

OUTLINE OF HEBREWS 11:17-22

TESTED FAITH IS PRESERVING FAITH (PART 1)

I. Introduction

- A. Previous lesson> author emphasizing that the suffering Hebrew Christians are part of long line of people whose actions were the fruit of faith in God and hope in His promises resulting in enduring to the end
 - 1. Their fulfillment was earthly and in greater measure heavenly
- B. Why the confusion about the relationship between faith and actions?
 - 1. Consequences of the fall
 - a. Pride and self sufficiency
 - b. We cannot truly know our own hearts> they are deceitful and prone to believing lies
 - 2. Cause and effect world> we work for benefits
 - 3. Moment-by-moment decisions made automatically
 - a. Our actions flow from our real beliefs and hopes
 - b. We are sometimes surprised by our faithless actions
 - 4. Similar actions may flow from different motivation
 - 5. God brings people to place of testing to grow reveal our motives and grow our faith

II. Abraham's testing

- A. God's unilateral covenant> descendants, land, bless the nations, slaves 400 yrs.
 - 1. God chooses the younger son
- B. v. 17-18 the test
 - 1. v. 17 He offered> action was complete and received by God, vs was offering> action was in process and God interrupted
 - 2. v. 18 Isaac was functionally an only son in terms of the covenant promises
- C. v. 19 a window into Abraham's heart and confidence
 - 1. Isaac is a type of Christ!

III. Promises continue to unfold

- A. v. 20 Isaac- God repeats reversal of choosing the younger> Jacob over Esau
 - 1. By faith, Isaac, though trembling, does not attempt to rescind blessing
- B. v. 21 Jacob- repeats reversal once more> Ephraim over Manasseh
 - 1. By faith, includes Joseph's sons w/ his own
 - 2. His name will live on> the promise of descendants
- C. v. 22 Joseph- looks ahead to the exodus and wants resurrection in the land of promise
- D. Progression of language about God in blessings
 - 1. Isaac- the LORD blesses the fields
 - 2. Jacob- the God who has been my shepherd, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil
 - 3. Joseph- God will surely take care of you, repeated twice

THINKING ABOUT HEBREWS 11:19-22

1. Have you experienced confusion in your life as a follower of Jesus about how your faith and your actions are related? Why do you think that is so?

2. Before class next week, take some time to read the following passages, considering how God's promises to Abraham are advanced:
 - a. Related to Abraham's testing
 - i. Genesis 12, 15, and 17- note the circumstances and promises
 - ii. Genesis 22:1-19- how does Abraham react to God's command?
 - b. Related to Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau
 - i. Genesis 25:27-34 the birthright "taken away"
 - ii. Genesis 27 the "mistaken" blessing of Jacob
 - c. Related to Jacob blessing Joseph's sons
 - i. Genesis 48
 - d. Related to Joseph
 - i. Genesis 50:22-26

3. Why do you think God chose to test Abraham in such a drastic way?

4. Describe how the actions of each of these four men flowed from their faith in God and hope in His promises.

5. Can you think back over your life about some 'crossroads' to which God has brought you in which your actions either expressed your faith in God or where there was a lapse in faith revealing an area in which He wanted to strengthen you?