

Title: The Faith of the Patriarchs

Text: Hebrews 11:20-22

Hebrews chapter 11, please. We are studying this tremendous chapter on Faith. And the Bible's message about faith in Hebrews chapter 11 is that unless we demonstrate in our lives true saving faith, there is serious question whether there is faith at all. You see, <sup>real</sup> ~~the~~ faith acts upon what it says it believes. That is the teaching of Hebrews 11.

Now, tonight we want to come to the Patriarchs and see what they did to demonstrate that they were men of faith.

Hebrews chapter 11 beginning with Vs 20.....(READ VS20-22)

PRAYER

*out* These three men - Isaac, Jacob and Joseph - represent the majority of the book of Genesis. You can read about their lives in Genesis chapter 21 through chapter 50.

Now, let's look at Isaac and see what we can learn about his faith.

~~Vs 20 says.. "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Essau, even regarding things to come."~~

Vs 20 says, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Essau, even regarding things to come." Now, if you just read that and remember that Isaac is suppose to be giving an example of faith, you might ask.. "what is the example of fiath in this verse. To answer that question, you must read between the lines, or, go back to the story in Genesis. <sup>CH 27</sup> I hope you know the story of Isaac and his two sons: Esau, the eldest, and Jacob, the youngest. And how Jacob cheated Esau out-of his birth right.

There are two things that I want to share with you about the faith of Isaac. (1 ) NUMBER ONE, this versw tells me that Isaac believed in God's promises that dealt with the future. You say, "How do you know that?... It is in the phrase "things to come." There is no way that Isaac could know <sup>NO MORE THAN YOU AND I CAN READ THE FUTURE</sup> that. He could not read the future. He had to accept just what God said about things He had never seen before. As Vs 1 says, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Isaac predicted things about Esau and Jacob's families. And there is no way that he could have known about or seen what he was predicting. Yet, he believed God's promise. You see, God before we had the written word, which didn't come into existed, that is the first five books of the O.T. didn't come into existence until around 1500 B.C. And we have all this time before asking ourselves the question: HOW DID PEOPLE KNOW WHAT TO DO WITHOUT A BIBLE? ANWER: God directly revealed things to them. Even things that they had never seen or could possible understand. But, they believed because God said it.

You know, <sup>IT IS ONLY TODAY, TO KNOW WHAT GOD WANTS US TO DO</sup> we have God's word to us in written form called the Bible. And, yet, we still struggle with it. What if it were a voice saying, "Hay! Bill, get out of this land and go to a new country. Don't worry about a thing. I will tke care of you."

I know what I would do. I would look abound..WHO IS SAYING THAT? "THIS IS GOD SPEAKING." "Sure....Un Hun...

You stop and think about it. These men were men of faith. WHY? Because when God told them to do something..they did it. They believed without seeing...

(2) The second thing that really stricks me, and ~~this is a tough point...~~

so ~~stay with me~~, Isaac believed in God's power to over come the deception of men and their attempts to change God's plan.

*you say - "Where do you get that? - It is right there in Vs 20"*

~~You talk about what this passage is talking about, it becomes deep.~~

Let me tell you what I mean. Do you remember when Issac came to bless his oldest son, Esau? *Do you remember what Happened? Jacob deceives his Father - the Blessing went to Jacob*

And by the way, *Rebecca was her* the Bible tells us that Isaac loved Esau. Jacob was loved by his mother, Rebeckah. Isaac really loved his son Esau. And Yet, when Esau and Jacob were born, the Bible teaches that when they were in the womb of Rebeckah, there was a great struggle going on in the womb, and they ask the meaning of this. And *Rebecca was* they ~~were~~ told that their ~~were~~ two nations in *her* your womb. But, the elder is going to serve the younger.

The chosen seed of the Messiah is going to be traced through the younger son. Not through the older one like you would expect. And that is just how it happened. Esua was the ~~eldest~~ *eldest* son. But it was through Jacob that the line ~~would~~ *would* go. In contrast to what people would normuually expect.

Now, they had that revelation. Yet, Isaac loved his son, Esua. Isn't *it* interesting that he loved the one that was not the one through whom the Messiah would come. And he was therefore, going to be forced by God to bless the boy that was not the *First Born* one that he loved. You talk about faithfulness to God no matter what. *Isaac* He was really faithful. That really hit a note in my mind.

Plus the fact, that according to the Bible, God had already determined this before the boys were even born.

Take your Bibles and turn back to Romans chapter 9. Romans 9. The point that I am making about Isaac's faith is that he believed ~~that~~ *in* God's power to over come the decption of men and their attempts *to* change God's plan. Because you see, that is exactly what Jacob did. He tried to deceive him when he thought he was blessing Esua. He ~~put~~ *put* on the hair skin of an animal so that he would even feel and smell like Esua. And came in and was blessed by his father who was old and blind and couldn't see. And so he decieved his father. Yet, Issac still knew. He had the opportunity to change *the blessing* ~~he would not change it. Isaac knew that God was going to over rule even the deception of his son Jacob.~~

*And* he would not change it. Isaac knew that God was going to over rule even the deception of his son Jacob. That it was all a part of God's plan. And God knew exactly what he was doing.

This is fantastic. Because many times people will say to me, because of some <sup>*persona*</sup> ~~person~~ sin or failure or their hostility that somehow that changes God's plan. NO WAY! Even Joseph himself who landed in Egypt through the cruelty of his brothers, when he finally met them <sup>*and confronted them, he said*</sup> ~~about this issue~~ said: "Listen, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

In Romans 9 watch this about Jacob and Esau. Let's pick it up at Vs 9.

(Read Vs 9-16)

Now, what is the point of that? Listen, it wasn't up to the decision of Isaac to make God's plan happen. It wasn't up to the decision of <sup>*Esau*</sup> ~~Isau~~ or Jacob either. Because they were not even born. And yet God already settled it.

You see, if you really trust in God, you are trusting in his power to control all things. Do you know what our problem is? We have trouble with that when "the all things" is something we do not like. YOU KNOW..

When that great all inclusive statement that we know "that all things work together for good." When there is something in that that you and I don't like or is a little tough to take, little bit of pressure, little bit of testing, whatever, trouble in the home, trouble at work, when we don't like it...there is where we face our problem about trusting God. ALL THINGS.

You see, Isaac in a moment ~~when~~ he realized that his younger son, Jacob, had deceived him...had stolen both the birth right and the blessing, that it was all still a <sup>*part*</sup> ~~part~~ of God's plan. He was doing exactly what God wanted him to do.

And so Isaac refused to change his mind. He said, "What I have done, I ~~have~~ done. I have done just what God wanted me to do. And then in time when Jacob desired a wife, Isaac called him in and said, "I want ~~you~~ to go up to Laban, my relative, and see him about a wife. And he said, "listen, I want to tell you again, God has blessed you. And it will be through your seed that all the <sup>*promise to*</sup> ~~blessing of~~ my father, Abraham, will come.

*You see, at that point*  
Add then Isaac could have changed his mind, again, But he didn't. He knew that God had over come even the attempts of his son and his wife and all of that to deceive and trick him. Listen, it was all a part of God's plan. It is all a part of what God wanted to happen. *Application - church ser.*

And I learned something about Isaac from this story. I learned how to trust God. God taught me how to trust him no matter what happened in my life. All things truly come from God. All things are from him. All things are operating through him. And all things will return unto him. (Romans 11:36)

*Dear Friends* Trust Him in the dark and you will know how to trust him in the light. Trust Him when things are not going right and you will know how to trust him when things are going right. *Issue - Man of Faith*  
*STOP*

(2) O.K. let's move now to Jacob. The example of Jacob. What can we learn about faith from Jacob. Vs 21 says: "By faith, Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph"

*am* Do you see that? That is interesting. Because Jacob had 12 boys. And he blessed all of them. *But* Why does it bring up two of them? Why does it mention only the two son's of Joseph? And why does it say then "that he worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff." That is kind-off odd. You must admit.

What is that talking about? *TWO THINGS:*

*1* (1) One, it reveals to me that *Jacob* he believed in God's promise even when it referred to two boys who were not born of a Jewish mother. This is a part of the messianic plan. Do you remember what God said to Abraham? "In thee shall all nations (Gentile is the word) all Gentiles be blessed."

*net* Here is an example. The nation of Israel is now established with 12 tribes. Two of which are the sons of Joseph. *and Joseph was married*  
*who was the boy through.*

*TO An Egyptian woman*  
Rachel that Jacob had.

Now, these two sons: E'free'am and Man'as' seh are born of an Egyptian woman named As'en'ath.

Already in the history of God's plan Abraham had Ismael by an Egyptian named Hagar. And the Bible says "in thee shall all families of the world be blessed."

God said the "the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh comes."

Why am I telling you all of this? Did you know that the Gospel, according to Galations 3, is the Abrahamic promise? Everything that I have been sharing <sup>tonight</sup> today is the Gospel? Did you know that non of us could ever be a part of God's plan of salvation, if this were not so? Of which this little case about Jacob is only one example. If you are a Gentile, today, unless this promise of God to Abrham was given and fulfilled, you couldn't possible be saved? The Bible says in Galations 3:6 to 9 that the way you and I, if you are not 'born or married into the line, ~~how are you going to be a part of God's promise~~ <sup>could have no</sup> to Abrham? ANSWER: We are both born and married to a son of the Abrahamic line. NAMELY Jesus.

Now, something that Abraham never saw, nor could he even realize, his seed would be as the sand of the seashore and the stars in the sky because through one seed, a Jew, Jesus. By faith we are married to Him. We are the bride and He is the bridegroom. We become heirs and joint-heirs with Him to all of God's promises to Abraham. IT IS A FANTASTIC STORY IN GOD'S WORD.

Jacob believed the promises of God and ~~showed~~ <sup>showed</sup> it.

(2 ) But, secondly, it remains me in the last phrase of Vs 21 that Jacob's trust was in the Lord and not in himself. His trust was in the Lord. The Bible says that he was worshipping on the top of his staff. <sup>What Does That mean?</sup>

Now, if you turn back to Genesis 47 you are going to find that the Hebrew is translated "bed." He worshipped on the top of His bed.

Well he wasn't in Bed. The Greek O.T. translated it "the top of the staff." And the staff, here, is a very important point.

Do you remember what happened to Jacob one day? He wrestled with a man all night. Who many believe was Jesus Christ in an appearance in the O.T. Some believe just <sup>believe it was</sup> an angel. But, anyway, he wrestled all night with a man. That is when God broke Jacob. Jacob was just broken. And God changed his name to Israel--the father of the nation of Israel.

On that occasion the Bible says that His thai was touched.

And after God broke that man, made him a humble servant of God, from that day forward God gave him a living symbol in his own life. The Bible says that he went away limping on his thigh.

You see, what I believe that passage is reminding us is that Jacob was worshipping on the top of his staff because he had to lean on that staff because his thigh had been touched by God. And it was an open public symbol of a man who had been broken by God. And he learned that he must trust God no matter what. He must depend upon the Lord.

And I believe, here, that it is brought to our attention to remind us of the same thing. We need to trust God no matter what. And Jacob learned that as a hard lesson in his life. And he limped the rest of his life. And everybody who saw that limb knew one thing: that Jacob learned to trust in God. You cannot fight God. You cannot live independently of him. You learn to depend upon God. Some of us just frankly need to be broken. We are still stubborn and head strong and proud. And that is why God isn't using us.

(3) And finally, a word about Joseph. Verse 22 says "By faith, Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones."

*Two things* here, *show* that *he* was a man of faith.

(1) First of all, I see that in his confidence in God's plan to take them out of Egypt. You know, almost 400 years later God took them out of Egypt. Yet, Joseph expressed that *just* God will take us out of Egypt. It is recorded in Genesis 50 verse 23. He had *confidence* promises, again, in the promises of God that didn't happen until 400 years later. But he believed that God was able to do it. God showed him that he would and *Joseph* accepted and trusted that promise.

(2) And the second thing that I see, is in that command about his bones. Why do I say this? You know, it just struck me that if God was going to take them out of Egypt, and was going to give them the land, then what would be the best way to show that you really believe that?

The only way that Joseph could have. He said.."take my bones out of here."

Do you realize that Josheph could have been buried in one of the greatest pyramids that Egypt could have possible constructed. Joseph had everything that he could possible want. *Money, fame, position*

Yet, he said, "I don't want you to bury me here. I want you to take my bones out of this place. Because I know that God is going to take us back to the promise land."

And he proved his faith, once again. ~~AND SO SHOULD WE.~~

*God does the same thing  
with us - Do we prove that we are men and women of  
faith by what we do?*

Let's close in prayer