

ONLY THING WHICH PLEASES GOD

Heb 11:1 – 3 then 6

INTRO

- **Christmas** is the **season for giving** ...
 - *Words of Jesus in Acts 20:35* are very applicable during the Christmas holidays
 - *Happiness comes from giving ~ not receiving*
- Scripture Reading states: "... w/o **FAITH** it is impossible to please God "
 - Premise of today's message: As God's Children ... we can give Him pleasure
 - Hebrews Chapter 11 names **17** individuals who *pleased* God
 - These saints shared something else in common ~~ **problems**
 - *Even in the midst of their challenges and calamities* ~~ these saints exhibited a very strong **FAITH** in God
 - ... and their **FAITH pleased** God ~ what a great gift
 - (Words of the Thief on the cross gave great comfort to Jesus)
- Hebrews 11 is called: **Faith's Hall of Fame** ... **17 mbrs** (MLB-326; NBA-323; NHL-271)
 - By studying these saints - we too can give God a pleasing gift ~ our faith
- These saints reveal an essential spiritual truth ~ something vital to **our** walk w/God
 - Everything God wants to do in our lives ... He wants to do thru **our FAITH**
 - **Today's Bottom Line** ~ is expressed in **Matt 9:29**
 - Because God never imposes Himself on anyone ~ **one's FAITH** determines what God will do in our lives
- So the question we'll explore today is: **What kind of faith pleases God**
 - **FYI** ~~ Bible talks about **3** types of faith: *dead*, *demonic*, and *active*
 - To discover our answer ... we'll explore **3** areas ~ first being:

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE FAITH WHICH PLEASES GOD

- There's **no technical definition** of faith in the Bible ... **however** ...
 - It does give a description of the faith which pleases God ~ **Heb 11:1**
 - **FAITH** is the assurance – confidence – God **will** fulfill His promises
 - Illustration of this fundamental point: **Rom 4:19 – 22** (Abraham)
- **FAITH** is our confidence in what we hope for as Christians ~ the promises of God
 - **FAITH** gives Christians a “**sixth sense**” - non-believers only have **5** to use
 - **FAITH** gives substance to invisible and elusive realities which can't be detected with just the normal **5** human senses
 - ***Faith** sees the invisible; hears the inaudible; touches the intangible*
- **Another example** of faith which pleased God is in **Matthew Chpt 8**
 - A Centurion asks Jesus to heal his paralyzed servant ...
 - Jesus **offers to go** and do what was asked: **Vs 7 - 10**

TRANS Having seen a description of a **FAITH** which pleases God ~ let's examine:

THE DISCERNMENT OF A FAITH WHICH PLEASES GOD [JUDGMENT]

- **FAITH** not only makes us sure and certain about God's promises ...
 - ... it also enables us to determine the origin of our world ~ **Heb 11:3 a**
- **FAITH** lets us know where we're going ... **and** ... where we came from
 - The awesome creative power of God is controlled by His spoken word
 - He simply declared something ~ and what He desired ... happened !!
 - In the natural world ... we never see something coming out of nothing (**magic**)
 - Our God is **supernatural** ... He spoke and everything came to be
 - **Psm 33:6** then **9** **P-1**

- Order of **Heb 11:3** is **key**: *By faith produces we understand* ~ **not** the reverse
 - God's Children should never be intimidated because we have **FAITH** in Creation
 - Key point: *What a person thinks about the origin of the Universe ... they **believe** by **faith** { **R** }*
 - Big Bang theory is an unproven model ... accepted on faith
- It's all a matter of **FAITH** ... faith in a **Creator** ~ or ... faith in random **chance**
 - Everyone chooses to believe one of two equations:
 - **1)** - God with nothing created everything
 - **2)** - Possibility with nothing resulted in everything
- With **no** empirical evidence - nor witnesses ~ we take either equation - on faith
 - I **don't have** enough faith to believe it all happened ... just by chance
- Some say: *It is so hard to believe in God*
 - My experience is the **exact opposite** ~ the easiest thing in the world is to believe God exists ~ it takes a lot of effort **NOT** to believe
 - **Matt 18:2, 3** [**converted** = to change one's mind, and turn to the Lord]
 - Children believe in God ~ till they're trained **not** to believe
 - Indication of God's existence is shouting from every direction
 - If we just open our eyes and ears - **Psm 19:1**

TRANS To understand what kind of **FAITH** pleases God ~ helps to appreciate: the **description** of faith, the **discernment** this faith facilitates ... and also

THE DEMONSTRATION OF FAITH WHICH PLEASES GOD [**EVIDENCE**]

- **??** **How** does a faith which pleases God show itself ... how do we know we have it
 - **FAITH** which pleases God **ISN'T** just believing in God ... or what He says
 - **James 2:19, 20**

- **FAITH** = an unchangeable point of view [**conviction**] held so firmly it causes one to fully align their **behavior** with it ... *changes one's life*
- **Illustration** ...
 - History tells us of **Nazism** in Germany which lead to the outbreak of **WW II**
 - We are **not** Nazis because we believe Hitler was the movement's leader
 - We'd have to *change our lifestyles* commit our lives (skinheads)
- Biblical **FAITH** doesn't just believe in God ~ it leads us to **act** on the Word of God
 - **Heb 11:6** { come to God ~ **86** times in Greek = "action" }
 - Illogical to assume there will be room in God's Perfect Universe for a created being who lacks **faith** in the Ruler of the Universe (**R**)
 - *God rewards those who come to seek Him - illustrated in **V 7***
- It wasn't enough for **Noah** to believe God was the Cosmic Creator ...
 - He also understood God was moral - just ~ and would reward Faith in Him
 - This is the **faith** {motivation} which sustained **Noah** for **12 Decades** as he faced constant rebuke and contempt from his neighbors
 - How does God reward those who come to Him in faith: **Eph 2:8, 9**
- We believe God's promise of eternal life ~~ which is demonstrated in our **faithful**, obedient life here ... in this sin-sick world
- **A faith which pleases God demonstrates itself by living a life trusting in Jesus as one's personal Savior and by continuing to follow Him ~ regardless**
 - The only way we'll ever lose as God's Children ... is **if** we forfeit our faith in the fact God **will reward** us for living for Him
 - **God** has X-mas present for us ~~ it **pleases** Him when we take it

CONCLUSION

- Hebrews Chapter 11 records examples of saints who ~ **because of their faith** ~ didn't lose heart ... **they successfully finished the race set before them**
 - As we study their lives through the next **12** sermons ... we'll learn more about this Biblical kind of faith
 - As we learn about ~ **and apply** ~ this type of faith ... we'll be pleasing God
- **Want more faith: Luke 17:5**
 - **Counsels on Sabbath School Work, pg 72** ~ *We must have an increase of faith, (or) we cannot be renewed in the divine image, and love and obey the requirements of God. Let the prayer go forth from (sincere) lips, "Lord, increase my faith; give me divine enlightenment; for without help from (You) I can do nothing." ... The words and promises of God are the **only** foundation of our faith. Take the word of God as truth, as a living, speaking voice to you, and obey faithfully every requirement.*

This coming week while enjoying Christmas:

- Your "**homework**" is to demonstrate a **faith which pleases God** in a way you didn't do LAST week
- And ... prayerfully meditate on **Heb 11:4** ~ and how it relates to **Psalms 95**