

## The Uniqueness Of Your Faith

**Hebrews 11:7** – “**By faith** Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with **godly fear**, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he denounced the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”...*By faith*, and in *holy fear*,” Noah built a ship to save his family.

Hebrews 11 was probably written to help us understand **steadfast faith** through the triumphant experiences of the Old Testament heroes mentioned. These awesome men of faith obtained a *good report*, not merely because of their individual achievements, personal holiness or total acceptance of the divine promises, but by an active conviction expressed through obedience, persistence and sacrifice. **By faith** each one of them was able to accomplish things that caused them to be set apart from the rest of their generation.

What's truly fascinating about the heroes of faith listed in this passage of scripture is that something new and particularly different concerning *the nature of faith itself* is very evident in each of them. Faith is always **unique**. It believes God without any prop to lean on (whether or not it has been present before). Note, the peculiarity and uniqueness of true faith will never allow a believer to imitate anybody. Because, to the extent that he imitates, faith becomes impoverished; and if his faith is merely an imitation, it is not genuine faith at all but only human endeavour masquerading as faith.

From this account of Noah we learn primarily that if faith is to be a unique and extraordinary experience beyond the level of nature (the natural world), it will be exercised without the example of an exact precedent or parallel. In other words, your 'faith experience' (if true) will be very distinct or singular, and therefore, common to you alone. What makes faith *faith* is the fact that there is never any pattern to follow other than the **promise of God**. You can draw inspiration from other people's 'faith experiences', but you can never impersonate their faith.

Noah lived in an era when there were no architects around who knew about building large ships. And it was a day in which there were no weather forecasters that knew anything about large dark clouds forming over the earth. But God had said, "Make an ark out of gopher wood" (Genesis 6:14), "because I will cause it to rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights" (Genesis 7:4). And what do you suppose Noah's reaction was? **He believed God** moved with fear and built an ark *for the saving of his household*. Noah's 'faith experience' had no parallel or precedent to be measured against. It was a 'first-time', and never to be repeated, encounter with the Almighty God.

Every person described in Hebrews 11 had in common this one attribute - *he believed God* - but never in exactly the same way or circumstances that had characterised those who had preceded him. The hardships and challenges accompanying their 'faith experience' were never presented in exactly the same way. God knows how to box you in so that nobody else is involved!

Why is this? Why does God want to confine you in order to keep all *faith activity* between you and Him? Because, until you are restrained in that manner, there can be no proof that your **trust** is in Him (and Him alone)! Can you recall our definition of faith?" *Faith is having complete and absolute trust in the faithfulness of God.*" Whenever you are confined to a place where your faith activities are simply between you and God, your trust is suddenly tried and tested. And it is for your sake that God does this; otherwise you may doubt whether your faith is authentic and well grounded.

However, when one is told to build an ark (when there had never been an ark before), faith undoubtedly has an opportunity to be unique, extraordinary and authentic. True faith is always that way - because God sees to it! Now you may be thinking, "Yes, but I've not been asked to build an ark." This may be the case, but you have been asked to build your life on the rock!" Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and **puts them into practice** is like a wise man who **built** his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24).

Your life is your ark! And the storms will surely come. But it is only through obedience to **God's word** that you can build effectively and efficiently. So much so that you will save yourself and your household." The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; **yet it did not fall**, because it had its foundation on the rock" (verse 25). By faith, you are compelled to do the *will of God*, and in so doing, you can survive every storm. Notice, your storms (the circumstances that you face in life), may be similar to other people's; but during the storm, your 'faith experience' will be completely unique. Therefore, every storm provides you with an opportunity - an chance for your faith to be **unique, extraordinary and authentic**. Noah's faith was unique, and because of this, he stood out in bold contrast to the general atmosphere of his day. Noah lived in a time of violence, unrestrained sexual activity and sensual pleasure.

Does this sound familiar? "*God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only **evil continually***" (Genesis 6:5). Genuine faith enables you to be different in any age, but when you live in a world where evil prevails there is undoubtedly an opportunity to be separate and stand tall. In today's world, as in Noah's day, morality alone would make one almost unique; but to have genuine faith is to be unique indeed!

Building your ark may be frightening, and it will certainly be challenging, but "believing God" and "moving in **godly fear**" will see you through - just as it did with Noah. When a person is running scared because of what God Almighty has told him to do, it soon becomes obvious that this person isn't trying to be clever or different. Rather, he is being **authentically motivated**, and as a result, moves with a sincerity that is both distinctive and attractive. When a man, woman or child is moving in *holy fear*, it is a sight to behold. In today's society, the one thing that stands out is cleverness, but the one thing that's missing is godly fear.

Noah's unique faith, and godly fear, did not save millions or even thousands, but it did this; it **saved his family**. I regard this as a remarkable accomplishment. Then faith leads anyone to the" saving of his own house." It is very precious indeed. From one point of view this is what gave Noah's faith its greatest uniqueness. Because, in his generation there was marrying and marrying over and over again - families weren't staying together at all. But Noah managed to save his family!

When a man saves his own household, it tells you a lot about that man. It tells you that those closest to him were influenced by his actions. It is one thing to gain the respect of thousands, another to win the respect of one's wife and children. So how exactly did Noah save his family? By example! Genesis 6:7 tells us that," Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he **walked with God**." Walking with God takes faith! Walking with God involves reverential fear. Walking with God makes you quite unique. Why is this? Because walking with God means you **believe God**, and if you *believe God*, you will do the will of God.

There is no other way to build your life. God has never promised a storm-free existence, but He did promise that through **faith** and **obedience** we could save ourselves. All that Noah did was *by faith*, and this unique faith accomplished a lot, not least of which was this - Noah himself was saved! Saving yourself from the storms of life is in your own hands. You can employ the *sword of the spirit* and the *shield of faith*! So be a wise man (or woman), and build your house on God's word.

This is going to mean *living by faith* (Romans 1:17). It's going to mean that you cannot continue to look for familiar props or crutches to lean on, or for people imitate. Every '**faith experience**' you have should be unique and extraordinary. If your faith is to be genuine - a unique and extraordinary experience beyond the level of our natural world - *it must be exercised without the example of an exact precedent or parallel*. In other words, your 'faith experience' (if genuine) will be very distinct or singular, and therefore, common to you alone. What makes faith *faith* is the fact that there is never any pattern to follow other than the **promise of God**.

Therefore, the blueprint for building your own 'ark' is contained in the *promises of God*. And for you to build according to the **will of God** it's going to require two things, (1) faith and (2) obedience. This is exactly how Noah did it!

To end let us define these two words - in the context of that we've already learnt:

**FAITH** = Having absolute and complete trust in the faithfulness of God (That is, God fulfilling every one of His promises, as He watches over His word to perform it).

**OBEDIENCE** = Moving in *reverential fear* of God and doing the will of God in spite of opposition.