

Sermon Series: Fundamentals for Christ-filled Homes”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—10/16/07

Title: “Training to Walk by Faith Alone”

Text: Hebrews 11: 8-19

Intro.: Illus. Uphill Battle video clip

Theme: By faith Christians live the life God intended for them from eternity in Jesus Christ.

What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Romans 4:3

Walk your life's path by faith (Print and read Hebrews 11: 8-10)

- Letting go of the control because you know where you are going
 1. Understanding your inheritance makes all the difference in how you live your life/home life
 - a. *Because you are children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a child; and since you are a child, God has made you also an heir. Gal 4: 6-7*
 - b. Not living as a slave to temporary things but living as if you were a child of the King of kings.
 2. Your inheritance and home are in heaven so live, choose, plan, enjoy, lighten up as if you were headed home
 - a. **Ills.: Fair conquers fear's enclosures**
- Living like a spiritual alien
 1. Travel light — living simply so that you are not loaded down with too much making you miss
 - a. Whether possessions, position, power, or pleasure — making sure temporary doesn't take sight of lasting
 - b. *Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 1 Tim. 6:17*
 2. Don't lose your way home — remember your destination and what gets you there (**Print and read Heb. 11:13-16**)
 - a. **Ills.: new passport rules — you need it to get back in**
 - b. *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given men under heaven by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12*
 - c. **Your purpose** in life is *to live in Christ and by Christ = by faith*
 - d. *While we are alive, we are constantly handed over to death for Jesus' sake so that the life of Jesus is also shown in our mortal nature. 2 Cor. 4:11*

Stand firm under your life's load by faith (Print and read Hebrews 11: 11-12)

- Living by faith is challenged by our own mortality and frailty
 1. Abraham and Sarah were barren/old which made believing God's promised deliverance through them unbelievable
 2. Debilitating illness, failure at school/work, harshness of a bad marriage--faith-walking seems unreasonable
 3. *"With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." Mark 10: 27*
- Looking to your impossible challenges as areas of **miracle alerts**
 1. **Ills.: deer crossing signs take on special meanings this time of year**
 2. *Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Cor. 12:10*
 3. It is not fatalism or a blind optimism but rather a calm security in God's bigger plan at work in good and bad

Accept God's growth challenges by faith (Print and read Hebrews 11: 17-19)

- **Ills.: the illustration and type of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac — God's and ours** (Genesis 22)
- Act on God's promises (vs. 17)

1. Abraham *acted beforehand* (first offered) on God's promise in Isaac and received him back
2. Is God's Word and promise to you good enough for you?
 - a. **Ills.: Banking on the promise**
- Don't limit what you are willing to let God do (vs. 18)
 1. God wanted Abraham's trust to be in him not in Isaac to get the promise accomplished
 2. Holding on lightly to our kids, our stuff, our life, our career, our dreams because of the hope that is ours in Christ
- Base your faith on the living resurrection hope (vs. 19)
 1. Abraham surrendered Isaac because he believed God could raise him from the dead
 2. Do you believe that God can raise you from the heap of ashes? Are you willing to let him do it?
 3. *Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! God has given us a new birth because of his great mercy. We have been born into a new life that has a confidence which is alive because Jesus Christ has come back to life. We have been born into a new life which has an inheritance that can't be destroyed or corrupted and can't fade away. 1 Peter 1: 3-4*
 4. **Ills.: Going the Distance**

Uphill Battle (video clip)

Faith Conquers Fear's Enclosures

The African impala can jump to a height of over 10 feet and cover a distance of greater than 30 feet. Yet these magnificent creatures can be kept in an enclosure in any zoo with a 3-foot wall. The animals will not jump if they cannot see where their feet will fall. Faith is the ability to trust what we cannot see, and with faith we are freed from the flimsy enclosures of life that only fear allows to entrap us. **John Emmons**

Banking on the Promise

The following letter was found in a baking-power can wired to the handle of an old pump that offered the only hope of drinking water on a very long and seldom-used trail across Nevada's Amargosa Desert: "This pump is all right as of June 1932. I put a new sucker washer into it and it ought to last five years. But the washer dries out and the pump has got to be primed. Under the white rock I buried a bottle of water, out of the sun and cork end up. There's enough water in it to prime the pump, but not if you drink some first. Pour about one-fourth and let her soak to wet the leather. Then pour in the rest medium fast and pump like crazy. You'll git water. The well has never run dry. Have faith. When you git watered up, fill the bottle and put it back like you found it for the next feller. (signed) Desert Pete. P.S. Don't go drinking the water first. Prime the pump with it and you'll git all you can hold." **Keith Miller and Bruce Larson, The Edge of Adventure.**

Going the distance by faith

Charlie Engle, Ray Zahab, and Kevin Lin know endurance better than most. For 111 days, they ran the equivalent of two marathons a day in order to cross the entire Sahara Desert on foot. They touched the waters at Senegal and then made their way through Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Libya, and Egypt to touch the waters of the Red Sea. Along the way, the trio faced blazing afternoons of over 100 degrees, jarring, freezing nights, sandstorms, tendonitis, violent sickness, and the usual aches, pains, and blisters. But the biggest challenge they faced can be summed up in one word: water. Finding it in its purest, cleanest form gets to be a bit of a chore while in the middle of nowhere! Crossing the Saharan Desert on foot is an amazing accomplishment. But just as commendable are these marathon finishers:

· Christians who finish their lives still growing, still serving.
 · Husbands and wives who stay faithful to each other "until death do us part."
 · Young people who preserve their virginity until marriage, in spite of crushing peer pressure.
 · Pastors who stay passionate about ministry until their last breath.
 · Church members who weather the rougher patches and remain joyful, loving, and faithful. **Anna Johnson, "3 ultra-athletes run across Sahara," USA Today (2-20-07)**

Hebrews 11:8-19

⁸ **By faith** Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

¹¹ **By faith** Abraham, even though he was past age--and Sarah herself was barren--was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹²And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

¹³All these people were still living **by faith** when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

¹⁴People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷ **By faith** Abraham, when God tested him, having first offered Isaac as a sacrifice, received the promises about the one and only son whom he was about to sacrifice, ¹⁸even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ¹⁹Abraham considered that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. [NIV]