use against the Roman church of "Sola Fida" Faith alone, apart from any meritorious works, is what saves us.

But then James comes along and says, there's a lot of people beating their chests talking about faith, but I don't see any works.

In other words, you claim to have this faith that saved Abraham, *Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him as righteousness*, that faith, but, I don't see any works.

James says maybe you do, and maybe you don't. We can't tell, because there's zero works. Zero visible evidence. And for his illustration of the faith he's looking for, he also uses Abraham, but it's the Abraham of Genesis 22, not Genesis 15.

The Genesis 22 faith is a faith we can see, because it has actions associated with it. James says, talk about faith all you want, I'm looking for the faith that is Missouri faith. Show me faith. James was a good Missourian Baptist.

Let's review the story. Turn to Genesis 22:

1 Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. 5 Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you." 6 Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. 7 Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the

lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” 12 He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” 13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. 14 Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, “In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

15 Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16 and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” 19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham lived at Beersheba.

This is faith on public display. Abraham rises early the next morning to obey God's wishes. The 'young men' are servants in his household.

Abraham splits the wood that will burn up the sacrifice. We can't help but wonder what is going through his thoughts as he prepares wood to burn up his son.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; 18 it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED."

This is a conundrum. God has made promises, blessing, a great nation from the loins of Abraham.

Abraham and Sarah decided they needed to 'help' God get his promises in motion, so Sarah sent Abraham into Hagar the egyptian woman, servant of Sarah.

Abraham has a son, Ishmael. And yet when this author tells this story he is careful to let us know, Abraham is offering up Isaac in obedience to God's command, and that Isaac is in fact Abraham's only begotten son.

How is that true when he clearly has Ishmael. Because in chapter 21, just before these things, Ishmael is seen by Sarah, mocking her son Isaac, and Sarah tells Abraham, Cast out the egyptian and her son.

Abraham is in a pickle, because we are told, Abraham loved his son Ishmael. But God tells him, do as Sarah your wife says, because all of the promises will come through Isaac, not Ishmael.

So, in the flow of progressive revelation, Abraham knows that the promises will only come through one person, Isaac. But here's what we learn about Abraham's belief in those promises.

Isaac is the only avenue of promise. Isaac is only there because of the miracle of God to 2 people who weren't going to produce a child without miraculous intervention.

When Abraham gets in the way and tries to accomplish what only God can accomplish, it's a disaster. You get an Ishmael and a heartbreak.

So in Abraham's mind, the promises are God's problem, obedience is his, and obedience with miracles trumps Abraham doing it for God.

That leaves only one possibility in the current situation. Abraham rises early, splits wood, takes some servants to help in the journey, and sets out for the mountain that God will show him, with Isaac his son.

We're let in on a little secret here though. God through this author of Hebrews lets us in on something we aren't told in the original narrative, although the hint of it is there;

19 He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

Abraham has learned that the realizing of the promises is God's problem. And Abraham's faith is such that if God said it, God will do it. Apparently a dead Isaac isn't a problem for that God. Big problem for us, not a problem for the God of heaven and earth. So Abraham proceeds thinking, perhaps God will raise him even from the dead.

Our hint is in the Genesis 22 account where Abraham tells the servants;

5 Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and

I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you."

Abraham's faith in the words of the God of heaven and earth is such that somehow, and he doesn't quite know how, maybe resurrection from the dead?, somehow when he returns to the young men, Isaac must be with him.

The same faith appears again in the precious conversation of a father with his beloved son. *6 Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. 7 Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.*

God will provide for Himself the lamb. Abraham still isn't clear on exactly how that will play out. All he knows is to proceed in obedience and let God solve the impossible's.

Progressive revelation. We are frightened these days by that word progressive. It seems like progressive is only advancing toward more evil. But in this case, Abraham acts on the information that God supplies. The words of God revealed.

I submit to you that if God had not made it clear immediately prior to these events that Ishmael is not the son of promise, that the promises can only come through Isaac's seed, this dilemma would have been more horrendous for Abraham.

His faith is acting in obedience on the information revealed. Only one possibility for the promises of God to be realized. Isaac. Go

kill Isaac.

Abraham knows a couple of things. God has made promises. God has revealed the promises can only come through Isaac. Therefore, somehow, in Abraham's mind, he WILL be returning to those servant boys . . . with Isaac.

Real faith causes real actions that sometimes trump all of the logic available to men. God said it. I understand it perfectly, it's crystal clear what God said. It isn't my problem to cause the promises to happen, that's God's realm. It is my problem to be obedient where His word is crystal clear. We have inherited this very same dilemma in our day.

The problem is this. Does the clear word of God trump man's logic, and if so, does that clear word have authority over not only our thoughts, but our actions?

If the Bible is crystal clear about something, and if obedience to that authority of God over men makes the world think we're a little spooky, a little deranged, a little distanced from cultural reality, if we're going to walk in faith, like Abraham, what trumps what?

You folks are beyond kind and encouraging to me. You don't give me any guff. But I have in fact received some pushback when it comes to the LGBTQQ+ issues that face the modern church.

I've lost at least 2 families that I know of over my stand on those issues. And I do get pushback to leave that topic alone as much as possible. And that's not the only topic the evangelical church is splitting over. There are others, but that one is most "in our face" as we speak.

This sort of brings Abraham's brand of faith you can see, home to

us in our time.

Abraham pressed on in faith, and if the onlooking world had known what he was doing, they would have sent armies to stop him. He was smart enough to be quiet about it. But all of human logic would have flown in the face of what God had ordered done in crystal clear words to Abraham.

The command was simple to understand. It was impossible to carry out with human logic. Abraham said to himself, the command is clear, the logic of it is God's problem, not mine. Mine is to carry out the commands of God. God's clear word, trumps all of human learning and thought and logic.

Churches, and individuals today, who like Abraham decide to live under the authority of the clear words of God, this authoritative book, in spite of real costs that the world will soon throw at us, are the people of a like precious faith, with Abraham, the believer.

Abraham obeyed the revelation that was crystal clear to Him, in spite of every human logic against it. I can't seem to say that enough different ways. When God speaks, and His word is crystal clear, it trumps so-called science and human logic and spreme court decisions, and the law of the land, and anything else that the world can dream up to counter it.

Now, finally, In the story of Abraham offering his only son, Isaac we have many wonderful types, pictures of future things. Vs. 19 tells us it is a type.

I used to have a big book, a thick book, about 2 1/2 - 3 inches thick and it was called, Typology of Scripture. I don't have it any more. I think I gave it to my brother because he's smart enough to understand it.

In the Bible, God seems to delight in giving us events that are pictures of future events. This incident in Abraham's life is a type that even I can understand.

A remedy for sin, but the sacrifice is Abraham's only son, Isaac. The son of promise. And Isaac says, my father, where is the lamb for the sacrifice, and Abraham says, God will provide for Himself the lamb.

And in Revelation chapter 5 we meet that Lamb of God that was provided for our sins, the perfect sacrifice that only God could provide for Himself, His only, precious, beloved Son. Jesus. Bear with me for a few more moments while I show you this Lamb that God has provided.

1 I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. 4 Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; 5 and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of

incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

10 “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

We are waiting for that Lamb of God to come and take us to His home in heaven with His Father. Just like the Thessalonians. And while we wait, we are obedient to the words of this book, the revelation of God to men.