

FAITH AND GODLY FEAR
Hebrews 11:7
The Faith Chapter – Week 4
By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Perhaps the most famous story in the Bible is that of Noah's ark. So, let's start with some Bible Trivia to test your Bible knowledge. Here are some other Bible trivia questions:
 - i. Q: How many animals did Moses put on the ark? A: "Moses" didn't put any animals on the ark; Noah did.
 - ii. Q: Which animal on Noah's Ark had the highest level of intelligence? A. The giraffe.
 - iii. Q: Why did Noah have to punish and discipline the chickens on the Ark? A. Because they were using "fowl" language.
 - iv. Q: What kind of lights were on the ark? A: Floodlights.
 - v. Q: Why didn't Noah go fishing? A: He only had two worms!
 - vi. Q: What animal could Noah not trust? A: The Cheetah.
2. We're in a sermon series right now on Hebrews 11 – The Faith Chapter. It's called the faith chapter because it is all about faith. It begins with a definition of faith, and then it shows us what faith looks like in real life through the stories of the heroes of the faith in the Old Testament. So far we've looked at Abel, and then Enoch, and today we're going to look at Noah.

II. TEXT

1. **Hebrews 11:7** "By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith."

III. THE STORY OF NOAH

1. Who is Noah?
2. Noah's story is found in Genesis 6-9.
3. The people of his generation had become very wicked; so wicked that God decided to destroy every person on earth, and every animal on earth.

4. But there was one man who please God. Noah. Noah took after his great-grandfather, Enoch, who walked with God.
 - i. **Genesis 6:8-9** says, “Noah, however, found favor with the Lord. These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God.”
5. So, God told Noah His plan. He said He was going to destroy every human and animal in a worldwide flood. And He was going to start over with Noah and his family – Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives.
6. Then God gave Noah some instructions. He told him to build an ark – a giant boat. How big? 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. That’s the length of one and a half football fields.
7. Why would Noah need such a big boat? Because God told him to get a pair of every animal – a male and a female – to put in the ark, so that the animal kingdom would not be wiped out.
8. Noah was five hundred years old when God told him this. And he believed God and obeyed.
9. One hundred years later, when Noah was six hundred years old, the flood began. It rained for forty days and forty nights, and the sources of the watery depths burst open. The water rose so high that the highest mountains in the world were over twenty feet under water. All the people and animals died except for Noah and his family.
10. Eventually the rain stopped, and the waters receded. After being in the ark for over a year, the earth was dry enough for Noah and his family to leave the ark and start over.
11. Then God made a promise to Noah to never destroy the earth with a flood again. And as a sign of His promise, God put a rainbow in the sky. Now, any time you see a rainbow, it is to a reminder of God’s promise.
12. What can we learn about faith from Noah?

IV. FAITH IS GODLY FEAR

1. So far in this series we have learned from Abel that faith is righteous living. We learned from Enoch that faith is pleasing God. In the story of Noah we learn that faith is godly fear.

2. **Hebrews 11:7** “By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”
3. Notice the term godly fear. His godly fear is what motivated him to believe God’s message and obey God’s word. Where did this godly fear come from? Faith. If you have true faith in God, you will have godly fear. If you lack godly fear, then you lack faith.
4. At the same time, if you want to develop this godly fear, which is a Christian character quality, then you need to grow in faith.
5. So, what is godly fear? The term is translated by different Bible versions as “godly fear,” “reverent fear,” “fear,” and “holy fear.” The Greek term comes from the word eulabes, which, which is a combination word. Eu means good, well, right, rightly, and lambano means to take. So, literally the word means to take well. Spiritually it means to take God’s word seriously – His promises and His commands.
6. **John MacArthur** wrote, “Noah treated the message of God with great respect and awe.” (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, 318.)
7. **Donald Hagner** wrote that it literally means “Having reverent regard for [the divinely revealed warnings or commandments].” (*Hebrews*, New International Biblical Commentary, 185.)
8. So, this godly fear has means taking God’s word seriously.
9. This is what faith looks like in a person’s life. Taking God seriously. If someone has genuine faith, they take God’s word seriously. Those who don’t have genuine faith don’t take God’s seriously.
10. What does this godly fear look like in real life? That’s where the story of Noah helps us. Hebrews 11:7 tells us that there are three aspects to godly fear.

V. **WHAT IS GODLY FEAR?**

1. **Believing God’s word.**

- i. **Hebrews 11:7** “By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”

- ii. Why did Noah build an ark? Because God warned him about the flood and told him to build the ark, and Noah believed God's word.
- iii. Godly fear, or taking God's word seriously, means believing God's word.
- iv. Do you believe God's word? The Bible says that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and rose again. Do you believe it? The Bible says that there is only one God, and one Savior. Do you believe it? The Bible says that Jesus is coming back one day. Do you believe it? The Bible says that heaven and hell are real, and everyone will spend eternity in one or the other. Do you believe it? The Bible says that God is always watching you, and he will punish wickedness and reward righteousness. Do you believe it? The Bible says that God hears and answers prayer. Do you believe it? The Bible says that God is good even when life is not. Do you believe it?
- v. Godly fear or taking God's word seriously means believing God's word.
- vi. Someone might ask, "Can we trust God's word?" Absolutely. There is nothing more trustworthy in this world than God's word. There is only one thing that is infallible in this world. It's not scientists or doctors. Look at the way many of them handled the pandemic, and masks, and social distancing, and the vaccine. It's not politicians. Many of them believe that a man can get pregnant? It's not school teachers. A large number of our public school teachers today are activists for Communism, Darwinism, Atheism, Critical Race Theory, and the queer alphabet. It's not even pastors. The entire United Methodist denomination just voted to change their beliefs on homosexuality and no longer call it a sin. I hope you don't think the internet is infallible. Just recently Google came out with Gemini, an AI image generator. You could type in something and it would instantly generate an image. They quickly had to take it down because it became apparent that it was created by a woke lunatic. If you typed in the word pope, it would generate a picture of an Asian woman

pope. If you typed in the word “Vikings,” it would generate a picture of black Vikings. If you typed in “Founding Fathers,” it would generate an image of racial minorities signing the Declaration of Independence. There’s only one thing infallible in this world, one thing that you can trust completely, and that’s God’s word. **1 Peter 1:24-25** says, “The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” **Psalm 19:7** says, “The instruction of the Lord is perfect, renewing one’s life; the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise.” You can trust the Bible. I trust the Bible. I believe every word of it. I believe it when it says God created the heavens and the earth in six days. I believe it when it says that God created human beings, male and female, in the image of God. I believe the Bible when it says that God flooded the entire earth in the time of Noah. I believe the Bible when it says that God parted the Red Sea to rescue the Israelites. I believe the Bible when it says that God spoke to Moses out of a burning bush. I believe the Bible when it says that Jonah was swallowed by a big fish and lived to tell the story. I believe the Bible when it says that Jesus was born of a virgin, turned water into wine, walked on the water, cast out demons, healed the lepers, and made the lame to walk, the mute to speak, and the blind to see. I believe the Bible when it says that Jesus died for my sins and rose again. I believe the Bible, every word of it, and you can too.

- vii. So, let me ask you again. Do you believe God’s word? That’s godly fear. That’s what it means to take God’s word seriously. That’s true faith.

2. Obeying God’s word.

- i. **Hebrews 11:7** “By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”
- ii. The second aspect of godly fear is obeying God’s word. Noah did not just believe God’s word about the flood; he obeyed God’s instructions and built the ark. He followed God’s building

instructions for the ark. He followed God's instructions about bringing two of each animal into the ark.

- iii. The book of Genesis repeatedly points out Noah's obedience.
 - 1. **Genesis 6:22** "And Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him."
 - 2. **Genesis 7:5** "And Noah did everything that the LORD commanded him."
- iv. Godly fear, or taking God's word seriously, means obeying God's word.
- v. What is God's word? It is the Bible. Sixty-six books, 39 in the Old Testament, and 27 in the New Testament. It is filled with God's moral commands, such as the Ten Commandments. And even though it was written thousands of years ago, it is still relevant and authoritative today. Thousands of years ago the Bible said, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church." That's still relevant and authoritative today. Thousands of years ago the Bible said, "Wives, submit to your husbands." That's still relevant and authoritative today. Thousands of years ago the Bible said, "Children, honor your parents." That's still relevant and authoritative today. Thousands of years ago the Bible said, "No foul language should come from your mouth." That's still relevant and authoritative today. Thousands of years ago the Bible said, "What God has joined together, let no one separate." That's still relevant and authoritative today. Thousands of years ago the Bible said, "If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." That's still relevant and authoritative today.
- vi. The Bible is not a book of suggestions, or helpful hints, or propositions, or recommendations. It's not a book of friendly advice. It is a law book. Yes, it's a love letter, but it's a love letter that says, "Because I love you, I want you to live a certain way for your good and My glory." Christianity is not merely rules and regulations, but it includes rules and regulations. It includes moral commands and laws and boundaries and guidelines. And God demands and deserves our total obedience.

- vii. **1 Corinthians 7:19** "Keeping God's commands is what matters."
- viii. **John 14:15** "If you love me, you will keep my commands."
- ix. True faith is godly fear or taking God's word seriously. And that means obeying God's word.
- x. **1 John 2:3-4** "3 This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commands. 4 The one who says, 'I have come to know him,' and yet doesn't keep his commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."
- xi. True faith means godly fear, or taking God's word seriously, and that involves obeying God's word.

3. Preaching God's word.

- i. **Hebrews 11:7** "By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith."
- ii. The third aspect of godly fear is preaching God's word. Notice it says, "By faith he condemned the world." 2 Peter 2:5 calls Noah a preacher of righteousness. Try to imagine what it was like when Noah built the real ark; the original. Noah likely lived in Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and Euphrates. He and his neighbors didn't live near a large body of water. They had probably never seen large ships before. They had never seen rain before. Then Noah builds this giant ship. Can you imagine the conversations Noah was having with his neighbors? "Noah, what are you building? Why?" How did Noah respond? He preached. He told people that God was going to send a flood, and that people needed to repent and turn to God, and join him on the ark. Noah started building at the age of 500, and the flood didn't come until 100 years later. That means there was plenty of time for the word to spread far and wide about the weird man who was building a giant boat. Answers in Genesis is an organization that built a true to scale ark in Kentucky, and each year over one million people travel to see it. People likely traveled from all over to see Noah. When the multitudes

- showed up to see the ark, guess what Noah did? He preached. Repent. Turn to God. Join me on the ark. Judgment is coming!
- iii. True faith is godly fear; it is taking God's word seriously. And that means not just believing it, not just obeying it, but preaching it. When you truly take God's word seriously, you can't help but wanting to share it with everyone you know. Because you know how important it is.
 - iv. As human beings, we can't help but talk about something if we are truly excited about; if it makes a positive difference in our lives; if we are passionate about. When you find a good restaurant, or watch a good movie, or discover a new diet that helps you lose weight fast, or buy a new car, you can't help but tell people. The same is true with godly fear. The person who takes God's word seriously can't help but share it.
 - v. I got saved when I was in middle school. And it wasn't enough for me believe God's word, or to obey God's word. I had to share it with everyone I knew. God had changed my life. And Jesus was the only way to heaven. I had to share it. So, as a middle school student I started wearing a Christian t-shirt every day, and I carried my Bible around from class to class. When I was in high school I did the same thing and more. There were these popular t-shirts back then that said things like, "Football is life," or "Fishing is life," or "Baseball is life." I found a t-shirt with a picture of a basketball that said, "Basketball is life," and I would wear it during warm-ups for my basketball games. I also wrote a scripture reference on my basketball shoes. Why did I do all of that? As a conversation starter. I wanted people to say, "Why are you doing that? Why are you wearing that? Why are you carrying that? Why are you building a giant boat?" "I'm glad you asked."
 - vi. Your relationship with God should be very personal to you, but it should not be private. It's not meant to be a secret. God wants you to live out loud. He wants you to be His witness. He wants you to be bold; to be fearless; to be outspoken.

- vii. We need Christians like that today. We need Christians who will boldly proclaim God's truth -- that there is only one true God; that the Bible is true; that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven; that heaven and hell are real; that sex before marriage is a sin; that homosexuality and transgenderism are against God's will; that marriage is permanent and God hates divorce. We need Christians who will not only live for God but speak for God.
- viii. That's what godly fear looks like. That's what it looks like when you take God's word seriously. You preach it.
 - ix. Yes, speak the truth in love, but preach it.
 - x. Yes, always with gentleness and respect, but preach it.
 - xi. Yes, actions speak louder than words, but preach it.
 - xii. These are the three aspects of godly fear: Belief in God's word; obedience to God's word; preaching God's word. That's the person that takes God's word seriously. That's what true faith looks like. That's what being a true Christian looks like.

VI. ILLUSTRATION

1. I heard a story about a lady named Pauline Jacoby. Her story powerfully illustrates the life of godly fear. She lived in Dyersburg, TN. She was 92 years old. She taught Sunday school, was engaged in WMU, and was very involved in her church, FBC Dyersburg. She went grocery shopping every Tuesday. One Tuesday during the winter she went shopping, she walked to her car, loaded up her groceries, sat down in the driver's seat, put the key in the ignition, and the passenger door opened. A middle-aged man with an unsavory odor sat down, pointed a gun at her and said, "Lady, give me all of your money." Ms. Jacoby looked at him and said, "No, son, I'm not going to give you my money." Then the man pointed the gun in her face and said, "Lady, do you not understand that if you don't give me all of your money that I'm going to kill you?" She said, "Yes sir, I understand that very well, and if you kill me I'm going to go straight to heaven, but sonny I'm not so sure about you. It seems to me like you need the love of God in your life." She began to share the gospel with him. She said, "God loves you, and wants to save you, and doesn't want you to live the life you are living. And if you'll just turn to God, He'll help you." The man put the gun down on his lap said,

“Ma’am, I’m going to have to think about what you shared today.” And he pulled the handle to get out of the car, but before he could leave she grabbed his arm and said, “Hang on, son.” She pulled out her wallet from her purse and gave him all the cash in her wallet, \$43. At this point she noticed big tears that began to stream down his cheeks. He again moved to leave the car, but then he stopped, turned around, and gave Ms. Pauline a kiss on the cheek. Then he got out of the car and went on his way.

2. I don’t know if that man got saved or not, but I do know that that was an example of godly fear. That is an example of a woman who takes God’s word seriously. That’s a woman who believed God’s word, obeyed God’s word, and preached God’s word. And that’s the kind of Christians that our world needs today.
3. Before we close, I want to give you three warnings and a promise about godly fear.

VII. THREE WARNINGS AND A PROMISE

1. Warning: The life of godly fear is not easy.
 - i. If you expect the life of faith and godly fear to be easy, you will be disappointed.
 - ii. The message God told Noah was hard to believe. A flood that would destroy the entire world. Noah had never even seen rain before.
 - iii. The task God gave Noah was hard. Build a giant boat. Noah did not have the power tools and the machinery that we have today. Maybe the reason that one hundred years passed between the flood and God’s command to build the ark was that’s how long it took Noah to build it.
 - iv. The life of godly fear is not easy. Being pure until you get married is hard. Saying no to alcohol when everyone else says yes is hard. Doing the right thing at work and school rather than cheating and cutting ethical corners is hard. Sometimes faith means going the long way; sometimes it means losing money; sometimes it means suffering and sacrifice.
2. Warning: The life of godly fear is lonely.

- i. If you go all out for Jesus, don't be surprised if you have to go alone.
 - ii. The Bible says that in Noah's generation he was the only one who found favor with God.
 - iii. Noah preached for over 100 years without winning any converts.
 - iv. The life of godly fear can be lonely. You may not fit in with the world; you may not be accepted by the world; the world may not be impressed with your devotion. You may be the only one doing the right thing.
3. Warning: The life of godly fear looks silly.
- i. If you go all out for Jesus, don't be surprised if unbelievers don't think you're cool, hip, and trendy.
 - ii. When Noah built the ark and preached about a coming worldwide flood that would destroy every person and animal, to most people he must have looked and sounded very silly. People likely laughed, teased, mocked, ridiculed, and made fun of him.
 - iii. Godly fear often looks silly to people who don't have faith.
4. Promise: The life of godly fear is always worth it.
- i. As a result of his faith and godly fear, Noah lived a truly amazing life.
 - 1. He built the ark – a humanly impossible assignment.
 - 2. He saved humanity.
 - 3. He saved the animal kingdom.
 - 4. He became the father of all human being who would follow him (we are all descendants of Noah).
 - 5. He and his family survived the flood.
 - ii. In other words, the life of faith and godly fear is worth it. It may be hard at times, it may be lonely at times, it may look silly at times, but it's always worth it.
 - iii. God will reward you in this life and in the life to come.
 - iv. **Galatians 6:9** "Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up."

VIII. CONCLUSION

1. Hebrews 11 is teaching us about faith. What can we learn about faith from Noah?

2. Faith is godly fear. Faith means taking God's word seriously – believing it, obeying it, preaching it.
3. If you true faith, then you will live a life of godly fear.
4. If you want to live a life of godly fear, then you need to grow in faith.
5. When you listen to a sermon like this, you may be thinking, "I don't measure up. I haven't lived a life of godly fear. I have doubted God's word. I have disobeyed God's word. I have not preached God's word. I'm a sinner. What should I do?"
6. The story of Noah and the ark is a beautiful reminder of the gospel. Just like in Noah's day, God has promised that once again the world is headed toward judgment; but this time the judgment is not a worldwide flood, it is eternal hell. Everyone who has sinned against God will be thrown into hell for all eternity. But, just like Noah's story, God has provided an ark; but this time it is not a boat, it is His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins, and He rose again. And the Bible says that if you will repent of your sins and believe in Jesus, if you will board the ark, God will forgive your sins and save you from the flood of His judgment. When you die, you will go to heaven instead of hell. Will you trust Him today?
7. It's hard to imagine that the ark was big enough to fit every kind of animal. But people have done the math. The ark was big enough to hold about 522 railroad stock cars. It needed room for about 35,000 vertebrate animals. Let's assume the average size animal is the size of a sheep. A stock car can hold 120 sheep. That means the ark would only need to hold 292 stock cars worth of animals. That means there was plenty of room for Noah, his family, the animals, and food.
8. Jesus has the capacity to save you from sin. It doesn't matter what you've done, Jesus has room for you. He can fit you in. He invites you in. All you have to do is believe.