



Holy Desire: Hebrews 11v5-22

Faith does astonishing things when you view it from a worldly perspective (for example, Noah and Abraham). Faith begins on the inside of a person (Hebrews 8v10). People with faith desire something that cannot even begin until they have God's loving presence with them here.

1) Holy Fear (11v7)

The word used to describe Noah's "holy fear" (11v7) is the same word used to describe our reverence in worship in Hebrews 12v28. It is an awesome thing to have God reveal himself and speak his guarantees and promises into your life, to keep on encountering and knowing the God who is holy, special and set apart. Noah lived by faith and so he knew reverence towards God.

2) Holy Longing (11v8-16, v20-22)

Abraham also encountered God and received his covenant promises of a people and a place. He left his familiar home for a better home, because he was waiting for and seeking a city with foundations built by God (v8-10). Faith seeks God himself, and the promise is that this approach of faith finds him (11v6, Matthew 7v7-8).

A large part of the benefit and blessing of being a Christian is future (v13), and that creates both holy longing now, and the ability to die in faith holding onto God's promises (v13, v20-22). All these "witnesses" (12v1) lived by faith, and so pleased God (v6), and were seeking a home that felt like being home (instead of like being a stranger on earth, v13-14). They didn't have an overriding taste for what they gave up (v15), but deeply longed for and desired that heavenly country and city (v16). Their and our longing is for God, in the place he prepares for us. Wonderfully, God is not ashamed to be our God (v16), but passionately longs for us too.

Faith starts on the inside. God transforms our understanding and our affections, our perceptions and our passions.

3) Laying it down (11v17-19)

When Abraham is tested with the prospect of offering Isaac (v17-18), Abraham has reached the point where God is his supreme treasure and Abraham trusts God person-to-person. This is a moment of absolute vulnerability between God and Abraham which must have been excruciatingly hard for Abraham. When we lay everything down (v19) and place our lives, with holy reverence and awe, with holy longing and love into Christ's hands, he always uses his wisdom and power to bring life. Christ has been vulnerable with us, to the point of exposure and death on the cross, and he longs for us to bring all of our lives in vulnerability and love to him.

Faith knows this holy reverence, this holy longing, and this holy vulnerability towards the Lord.

