



Sunday, July 2, 2017
Pastor Keith Sovà

Introduction to Hebrews 11:8-10

Apart from Jesus, Abraham is the New Testament's favorite example of a person who lived by faith (see Rom. 4; Gal. 3; James 2). While certainly not without his flaws, what is praiseworthy about Abraham was his ability to take God at His word. When God spoke, Abraham listened, obeyed, and persevered in that obedience with the hope that through his obedience he would obtain the reward (see Heb. 11:6).

Today we live in an age of skepticism. Most of us are not willing to take someone at their word. We tend to think that everyone has ulterior motives or that they want to deceive us. To be fair, in a sinful, fallen world that is often the case. But our general skepticism can derail our faith if we allow it to impact the way we view and listen to God. Do we need God to give us some proof other than His word in order to obey Him? Do we need special blessings from Him when trials come our way so that we continue living by faith? Or is His word sufficient to sustain us even in the worst of times? If we can learn anything from Abraham, it's that God's word is all we need...

Context

The context for Hebrews 11:8-10 goes all the way back to Genesis chapters 12-25 (but especially 12:1-9) where God speaks to Abraham and tells him to leave his home country, pack up his camping gear, and follow wherever God would lead him. Through famine, war, broken family relationships, and all sorts of other hardships, Abraham never gave up his camping gear for a safer, more permanent home. He simply took God at His word and remained faithful until the end.

Discuss

- 1) Our world is filled with people who try to discredit the Bible. Many try to object on intellectual grounds that the Bible contains errors. Others object that it is an outdated way of life, that culture has progressed beyond what the Bible teaches. Why do you think so many people are skeptical of the Bible?
- 2) Abraham's obedience to God's command was immediate and unflinching. Why is it so difficult for us—even those who truly believe the Bible—to obey in a similar way?
- 3) Trials, like physical suffering or simply waiting for deliverance, inevitably come to people who live by faith. How can we persevere in living by faith when we suffer or seem to be waiting with no end in sight?
- 4) Jesus is the ultimate example of living by faith (Heb. 12:1-2). He obeyed God the Father and lived as a stranger as well. How does Jesus' patient, persevering obedience encourage us to live by faith?
- 5) Read Isaiah 65:17-25 and Revelation 21:9-27. How do those passages describe the "city that has foundations" which is built by God Himself? And how can we encourage one another to meditate on those things so that we persevere?