

# LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH

## Sermon Ten – “Learning To Lean”

Text: Hebrews 11:21; Genesis 32, 35, 48

**INTRODUCTION:** “*By faith*” is the only way a Christian is to live. The just should live by a continued confidence in God.

In this series on “LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH”, we have learned that: If the “*just*” is to live by faith, the “*just*” must know what faith is. Hebrews 11 gives us both a description of faith and many demonstrations of faith.

- A. Faith is Confidence (Hebrews 11:1 – “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, . . .*”).
- B. Faith is Conviction (“*. . . the evidence of things not seen*”). It is the proof, “evidence” (*elegchos*); inner awareness of the reality, the conviction.
- C. Faith is Communication (vs. 2).
- D. Faith is Comprehension (vs. 3).

We have learned from Abel’s life that the just must “**Worship by Faith.**”

- A. “*And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering . . . But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect.*”(Genesis 4:45)
- B. The man was being judged rather than his offering. The emphasis is on each man. Notice the verses do not read: “The Lord had respect unto *Abel’s offering*, but unto *Cain’s offering* He had not respect.” The verses read: “*And the Lord had respect unto **Abel** and to his offering: But unto **Cain** and to his offering He had not respect.*”
- C. Abel presented his offering by faith (Hebrews 11:4). Cain presented his offering in the flesh (Genesis 4:5).

We have also learned from Enoch’s life that a life that pleases God is a “**Walk of Faith.**”

- A. It is a Life of Faith (Genesis 5:18-24).
- B. It is a Life of Fellowship (Genesis 5:22).
- C. It is a Life of Faithfulness (Genesis 5:22).
- D. It is a Life of Fruitfulness (Hebrews 11:5).

From Noah’s life we learned that Noah was a man of Great Faith, he had a Working Faith!

- A. Noah's Faith Believed God's Warning (Hebrews 11:7).
- B. Noah's Faith Achieved God's Work ("*... prepared an ark ...*")
- C. Noah's Faith Perceived God's Wrath on Man's Wickedness (Genesis 6:5, 7-8; 11-13).
- D. Noah's Faith Received God's Wealth (Genesis 6:9).

From Abraham's life we also learned much about faith. Abraham's faith gave him vision to see afar off. From Abraham's life we have learned to **"Wait by Faith"**. We learned several principles:

- A. The Voice Principle (We must hear God's voice through His Word – Romans 10:17).
- B. The Venture Principle (We must be willing to obey God's voice when we hear – Luke 6:46 – "*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*").
- C. The Values Principle (We must establish priorities for God, and not set our tent pegs down too deep in this world).
- D. The Vision Principle (We must keep our faith focused during difficult times).
  1. Vision will help you to make difficult decisions.
  2. Vision will help you to be willing to sacrifice, to pay the price, to see God's will accomplished in your life.
  3. Vision will give you an eternal perspective (II Corinthians 4:18).
  4. Vision will help you to overcome fear and give you confident faith in God's Word (Hebrews 13:5-6).
- E. The Vigilance Principle (Faith will be tested – Genesis 12:10; 13:1).
- F. The Victory Principle (Hebrews 11:11; I John 5:1-5).

A **"Waiting Faith"** allows us to **"See Afar Off"**. Hebrews 11:13 – "*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but **having seen them afar off**, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims of the earth.*"

We also learned from Abraham's faith that our faith will be tested. In our last message in this series of messages we saw that Isaac's life showed us that God can even use a dysfunctional family to fulfill His will and purposes (Genesis 27).

- A. Look at the Sinful, Unspiritual Father (Isaac).
  1. Even though he was carnal and worldly, there was one special thing he had to pass along – the patriarchal blessing.
  2. It involved the family property, the family priesthood, and the family pedigree (the right to be in the direct lineage leading to the Messiah).

3. The **birthright** was the privilege, advantages and responsibilities of the Israelites. It normally was given to the firstborn son.
- B. Notice the Scheming, Unsurrendered Mother** (Rebekah – Genesis 27:5-17).
- C. Look at the Subtle, Unscrupulous (Shady) Son** (Jacob – Genesis 27:18-29).
- D. Notice the Sorry, Unsaved Sibling** (Esau – Genesis 27:34, 38). He thought that spiritual things could be bought and sold like a commodity.

In today's message I want us to see that Jacob had been a schemer all his life. But he learned to lean on the Lord. Notice some lessons from Jacob's life that we can learn:

## **I. LEARNING TO LEAN**

### **A. Notice the background of what has happened.**

1. The fact that God chose Jacob over Esau was not a mistake.
  - a. It was not an accident.
  - b. It was contrary to man's custom and tradition, but it was God's sovereign will (Romans 9:10-12; Malachi 1:2-5).
2. Jacob was a schemer. He had tricked his brother Esau out of his birthright.
3. Jacob had a right desire for spiritual things, but he sought to achieve them through carnal and wrong means.
4. Jacob by his natural nature was a con artist.
  - a. God was working on Jacob to make him what He wanted him to be.
  - b. God is still working on us and will not be finished with us until our total dependence is on Him and not on ourselves.
5. God will complete what He starts (Philippians 1:6).
6. Jacob had deceived Isaac his father. He had tricked Esau into trading the birth right for a bowl of stew, even though God had already given the birth right to Jacob, but Jacob did not trust God for what God had promised him (Genesis 25:23).

## **II. LOOK AT THE PRINCIPLES FROM JACOB'S LIFE THAT WE NEED TO LEARN**

### **A. God will Protect you, but God won't Pamper you** (Genesis 31:3, 24, 42).

1. Jacob finally decided to leave Laban when the Lord told him to "*Return to the land of your father and grandfather.*" So, Jacob returned to Bethel (vs. 3, 13).
2. During his ride to overtake Jacob, Laban is warned by God not to harm him (vs. 24, 25).

3. Jacob told his father-in-law that Laban's dishonesty caused him to leave. Jacob then told Laban that he left secretly because of fear (vs. 31-42).

**B. God will Hurt you, but God won't Harm you** (Genesis 32:22-32).

1. Look at the travail (vs. 22-26).
  - a. Jacob waited alone by the Jabbok River during the night.
  - b. A man came and wrestled with him until dawn.
2. Notice the triumph (vs. 27-29).
  - a. Jacob maintained the upper hand in this wrestling match.
  - b. God changed his name from Jacob ("the deceiver") to Israel ("a prince of God" or "one who struggles with God").
3. Look at the testimony (vs. 30-32).
  - a. Jacob called the place Peniel, meaning "the face of God".
  - b. Following this event, Jacob (literally) never walked the same again!
    - i. Are you truly different from the world since you have been saved?
    - ii. Are you truly walking with God?

**C. God will Break you, but He Desires to Bless you** (Genesis 32:27-28).

**CONCLUSION:** Genesis 47:28-31 tells us that Jacob wanted to make sure that the world would know that he was not an idol worshipping Egyptian, but a believer in the true and living God. His burial would be his last witness and testimony about the goodness of God. In his last days Jacob did not talk about the difficulties of life. He talked about the blessings of God (Genesis 48:3, 11, 15, 20-21).

Jacob's concern was to bless Joseph, whom he had made his firstborn, to adopt Joseph's two sons as his own and make them sons of Israel. Jacob had learned to lean upon the Lord. He had learned to trust God not and not in himself and his schemes.

How about you? Have you truly learned to trust God in every circumstance? Do you mostly talk about life's problems and difficult circumstances or do you continually testify to others about God's goodness and the blessings He has given you? Do you need to be saved, to trust Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?