Righteousness Comes by Faith

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[0:00] The book of Hebrews, in the 11th chapter, verse 7.

! In earlier lessons, in this great chapter, we saw Abel worship in faith,! And Enoch walked in faith, and today we come to Noah who obeyed in faith.
Verse 7 says this, 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. That single verse of Scripture is so packed with enough information, we could really study that easily the rest of the year, this year, which is only three lessons.
It's difficult to know exactly where to start, so I said, let's start with James. That makes a lot of sense. James 2.26, faith without works is dead.
[1:29] Those five words of inspiration are also packed with great truth and great information. true faith, true faith, which is, by the way, the only kind of saving faith there is, is always supported by accompanying good works.

By good works, we're referring to those works that God has established and preordained that we should walk in them.
For faith to be legitimate, it must radiate godly good works. Those truly saved bear the evidence of the indwelling Spirit of Christ through the way they live, the things they say, and in what they do.
So, in other words, don't live your life like me, live it like Jesus commanded us. Many there are on this earth that only have a dead faith, and a dead faith never saved anyone.
Never. So today we come to Noah, who perhaps more than anyone in history, Noah illustrates true faith, which also manifests itself in obedience.
[3:07] Noah obeyed the voice of God when it made no sense at all to do so. That is an obedient faith.

Now, the deceiver Satan has always been the enemy of faith, makes every effort to get people away from true faith, and have them camp out in a false or counterfeit faith.
There are many tracks that Satan can take on this evil mission. He might try to convince some that they're already good, so why do they need faith?
He may try to convince someone that if they are saved, works are not necessary.
And there are all kinds of variations to the evil schemes of the evil one. The apostle Paul, of course, was a great champion of justification by faith alone.
[4:17] But he also knew that those truly saved by faith alone would engage in good works. Here's Paul's words in 1 Timothy 6.18.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share. As believers, I think most of us have memorized Ephesians 2, 8, and 9, and that's a good thing, but we should never read those two verses without including verse 10.
When we do, here's what we hear from God. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and not of your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
So we're to walk in good works, preordained by God. And Noah was such a man of faith. He had an active faith in that he believed God, he obeyed God, Noah displayed the faith of Abel in that he worshipped God correctly, he displayed the faith of Enoch, in that he walked with God in his generation, and he also worked for God faithfully.
[6:04] Noah, in fact, was so strong in his faith that when God told him to do what appeared to be an absurd and impossible task, he did it all the same.

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He built an ark, if you would, a boat, but we'll call it an ark because that's what the Bible calls it. It took him 120 years to complete that project in a region that had very little water.
Still doesn't have very much water. I've been over there. He did so because God told him a flood judgment was coming over the entire earth. You know, we debate that all the time.
I don't know why. Why is that so hard? He said a flood is coming. It's going to cover the whole earth. And that was all the information that God had to tell Noah.
He then set out doing what God told him to do. And by doing that, we call that faith. He put wheels to his faith.
[7:13] How do we know that Noah's faith was genuine? Well, the proof is in Hebrews 11.7, the very verse that we're studying tonight. And in those three brief words, we will see three proofs as to the genuineness of Noah's faith.

We do know that Noah responded to God's Word. In the first portion of verse 7, Hebrews 11, by faith, Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen.
No one had ever seen a flood, by the way. In reverent fear, constructed an ark for the saving of his household.
There we have proof number one. God told Noah, Brother Noah, I'm going to destroy the world because it is covered with wickedness.
Noah, I want you to build an ark. And Noah dropped what he was doing and he started construction. Put this in context, Noah lived in an area known as Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.
[8:38] They may have been just little streams in those days. I don't know. There were no sizable lakes in the region and he was far from any ocean.

We can only imagine what such a command from God must have sounded like. It certainly would have been a struggle, but also embarrassing. I wonder how many of us would have chosen to debate God, perhaps try to talk him out of such a plan.
You know, why do you want me to build an ark? Looks like I could build a raft. Now, Noah only had a fraction of light concerning the catastrophe that was coming.
Yet we see no evidence of anything on his part except total and instant obedience. He received this one command and spent the next 120 years fulfilling it to the letter.
Noah stands first in the long line of God's people who obeyed even when they didn't fully comprehend. And I can just imagine from the human standpoint how many arguments Noah might have had with his wife.
[9:57] You know, you're letting everything else go and you're out here building this thing. Are you sure you heard from God? But he must have won her over at some point.

From the human standpoint, the deck was stacked against Noah. I don't mean that as a pun. But the deck was stacked against Noah.
He didn't have any shipbuilding experience, neither did anybody on earth. never seen an ocean, never seen a large ship. He certainly couldn't turn to his neighbors and say, hey, would you help me with this project?
He received assistance only from his three sons and their wives along with Mrs. Noah.
There are some theologians that believe Noah may not have even seen rain in his lifetime at this point, that most of the watering of the plants and the grass or whatever came from below and rose up.
[11:06] But we can't be emphatic about that. More watered by dew, though, certainly he had never witnessed a flood. We're positive of that.

But by faith, he began construction of the ark. And think of that ark, brothers, as a type of deliverer that would save him and his family from the judgment of God.
And in that regard, the ark is a type of Christ. Think of the ark as a type of Christ. We hide ourselves in him and are safe from the wrath of God upon sinners.
And we're told that Noah built the ark in reverence. He was on a holy mission, a holy quest here. That's an interesting word in the Greek language.
It means he built it out of pious care and concern. Noah was spiritually devoted to this project.
[12:21] Now, the ark is filled with symbolic truth that has application down to our day. It was covered in pitch.

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By the way, that is the word atonement. The pitch kept the water from entering the ark. The blood of the atonement keeps God's wrath and judgment from sinners like us who have by faith, given us by God, received salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.
Now, the ark was not a seafaring ship as we know them. First of all, you couldn't maneuver it. It had no maneuverability. It was really meant to float on top of the water and not to capsize.
That was the two, you know, I'm going to build in two things in this, Noah. It's going to float and it's not going to turn over. Well, that's a good thing. That's a good thing.
It was basically a wooden chest out on the middle of the water. Some estimate that it contained about 1.3 million cubic feet of space, more than adequate for the purpose of its design.
[13:45] Interesting, the Naval Academy, which is filled with naval engineers, will tell you, and they did studies, that such a vessel is the most stable one that can be built for the ocean.

That's a very stable, I hesitate to call it a boat, an ark, like a chest. And the ark, of course, is a beautiful picture of salvation in Christ.
The size of the ark was such it provided safe haven for the animals, for the eight members of Noah's family. And you know, it still had plenty of room had there been more human passengers. But there weren't any. They were too busy mocking Noah and laughing at him and making fun of him. No one else came on board because no one else in that generation sought safety and salvation on God's terms.
Sounds like our day. Most don't seek salvation on God's terms, which is only through Christ. The fault was not God's then or now.
[15:02] People are not saved because they do not want to be saved. I heard the great R.C. Sproul and he would get in arguments about election and all that and he said, you show me someone who wants to be saved, they can be saved.

All they've got to do is come God's way through Christ. It's not rocket science. You want to be saved? Do it God's way, you'll be saved.
God is not willing that any should perish. It is His desire that we come to repentance. But they must come on His terms through the atonement of Christ and with heart desiring obedience to Him.
Had anyone else come to enter the ark they would have been allowed because no one who comes to Christ is ever cast out. And by the way, that's good news.
The Scriptures tell us that Noah was blameless in his day. And let me add here, that is not a declaration of sinlessness. Was Noah a sinner?
[16:13] Sure. All of sin and come short of the glory of God. All of us. Noah, like all of us, had sinned. He had fallen short of that glory. We actually see some of his sinfulness after the flood when he was in a state of drunkenness.

But Noah was a man of obedient faith and therefore God could cleanse his account and declare him righteous. Like Abraham and all who are saved, this is a righteousness that is accredited to his account.
Noah believed God about the approach of judgment. He did not pick and choose certain aspects of God's revelation to him.
And that is what many in the church and in the world do today. Noah chose to believe everything God told him and he did everything God told him to do and he was blameless in his generation. Certainly, his neighbors couldn't find any fault with him even if they tried. And Noah rebuked the world. And that's the second proof of the genuineness of Noah's faith.
[17:39] He rebuked the world by faith. The second part of verse 7. By faith, Noah condemned the world.

Noah passed on to his generation God's warning of coming judgment. And for that, by the way, he was referred to in the New Testament, 2 Peter 2.5, as a preacher of righteousness.
While he built the ark out of obedience to God's instruction, he also preached to those who came and watched. And you can imagine, I mean, that's cheap entertainment in a small community, you know, a few thousand people.
Come out and let's watch this guy. Now we know that Noah lived in times of great wickedness. Genesis 6.5, the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
So Noah was given a task by the Lord God. And he told, I want you to warn these people. Judgment's coming.

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[19:04] To do so, he referred to his audience as wicked and perverse in their generation. You know, that's not an easy message to preach, is it, Pastor?

To get up and tell folks that. The earth had become truly demon-possessed. sin was rampant. God had tempered his judgment with mercy in that, and think of this, he allowed 120 years of steady preaching that revealed the danger the people were in.
Noah went out there and preached every day while he was working on that ark. God was preparing judgment, but he was also preparing a way of escape.
And the people in Noah's day had ample warning. Had no excuse when the flood water swept them away. People today, regardless of religion or geographic location, have the same warning.
[20:17] warning. Let me read one of those warnings to you. Romans 120. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made, so they are without excuse.

Another great one is in the Psalms. the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament his handiwork or his fingerprints. People can go out in the night sky and see God's work on display.
The sad lesson about Noah's day is that men and women in our day have not learned the lesson. It's all in writing.
They can pick it up and read it, but they haven't learned the lesson. The world is filled with sin and massive rejection of God.
Men are still without excuse. And because judgment has been delayed, a lot of people believe judgment's been denied. But judgment delayed is never judgment denied.
[21:39] Ever. God said judgment is coming. Do you want to know the problem with the human race? most of its members have lost the fear of God.

Consider the parallels between Noah and our day. God's message rejected, wickedness, immorality, violence, lewdness, vulgarity, profanity, lying, killing, blasphemy.
I just want to name a few. the last judgment approaches and it will be by fire and it will be the final judgment before believers enter into the eternity of eternities.
And the scriptures tell us also that Noah became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. Noah received the righteousness of God.
Third proof of the genuineness of Noah's faith is that God bestowed upon him a righteousness that only comes to those who are faithful.
[22:52] It comes to those who have trusted God through his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. No other name under heaven by which we are saved. And Jesus told us he was the way the truth and the life and no one could come to the Father except by him.

Genesis 6 9 says a righteous man blameless in his time Noah walked with God. What a testimony isn't it? Noah walked with God.
You know can't be emphatic about this but Noah may well have learned that walk from Enoch. Remember we studied him? And Enoch got raptured off of the earth before this universal judgment. That is a picture of what will happen to the true church in my opinion before the next universal judgment. I think will be removed.
People say well yeah but you can't point to any verse of that. Well I'm going to point to one. I love how John put it in the revelation of Jesus Christ. Revelation 3.10 Jesus is speaking to the church at Philadelphia and when you study all seven of those churches I hope we're a Philadelphia church, this church because every church in existence fits one of those seven churches.
[24:22] Here's what Jesus said because you have kept the word of my perseverance I will keep you from the hour of testing.

That hour which is about to come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth. And that hour of testing is always a reference to judgment coming.
That is a great and confirming statement on pre-tribulation rapture of the church. So are Paul's words to the church at Thessalonica 1 Thessalonians 4.16-18 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.
And the dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall always be with the Lord.
Therefore encourage one another with these words. People ask me sometimes, we mean we're just going to hang in the air the rest of eternity? No, no. Wherever Jesus is, we're going to be there.

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When He comes to this earth to establish His kingdom on earth, we're going to come with Him. [25:46] When He goes to the eternity, to the heavenly Jerusalem, we're going to go with Him. Those who have been saved by God through the blood of the Lamb are righteous.

They have an imputed righteousness. We may experience frequent times when we do not possess a practical righteousness, but by God's grace, He has bestowed upon us positional righteousness. righteousness. When the Father sees us, He sees the Son if we are one with Him. He saw this righteousness in Noah and used Him to preach coming judgment upon a dying world.
And that is really our message today because that judgment is still coming and the world is still dying. There are two other passages that should be familiar to us.
One of those is found in the Gospel of Matthew. The other found in the Gospel of Luke. In Matthew 24, 38 and 39, we read this, for as in those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.
[27:29] And then our good friend Dr. Luke, in Luke 17, 28 to 30, likewise, now that was as in the days of Noah. Here, we have the days of Lot.

Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot, they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all.
So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. So what do these passages mean? In the last days, just before the turn of Christ, there will be widespread sin, according to Matthew. According to Dr. Luke, there will be widespread homosexual sin. Are we not in those days? really? So how do we close? I'll close with Luke 21-28. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh.
[28:51] Jesus is coming. I used to believe firmly He was going to come in my lifetime, but then I backed away from that.

Now I'm back on track. I really believe, or some of us in here at least. Thank you.

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