

What Kind of Faith Do We Need?

[Hebrews 11:4-7](#)

Hebrews, Day 39

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he 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. By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

- Hebrews 11:4-7, ESV

People who know me know I drink coffee. As I write this, I'm sitting in Starbucks, where I also write most of my sermons. I like coffee, and I was excited to learn recently that [drinking six cups per day is good](#) for my health and will likely extend my life. Here's the catch: I drink my coffee black, and since I made that switch, I've become much pickier in my selection of coffee. I like strong, dark, smooth coffee. Today, I'm trying a new single-origin roast from the Rift Valley in Kenya. I like it. It's smooth. Some people would say it's too strong, but is there such a thing?

Hebrews 11 tells us of the importance of faith and defines faith for us: Faith is assured and convinced that what God has said and promised is real and reliable. We need true and saving faith, because without faith, we would shrink back from following Christ and be destroyed. But will any kind of faith do? Jesus said we don't need much faith, just as much as a mustard seed. But what kind of faith? What kind of assurance and conviction of the unseen do we need?

As we read on in Hebrews 11, we find that we need a faith that pleases God. A faith that pleases God believes that God exists and believes that He rewards those who seek Him. In other words, true faith believes in the existence and the goodness of God. We're not just convinced and assured that God is real, but we're also convinced and assured that He is good, that He keeps His promises, rewarding those who seek Him.

This kind of faith pleases God because it leads to joyful, willing obedience and not a begrudging fulfillment of duty or a shallow, hypocritical profession without fruit. Think about it: If you are convinced God is real but think of Him as a tyrant in the sky, any obedience you render will be begrudging, half-hearted, driven by fear, and tinged with resentment. Will God be pleased with this kind of obedience? No!

Think of the parable of the talents ([Matthew 25:14-30](#)). The man with one talent said, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours." (vv. 24-25) Was this man convinced that the Master was real? Yes. Did he fully believe and expect the Master to return? Yes. So, did he have faith? Yes, at least a kind of faith. What he didn't believe was the goodness of the Master. His picture of the Master made him hide in fear instead of risking and serving in love.

Contrasted with the one-talent man, consider the three examples in today's passage:

1. Abel's faith led him to offer a better sacrifice, one that involved the shedding of blood and pointed by faith to the One who would come and shed His blood as a sacrifice for Abel's salvation.

2. Enoch's faith caused him to walk with God, a simple expression describing a life of loving faith and faithful obedience. Enoch's faith caused him to be taken up, delivered from death, just as everyone who is left alive at the coming of Christ will be taken up to be with Christ and spared death.

3. Noah's faith led him to build an ark, an ark that saved him and his family from God's wrath and that provided the means for the renewal of creation. His ark was also a picture of Christ, who saves us from the wrath of God and will renew creation again, one final time, when He returns.

Faith that pleases God trusts, risks, and is rewarded. Why? Because it is confident in the goodness of God. It knows that God will not fail to keep His promises to reward His own.