

From Art Barber Oct 11, 2011

THIS EVENING'S DEVOTIONS ARE FROM AN ARTICLE RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN *THE PHILADELPHIA TRUMPET*, A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD, TITLED - "THE EVIDENCE OF FAITH".

YOU CANNOT SEE FAITH AS IT IS SPIRITUAL AND DOESN'T COME BY THE FIVE SENSES. IT IS THERE BECAUSE OF THE PRESENCE OF AN INVISIBLE SPIRITUAL GOD. HEBREWS 11:1 MAKES THIS PLAIN, STATING "... *FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN*".

THERE ARE SEVERAL OUTSTANDING MODELS OF A LIVING FAITH IN OUR HOLY BIBLE. NOAH, FOR EXAMPLE, "MOVED WITH FEAR" AFTER BEING WARNED BY GOD OF THINGS NOT SEEN AS YET. NOAH'S REACTION WAS BASED SOLELY ON WHAT GOD SAID. THERE WAS NO PHYSICAL EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST A FLOOD WOULD EVENTUALLY DESTROY ALL MANKIND. ALL THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTED HE SHOULD NOT BUILD THE ARK. PEOPLE IN THOSE DAYS WERE ENJOYING THE "GOOD" LIFE- EATING, DRINKING, AND CONTENT, AS CHRIST DESCRIBES IN LUKE 17. WHY LOOK LIKE A FANATIC AND SPEND 100 YEARS BUILDING A HUGE ARK IN THE MIDDLE OF DRY LAND WHILE BEING SUBJECTED TO CRUEL MOCKINGS AND RIDICULE? NOAH ACCEPTED THIS ASSIGNMENT BECAUSE GOD SAID SO! GOD TOLD HIM THAT A FLOOD WOULD COME AND NOAH SIMPLY BELIEVED HIM IN FAITH.

ABRAHAM ALSO FAITHFULLY FEARED AND OBEYED GOD. HE WAS 75 YEARS OLD WHEN GOD TOLD HIM TO LEAVE ALL THAT HE HAD AND TRAVEL TO AN UNFAMILIAR, FARAWAY PLACE. HEBREWS 11:8 DESCRIBES "*BY FAITH ABRAHAM, WHEN HE WAS CALLED TO GO OUT INTO A PLACE WHICH HE SHOULD AFTER ^{ward} RECEIVE FOR AN INHERITANCE, OBEYED; AND HE WENT OUT, NOT KNOWING WHITHER HE WENT*" GOD TOLD HIM TO GO, AND ABRAHAM LEFT IN FAITH, NOT EVEN KNOWING WHERE HE WAS GOING! AT THE AGE OF 130, NEARLY 55 YEARS AFTER LEAVING HIS HOMELAND, ABRAHAM FACED HIS GREATEST TEST OF FAITH. HE WAS TOLD TO SACRIFICE HIS SON ISAAC. HIS FAITH HAD BECOME SO STRONG THAT

HE DIDN'T QUESTION GOD! WHEN HE ARRIVED AT THE PLACE GOD HAD COMMANDED AND ARRANGED FOR THE SACRIFICE, HE WAS STOPPED SHORT OF KILLING ISAAC BY THE ANGEL OF THE LORD WHO SAID "...NOW I KNOW THAT THOU FEAREST GOD, SEEING THOU HAST NOT WITHHELD THY SON, THINE ONLY SON, FROM ME". NOW GOD KNEW THAT ALL ABRAHAM WOULD EVER NEED TO CARRY OUT GOD'S COMMAND WAS FAITH.

IN THESE TWO EXAMPLES, FAITH DID NOT REQUIRE UNDERSTANDING. NOAH WAS WARNED OF THINGS NOT SEEN. ABRAHAM DIDN'T KNOW WHERE HE WAS GOING. THE IMPORTANCE WAS THAT GOD SAID "DO IT!" FAITH IS BELIEVING AND TRUSTING IN GOD. SOMETIMES GOD WILL TEST OUR PATIENCE BY MAKING US WAIT ON HIM AS HE WATCHES TO SEE IF OUR FAITH WILL WAVER. ABRAHAM LIVED TO SEE THE FRUITS OF HIS FAITH IN THE SEEMINGLY UNBELIEVABLE PROMISES OF GOD. ROMANS 4 TELLS US ABRAHAM "...DID NOT WAVER AT THE PROMISE OF GOD THROUGH UNBELIEF, BUT WAS STRENGTHENED IN **FAITH**, GIVING GLORY TO GOD, AND BEING FULLY CONVINCED THAT WHAT HE HAD PROMISED HE WAS ALSO ABLE TO PERFORM." THAT IS TRUE FAITH. IT IS SIMPLY BELIEVING THAT WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED, HE WILL DO.

THE MOST COMMON REASON PEOPLE SOMETIMES LOSE FAITH IN GOD IS THAT HE DOES NOT NECESSARILY ANSWER THEIR PRAYERS IMMEDIATELY. YET, IF WE CAN FOCUS ON OUR FAITH AT SUCH TIMES, THESE TRIALS CAN STRENGTHEN OUR BELIEFS. GOD WILL OFTEN TEST OUR PATIENCE, BUT HE WILL NEVER FAIL US. IF HE IS SLOW IN RESPONDING TO A PRAYER, THAT IS ALL THAT IT IS – A DELAY. IT DOESN'T MEAN GOD HAS REFUSED TO ANSWER OR FULFILL HIS PROMISES. **TRUST GOD.**

LET US PRAY-THANK YOU LORD FOR BRINGING US TOGETHER TO SHARE YOUR WORD. WE THANK YOU FOR OUR MANY BLESSINGS, THOSE THAT WE TAKE FOR GRANTED, AND THOSE THAT WE FAIL TO APPRECIATE. HELP US TO LIVE ACCORDING TO YOUR GUIDELINES AND TO DO YOUR WILL. WE ASK THIS IN JESUS'S NAME. AMEN