

## Grow Inward and Strengthened in Faith Աճէ՛ Հաստատուած Հաւատքի Մէջ

### Hebrews 11:1-7

**“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”** (Hebrews 11:1 ESV)

Our faith is not passive; our **faith is active**. It transforms our lives. It gives us the strength to carry on with our daily walk. In the previous sermon, we discussed how by faith we understand that the Creator created the world by His word. Then the author gave live examples of ordinary people living extraordinary lives. How? They had **faith in God**. As simple as that, they had faith in their Maker who helped them see the unseen. These people learned to live with the solid conviction that whatever was told by God was a promise, and was a reliable promise.

By studying these personalities, we live with them, we learn from them, we identify with their experiences and we become their friends. Their faith becomes ours. This means we will grow inwardly.

We talked about Cain and Abel, the first murderer and the first martyr. Giving the best from the heart was acceptable to God. Nothing else was.

We move on to another character-- **Enoch**.

**“When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.”** (Genesis 5:21-24 ESV)

We don't know too much about Enoch's life. He is the great grandfather of Noah. We know that when he was 65, he had a child by the name of **Methuselah**, which means man of spire. Something happened when his child was born. It seems Enoch witnessed the miracle of life. This made him seek God, and more, he had faith in God, and Scripture says **he “walked with God.”**

When I married Sevan, suddenly I saw the reality that I was not alone anymore. I was responsible for both of us. And when we had Nanor, our first child, things changed one more time. Now I was responsible for them. It seems little children bring a new life, a new order, a new pattern for sleeping, eating, driving...you name it. Believe me, both of my kids' births brought new beginnings. I used to watch and wonder how God created them. I gazed upon their hands and their eyes wondering about life.

It seems this child Methuselah brought a conversion in Enoch's life. He lived after this birth for 300 more years.

What was the world like in those days? The earth was full of wicked people. They did not believe or obey God. **"The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."** (Genesis 6:5, ESV)

Enoch walked with God. Despite the wicked situation, he walked with God. "The Hebrew verb for **"walked"** is a distinctive form that conveys the sense of an ongoing intimacy with God."<sup>1</sup> In the NT Paul used the same concept: walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16-25); walk as children of light (Eph 5:8); walk by faith (2 Cor 5:7); walk in love (Eph 5:2); walk in a manner worthy of the calling (Eph 4:1-32); walk in newness of life (Rom 6:3-5). Also John says: "Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 John 2:6). "Walk in the truth" (3 John 1:3-4). In other words, Enoch's faith was alive and active.

-Enoch walked with God. It is impossible to walk with somebody, unless you are going the same **place** together. This means Enoch had the **same direction, same purpose** as God had.

-Enoch walked with God. That means he had same **pace**. God is ready to walk with us with our pace. He teaches us to speed up or slow down. (I have witnessed that in my life).

How long did he walk with God? 300 years.

**-Enoch walked with God 300 years. This means consistency.** I wish we could learn this. I am learning from my diet. Consistency can help me walk in the right path with a focus. Three hundred years of walking with God? Wow....

Illustration: I love the way little Sunday school girl tells it: She said, “Enoch was a man who learned to walk with God, and they used to take long walks together. One day they walked so far that God said, ‘Look, Enoch, it’s too far for you to go back; just come on home with me.’ So he walked on home with God.”<sup>2</sup>

**-Finally, Enoch’s faith and his walk with God pleased God.** This is pretty strong. Who am I to please God? **“Now before he (Enoch) was taken he was commended as having *pleased God*. And *without faith it is impossible to please him*, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.** (Hebrews 11:5-6 ESV)

**The next character is Noah.**

Noah lived in a very wicked time. He lived at a time when people were so wicked that God regretted having created them.

**The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.** (Genesis 6:5-6, ESV)

Theologians call it “total depravity.” God wanted to see change in humanity. He patiently waited for their change of heart. There was one man who was ready to listen and obey God, Noah. Noah was a righteous man. Peter called him “a **preacher of righteousness**”(2 Peter 2:5). **Noah’s faith was not static; it was active.** His trust in God made salvation possible for him and his family.

How strange will it be to hear God telling Noah **to build an ark!**

**It is not strange to build an ark. But when the sea is 500 miles away from any sea , it is very strange to do such a thing.** To build a boat near the water is something. To build an ark in the desert where it hasn't rained for many years is something

else. It is also strange the size of the ark was a thousand times the size of his family!

Can you see how foolish this act was? Can you hear the voices of the neighbors who were laughing day and night?

**Faith sees the unseen things. Noah's faith "saw" the unseen things.** Most likely what God told him did not make sense to him either. He trusted and obeyed. In Genesis we read that Noah responded to God "in reverence." "And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him" (Genesis 7:5, ESV).

Here are some observations from both Enoch and Noah:

**1. Both were a minority and stood up almost alone.**

They were alone. Enoch was alone and Noah was with eight members of his family. The next time if you feel alone in your workplace, just think about Enoch and Noah. At least we have our church and other believers. At least you have more people who believe in God. They were alone.

**2. Both walked against the popular wicked society.**

**We cannot just observe the 'wicked life' and do nothing.** Their faith was active and not passive. Enoch walked with God; probably his life was a testimony to help other people see God; Noah built the ark. He tried to tell people about God's ways and His desire to save them from destruction. What he received was mockery. That did not stop him from his obedience to God.

For me the Syrian situation represents a wicked life. There is unfair political powers play and manipulate people's lives. I cannot just observe this. I will continue praying for God's inference. But also I will try to help the people who are there. I will try to help the pastors, the churches, the people by all means. If it is necessary to raise money, call, write, and make their voices heard....

I need to fight the battle with faith. Yes, with God's faith. Where there is hopelessness, I will see God's hope in this wicked world.

**3. They obeyed in totality, and not with an attitude of compromise. That needed courage and perseverance.**

**You cannot pick and choose what you want to obey from God's Word.** Noah obeyed in reverence and in all that Lord commanded. In the Bible we see God gives instructions, the blue print. Noah executes them without any changes. Also God asks him to tell people about the coming judgment. (Go preach the 'gospel'). Can you see him carrying the hammer with one hand and, and the God's word with the other (there was not bible in that time), the message of salvation. He did this for **120** years. Enoch walked **300** years with God, alone. It needed courage and guts. Both Noah and Enoch saw the result of their obedience, total obedience. When I read His word, I cannot just pick and choose.

**4. Noah's obedience brought salvation and judgment.**

When I look to Noah's life, I see that he did not see, but he believed in "things hoped for."

Noah's ark brought temporary salvation and judgment.

We, who believe in Christ, **by our faith we receive eternal salvation and by rejecting faith, we will face eternal judgment.**

God did not ask us to build and ark. He asked us to believe in His Son Jesus Christ.

**Noah was saved through his faith in God.**

**We are saved through our faith in Jesus Christ.**

**Noah was secure in the ark.**

**We are secure in Christ.**

Peter's words are clear:

**when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 3:20-21, ESV)**

So here we are. What can we learn?

**Do you have faith? Do you really have faith?**

**Are you hungry for God? to listen, seek, obey, trust, love, share, care, serve...**

**Are you ready to commit yourself to God?**

There is too much wickedness around us. Sin, is terrible thing that can blind us.

Malcolm Muggeridge a famous British writer and journalist illustrated it with a story. He says he was on an assignment to India. He went to the river to swim. There his eyes saw a woman bathing. His first impulse was to go to her and seduce her as King David did to Beersheba. Temptation was storming his mind. He began swimming towards this woman. The words of his wedding vows came to his mind. But he responded by going faster. When he arrived towards the woman and she turned towards him, Muggeridge saw that she was a leper. His first reaction was to despise her. "What a dirty lecherous woman..." Then he suddenly realized it all. It was not the woman who was lecherous; it was his own heart.

**We are wicked without God.** Our hearts need God. Our mind, soul and heart, need Jesus Christ to cleanse us and save us. By Faith.....By faith.....By faith....

God's grace will save us. Noah in the wicked society had faith, and that saved him. He found grace; Noah found favor (Grace) (it is from the word *hanan*) in the eyes of the Lord. (Genesis 6:8, ESV).

Let us reflect on these words, and go by faith to the world.

1 ESV Bible Commentary, Gen 5.

2. Ray Stedman, What is Faith. June 13, 1965 PBC