

All-In Faith

Heb. 11:7

Series “More”

Dr. Jarrett Stephens

I considered earlier this week taking a break from our *MORE* series and doing a one-off message addressing what we have experienced as a country regarding the shocking death of Charlie Kirk.

Historically, my preaching philosophy (right or wrong) is to NOT be driven by the headlines. If I did, I feel like I’d be chasing a new text every week to correspond with something that is happening in our community or in the world.

Rather than doing that, I have generally chosen to take the approach to speak to what may be going on perhaps through an illustration or even a prayer moment in the services, but generally, I stay in the text prepared as it relates to the sermon.

Certainly, there are times to adjust, but I so deeply believe in the sovereignty of God AND the sufficiency of scripture...and I have just been amazed through the years how often the text that has been prepared beforehand and, in our case, today it’s been planned months in advance – amazed how it sometimes matches up exactly with what we need in the moment.

I believe this is the case today and I think you’ll see this as well as we get going this morning.

Now, to catch those that may be visiting or new to Champion Forest up, we are in a series that is rooted in the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews. This chapter has been known as the “Hall of Faith” – it’s filled with names of people in the Old Testament that are held up and heralded as examples of what it means to live by faith.

In fact, those two words “by faith” together are mentioned 19x in Hebrews 11.

The goal of this series is to build our faith muscle. We want to look at the lives of people that are mentioned in Hebrews 11 and learn from them what it means to live by faith so that we can experience MORE of God’s presence and power in our lives.

So far, we have talked about Abel – he was known for his worship. He’s an example of living by faith and bringing our best to God. Then we talked about Enoch – you remember him! That was from the “lights out” sermon I preached two weeks ago, and Enoch showed us how to live by faith and walk with God.

Today, we are looking at Noah. He’s like Abel in that he worshipped God, and like Enoch in that the scripture says he walked with God. He’s best known though for the work he did for God in building an ark.

I’m calling the message today: **All-In Faith** (Ark faith)

Let's look together at **Heb. 11:7** – **“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.”**

Now, if I was to poll people – I'm talking believers and unbelievers and ask them if the name Noah rings a bell – I bet ALL of them could tell me what he is known for. Noah's story is one that is FOR SURE memorable simply because of the animals, the ark and the rainbow. People might not could give details surrounding the story, but the big picture they would know.

Most of us as young children heard this story OR we read this story to our young children...maybe even decorated our nurseries with the Noah's ark theme. We've got several children's bibles in our home, and I grabbed them just to see how they framed this story.

Here were the titles given to the Noah's ark story by these children's Bibles:

- “A Flood and a Rainbow” – sums it up pretty nice!
- “A New Beginning” – interesting way to put it – accurate though!
- “The Floating Zoo” – that's my favorite! What child would not like this story!

It's an amazing story and to get the full picture, let's turn in our Bibles to Genesis 6. Like the last few weeks, keep your hand in Hebrews 11 because we'll be flipping back and forth! Let's see why we are calling Noah's faith, an “ALL IN” Faith – it's an “Ark faith”.

Genesis 6 gives us the context of what is taking place in the world at the time of Noah. Look with me at:

Genesis 6:5-8 – **“The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ So the Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”**

Now, flowing down from Genesis 3 and the fall of man in the Garden, we read the downward cycle of sin. Adam and Eve choose to rebel against God's word and his prohibition regarding eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In Genesis 4, Cain rises up and out of jealousy and anger, he murders his brother, Abel in cold blood. Genesis 5 is filled with the names of people and the years in which they lived, and evidently the sin nature in people just got worse and worse over the years...it got so bad that:

- (v. 6) – “the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.”

That's bad, ya'll! If you were to continue reading into:

Genesis 6:11-12 – “Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.”

These were the days of Noah! Sound familiar? The world was full of violence...their thoughts were on evil continually...all of flesh was corrupt. It was dark. The culture was decaying. It's just this downward cycle of sin.

I say this to remind us here that man will never drift into holiness. If there is a natural slide – and there is (sin nature) – it's always going to be away from God. This is why we must be diligent...and make sure there are no chinks in our armor (full of the Spirit).

We need to make sure that we are not opening the door to the Enemy. We need to make sure that we're not giving an inch because as the old saying goes:

- Sin takes you further than you want to go...
- Sin keeps you longer than you want to stay....
- Sin costs you more than you want to pay...

Illus. Staff Advance – one accusation away! Be diligent in our holiness. Sin takes and takes and takes – we just drift! And that's for those of us that HAVE the Holy Spirit. Think about those that don't!

The Holy Spirit is the governor in our life. He protects us from temptation...gives us strength and power to say “no” to temptation...he leads us away from temptation.

If someone doesn't have the Holy Spirit restraining them – Genesis 6 is what you get, and it's a description of our world today! If I had read it to you without the chapter and verse, it could have been received as commentary regarding the day we're living in.

Stephen Davey is a pastor and theologian. He wrote a commentary on Hebrews 11. He takes all of the passages where the “days of Noah” are listed in scripture – be it Genesis 6, Luke 17, 1 and 2 Peter passages.

Listen to how scripture describes and defines the day in which Noah lived:

- Total disregard for the marriage covenant (Gen. 4:19)
- Rapid advancement in technology (Gen. 4:22)
- Widespread violence and the devaluing of human life (Gen. 4:23)
- A population explosion (Gen. 6:1)
- Rampant evil (Gen. 6:5)
- Immorality and corruption as normative patterns within human relationships (Gen. 6:12)
- Preoccupation with temporary matters (Luke 17:27)
- Materialism (Luke 17:28)

- Rejection of the authority of God's Word (1 Peter 3:18-20)
- No concern for God in either belief or conduct (2 Peter 2:5)

Sound familiar at all? Can I just remind you though...we could look at what is taking place in the days of Noah or events like what happened this past week in Utah, and the thought could be, "God, do you see what's going on? God, how long are you going to let it go on like this?"

And I just want you to read (v. 5-7) again and underline a few phrases. We read in:

- (v. 5) – "The Lord saw" – God sees! There's no evil not even evil in the heart that is getting past the eyes of God!
- (v. 6) – The sin he sees "grieves" him! God feels indignation for the corruption that was in and is the world.
- (v. 7) – "So the Lord said" – God speaks over it. He will not remain silent, and what does he speak? Judgment!
- (v. 7b) – "I will blot out man, animals, creeping things, birds..." And what we see him do is act...he sends the Flood.

God moves in relation to what he sees! This is a truth we see throughout scripture!

In Genesis 6, he sees a sin sick world, and he sent judgment in the form of a Flood. Right now, today – he sees EVERYTHING that is going on – and listen: He's going to move in relation to what he sees, and he will judge the world once again. Only this next judgment won't be a flood, it will be with fire (See 2 Peter 3).

This is when Christ returns and makes all things right and new, and I just found myself this week longing for it...maybe today, Jesus!

Until that time, what will he see from me and you?

- Will we be striving toward holiness...stewarding well what he has entrusted to us?
- Will we be bold in our faith in the public square? At our office? In our school?
- Will he see us praying for revival and working toward revival and spiritual awakening?
- Will he see us repentant and broken over sin?
- Will he see us reaching out to the lost and broken in this world?
- Will he see us standing for his truth even if everyone else is falling away?

What does God see? He moves in relation to what he sees. And in Genesis 6, he sees a twisted, corrupt, evil culture!

It was in this setting – a culture of darkness and decay that God chooses a man that he can use. God ALWAYS chooses a man or woman he can use! This ought to encourage us...that in a darkness that surrounds us, we can be that person who like Noah is light and have an all-in faith, ark kind of faith!

Now, our Hebrews passage gives us some insight into Noah, and we can learn what this “All-In Faith” consist of. First, having an “All-In Faith” means we:

1. Believe God

Genesis 6:8 – “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”

The word, “favor” here is actually the word, “grace”. Noah was a sinner like the rest of mankind, but God graced him, and it changed his life.

In fact, the grace of God so changed him that we read in **Gen. 6:9b – “...Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.”**

That looks and sounds TOTALLY different than the world surrounding him! What made the difference? GRACE!

Illus. Charlie Kirk – The gospel in four words: Jesus took my place. The gospel in three words: Him for me. The Gospel in two words: substitutionary atonement. The Gospel in one word: Grace.

Noah, at some point in his life – perhaps when God warned him of the Flood and called him to build the ark – we don’t know exactly when, but at some point in his life, Noah put his faith – he believed in God and started walking with him.

The name, “Noah” means to “rest”. Noah was righteous – which by the way...three times in scripture he is referred to as such!

- Gen. 6:9 – he was a righteous man...
- 2 Peter 2:5 – “herald of righteousness” – he preached righteousness...
- Heb. 11:7 – heir of righteousness – you know how it comes? By faith...

Noah rested (that’s his name!) in God’s grace, and because of this, he was considered righteous in the eyes of God.

God gracing Noah (listen to this – that) was NOT a reward FOR being righteous. Him gracing him was a gift because Noah like the rest of mankind was guilty. BUT...when Noah put his hand of faith, in God’s had of grace – when he “believed” it changed everything!

THIS IS what made him righteous...he responded in faith to the grace of God!

? – Have you responded to God’s grace?

This is what makes you righteous before God. It’s saying “yes” to him! It’s believing on him – NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS.

Rom. 3:22-24 – “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

If you are here today and outside a relationship with Jesus, the first step in having an “All-In faith” is to go “all in” with him and this happens when you by faith receive his grace as a gift.

You don’t have to do anything for it...you simply receive it into your life.

Illus. Invitation – ask you to go “all in” – you can do it today, and your life can be changed forever. Noah believed God. And he began walking with God – btw, this is how it is for us too!

And one day, according to (Gen. 6, Heb. 11:7), God warned Noah of events as yet unseen – he told Noah, I’m going to wipe out every living creature on earth.

Genesis 6:13, 17-18 – “And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth...”¹⁷ For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.”

God spoke to Noah...and told him a flood is coming. And if we were to keep reading Genesis 6, we see God instruct Noah to build an ark and prepare it for the animals that will board it.

Listen to how the writer of Hebrews puts it:

Heb. 11:7a – “By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen (the Flood and the covenant with Noah to come), in reverent fear (underline those words) constructed an ark for the saving of his household...”

An “All-In faith” means we believe God. But let me tell you what else an “All-In” faith means. It means we will:

2. Fear God

You want to know what keeps people grounded in their faith? It's a proper fear of the Lord. You want to know why people live however they want to live – want to know why some believers choose to do whatever they want to do instead of walking with God on a consistent and continual basis like Enoch and Noah?

It's because they have lost their fear of God!

Illus. social media – Just look at it...spend five minutes on it. See what the world celebrates! They've lost their fear of God.

This is how it was in the days of Noah. It was corrupt...it was full of violence...where we get the word "Hamas" from – it was filled with wickedness. There was absolutely NO FEAR of God!

Can you imagine Noah? Building that ark...all those years – some say it took 80 years, others argue as many as 120 years. Let's just average it out and say it took 100 years to build.

That's fathers and sons and grandsons all looking at Noah like he's crazy! What are you doing old man? "I'm getting ready for a Flood. God told me he's going to destroy the earth. Pick up a hammer and help me out!"

But none of them did...they didn't believe God. They certainly didn't fear him! They are going about doing their thing, ignoring Noah as he heralds righteousness their way!

This is the very definition of NOT fearing God. Just ignore him.

Now, to be clear, when I say "fear", I don't mean to be scared of...there's of course an element of that – I mean God can stop your heart in a moment...he could upend everything in a moment.

Fearing God is not being scared of or threatened by him...to fear God is to reverence him...to respect and honor him.

It wasn't present in the days of Noah, and it's not present today. We've lost our fear of God!

Illus. Sermon on Fearing the Lord

If I could give you a definition of the fear of the Lord, this is what it would be: **Honoring God from so deep within that it motivates us to live a life wholly pleasing to him.**

Every phrase of this definition is important:

1. Honoring God – we hold him in the highest esteem.
2. From so deep within – it starts in the core of our being...it's the foundation of our life.
3. Motivates us – everything flows from the core...it's the incentive for how we think and what we do.
4. To live a life – real reverence works itself out...it leads to action

5. Wholly pleasing – inside and out. This covers thoughts, motives and action – everything is pleasing!
6. To him – it’s all about him...for him...unto him.

This was Noah! He was all about pleasing the Lord because he feared the Lord! He wanted to wholly please him.

It was a holy fear that motivated Noah to build an ark when most scholars say it had never rained before, he was hundreds of miles from the nearest body of water and he was building a boat 45 stories long, 8 stories wide and five stories high!

Why would he do this? Because he feared God more than the ridicule of man.

Thomas Manton – The people of the world did not tremble with fear until the water reached the rooftops. Noah had trembled in fear when God did but speak.”

Tremper Longman (Old Testament professor at Westmont College): “One properly fears Yahweh because he is the most powerful being in the universe. Only fools would not be afraid of a being who has the power of life and death over them. Such persons do not understand their place in the cosmos and thus do not know how to act in the world. All other wisdom builds on this point, and there is no wisdom without it.”

Illus. Charlie Kirk – I read that quote and I thought of some of these clips of Charlie Kirk making the rounds on social media. I didn’t follow Charlie that much...I knew he was big with a lot of college students. He would go on these college campuses and universities – some of the most liberal! And he goes in there speaking up for biblical marriage and arguing toward a biblical sexual ethic – I saw some clips where he was sharing the straight up gospel, and people would hiss at him!

You see the difference between someone who fears the Lord and someone who doesn’t. Resolve today to live your life fearing God...not the opinions of man!

It’s the fear of God that will keep you walking with God each day (run a little scared! Hand off me, not on me)

Proverbs 9:10 – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is insight.”

Before Moses dies, he gathers the people of Israel and commands them in: **Deuteronomy 10:12 – “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”**

Solomon, the wisest man to ever live wrote in: **Ecclesiastes 12:13 – “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”**

You want to have an “All-In” faith: Believe God. Fear God. Third and finally:

3. Obey God

Listen: fearing God and obeying God go hand in hand. If you truly fear him, you will do what he tells you to do.

You’ll obey: **No matter what is asked** – “build a boat” – very specific instructions – specifications...read the construction of the ark, and you’ll read on two different occasions, the Bible says (Gen. 6:22 & Gen. 7:5) – he did ALL God commanded him.

We obey: No matter what is asked

We obey: **No matter what others think**

We already talked about this! We’re fearing God, not man. Listen, when God tells us to do something it may not make sense to others...it doesn’t matter, we have to do what God is telling us to do!

Illus. God is calling some of you to missions! The language of the Bible is to “get out of your comfort zone”.

We obey: No matter what is asked

We obey: No matter what others think

We obey: **No matter the cost**

Noah’s faith cost him his reputation...it cost him his time...it cost him! But he believed God...feared God...and he had made up his mind he was going to obey God.

He had an “All-in” ark kind of faith – Do you?

Let’s pray.