

Hebrews 11 - Part 7

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith and obedience in our lives, as seen in the example of Abraham's testing and trust in God's sovereignty.

Duration: 29:48

Scripture: Joshua 6:20, Matthew 7:1, Acts 6:8, Acts 7:2-3, Hebrews 11:33-35

Topics: "Faith Tested", "End Times"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of faith and how it will be tested. He shares a personal anecdote about a young girl who remembered his sermon from three years ago and how it impacted her life. The preacher then discusses the story of Noah and how he had faith in God's promise of a flood, even though it had never rained before. He highlights the need for the church to be on fire for God and warns of a coming doomsday. The preacher concludes by reminding the audience of the examples of faith in Hebrews 11 and how these individuals accomplished great things without even having a Bible.

Transcript

Last week we, we talked about this amazing character, Abraham. Of all the men that ever lived, he, he had a title that no one ever had. Moses, David, Joshua, all the great heroes in the Old Testament.

Nobody ever had one thing that Abraham had. What was it? Huh? Friend of God. Did you ever think God needed a friend? We think he's kind of remote, somewhere in eternity, doesn't need friends.

But he called Abraham his friend. In fact, I don't think the hymn is in our book, since it's a Baptist book, but it's in Methodist books. The God of Abraham prays who reigns enthroned above.

Ancient of everlasting grace and God of love. Jehovah great I am by earth and heaven confessed. We bow and bless the sacred name forever blessed.

And Abraham was the friend of God. Didn't he, didn't God say, shall I hide from Abraham the things that I do? And God has promised to share secrets with those who trust him. The secret of the Lord is with who? TV preachers.

No bishops, sorry, popes. No, hopeless. But who does he share his secrets with? Those that fear him.

You see, there's a holy fear as well as a natural timidity, nervous fear. Well, we've mentioned about these heroes. I've told you before, let me repeat quickly.

If I'd been writing Hebrews 11, I wouldn't have put this gang in here, I'll tell you that. Why should I put Abraham in? He lied. He deliberately went out of the path that God chose for him.

I wouldn't have put Moses in this chapter. He committed murder. I wouldn't have put Noah in this chapter, he got drunk.

There's a whole bunch of rascals in this chapter, it's a rogues gallery actually. So I wonder you're not in it, but anyhow. Not all the sailors are there yet.

On the other hand, there are some people I would have put in. I would have put Joshua there, he isn't there. He's there by influence, by faith, the walls of Jericho fell down.

But goodness, what's it going to be in a hero if nobody knows? You've got to get some credit somewhere. But you see, it's at the end of the line. The bottom line is the judgment seat of Christ for everybody.

Whether we like it or not. That's the bottom line. The judgment seat of Christ.

Well, I'd better get on with the story. Let's look in this... Wait a minute, which chapter? I marked it as usual last night. Chapter 22.

Now let's say this again, remember. As we've said so very often. Faith, faith that he's going to be trusted is going to be tested.

As I tell you rather humorously now, my muscles are hard to find. I have an exercise in my... Somebody asked our Paul one day when he was five years of age. When you get old, what are you going to work at? He said, I'm going to be like my daddy.

I won't work, I'll just be a preacher. He's learned better since. But if you don't develop... You use a thing, you don't develop it.

And you won't develop faith sitting here or looking at a blackboard. This man is tested right down the line. In the first place, God says to him, get thee up out of thy country and out of thy kingdom.

He tests him in his relationships. Well, then when he gets up, it says in the 51st chapter of Isaiah, I called Abraham alone. Did he go alone? So he set off in disobedience.

He took Tira with him. In Hebrew, that word Tira means delay. Who was Tira? He was the old man.

And you'll never get anywhere until you get rid of the old man. Then when you get rid of the old man, you have a problem with the young man. Somebody asked me today, do you believe in two natures? Yes, not three.

The man that says he believes in two natures, believes in three. He believes in a spiritual nature, a sinful nature and a human nature. I don't believe in that.

I believe in a spiritual nature and a human nature. You see, the trouble with modern Christianity is it isn't modern Christianity. I asked a big shot guy who came to see me today.

He's a millionaire, I think. But anyhow, he was disgusted. That's a pleasure.

Let me go up at my office disgusted and delighted. I said to him, is the sixth chapter of Acts the norm for a beacon? Who's in the sixth chapter of Acts? Stephen. What did he do? Signs, wonders, miracles.

Any deacons in the First Baptist Church in town, famous green acres like that? Or anybody at Church of God? Anywhere. Now don't mention names, just say I said it. Where are there any biblical deacons? He said, deacon, isn't a man a burnt preacher? And he does signs and wonders and miracles.

Now when were they put into death? They put us to death if we were apostolic. Pentecost in the Bible again is married to what? Pain, prison, punishment, poverty. What's it married to today? Prosperity, personality, superstars.

We're a million, billion miles away from New Testament Christianity. And I told this big shot today, I said, I'm looking for a church where you can open the door Sunday morning and say to that world outside which is scarred by what happened at PTL and those other places. It's scarred and it's scarred by the coming atom bomb and whatever you've got.

Open the doors and say to the world outside, this is that which is spoken of. Where is it? It may be your condition of being a member of your church. You have to speak in tongues to do something else and that's all right.

But where is the church that can open the door and say, this is that? Come and see Pentecost repeated. I believe Pentecost is the norm that God never intended a church with backside. He intended every deacon to be like Stephen.

Then he got an evangelist by the name of Philip in the 8th chapter. What did he do? Signs and wonders and miracles, cast out demons and everybody in the synagogue clapped their hands. They were happy.

It didn't say that. What did it say? It says the whole city rejoiced. I got my friend today and he's going to buy one copy of Azusa Street.

Do you have some with you tonight, John? You won. You'll have to loan it. Okay.

Get that book Azusa Street. Then get the other one. Seven pioneer Pentecostal preachers.

If those don't put you on your face, you must be dead. I mean that happened in our day in England in 1926 and 7. Men were not ordained. Men with almost no Bible knowledge went into cities and rented buildings, holding 2,000, packed them in in a week and turned thousands or literally thousands away.

And in two weeks, 924 people went through the inquiry group. There isn't a man on TDA in the inquiry group. Go from Billy Graham to Oral Roberts to Jimmy Shruggetts.

Everybody come up and say a word. This stupid business, close your eyes and bow your heads. Supposing a girl said that to her boyfriend just going to the wedding.

She said, well, darling, I've lived for this day, but just tell a preacher that when I walk down the aisle tomorrow, ask everybody to close their eyes and bow their heads. Wouldn't that be wonderful? He'd say, get out of here. It'd be any sense anyhow.

What is it embarrassing about going to the front to get a relationship with God? People ought to be glad to act upon their hands and knees. Just crawl down the aisle to be reconciled to God. Crawl down the aisle to get rid of condemnation and bondage and sin.

But no, no, we make it so easy. We're just about taking the cross out of Christian living. And yet Jesus says you cannot be a Christian without bearing the cross.

You take up your cross and follow him. Well, there's the introduction. Shall we go on? Genesis 22.

He came to pass after these things. After what? Well, again, the first thing, Abraham was tested with his family, tested with his nation. Then he goes on a trip with the old man.

He has trouble with the old man. The old man dies. Then he has trouble with the young man.

He's rescued, not from death. I think one of the most common sins in the world to be is ingratitude. Even amongst us, we don't have gratitude.

Why, most of us would have been in jail or in hell tonight but for the grace of God. So what's this man doing? The old man, he got rid of the old man. He didn't want to go on.

He didn't want to go down into the promised land. And so now you have the young man. And Abraham says, Lot, if you take that side of the valley, I'll take this.

If Lot had had half an ounce of being a gentleman, he'd have said, You rescued me when a contract was out for my life. You take the job. No, he says, he chose the well-watered plains of Jordan.

And he pitched his tent. The very slant of his tent post showed his interest. He pitched his tent towards Sodom.

The next chapter is in Sodom. The next chapter is out of Sodom. It's a very expensive thing to disobey God.

Lot chose Sodom. Why? Because he says it was like unto Egypt. Why did he go to Egypt? Because his bungling old uncle took him there.

Again, I say, if you want your child to go to hell, buy him a TV all for himself in his back room and destroy him. When this young man went to Egypt and he saw the ways of Egypt, sensual, earthly, sensual and devilish, he wanted to go that way. So he went and he became the mayor of the city because it said he sat in the gate.

That's where the judges sat. That's where the authority sat. That's why the Bible says, the gates of heaven.

It doesn't mean gates. It means the authorities who sit there will not prevail against the Lord. But this young man goes and he gets fascinated with the city and then he becomes the mayor of the city.

Then he asked Terul, after the young man he asked Terul again. Terul tested on the level of his parents, tested on the level of his nation, tested in his relationship with the young man, tested as to whether he treasured the things of this earth, more than spiritual things. And then he goes on.

Now this is the sixth and final testing in his life. What does God say to him? Look at this quickly with me. He said, he said, Isaac.

Go back a minute please to chapter 17 and verse 19. I'm sorry, verse 18. And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee.

What had happened in between? Do you remember the test that came? He had fought off every trial that he had, except when his wife came and said, I can never bear children, I'm 90 years of age. Take no serpent, it's a custom. And immediately the baby is born, put that baby on my lap, and according to law it's my baby.

And the man who had obeyed God and disobeyed God disobeys again. What happened? Ishmael was born. And here he is crying to God.

What does he say? Verse 18 of chapter 17. Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee. Why? Because he's a child of the flesh.

So what does God say in this chapter we're reading just now? Chapter 22. It came to pass after these things. Verse 1. God did test Abraham and said unto him, Abraham, and he said to old Abraham, he said, now take now thine only son.

But he had a son. And according to the law of the Old Testament, the law of the firstborn, the firstborn got a double portion of everything. But God completely ignores Ishmael.

He was born of the flesh, and he stood against the child of the spirit. God will never honor flesh. When the oil was put on the head again of the priest, in Psalm 133, it says the oil was on his head, it ran down his beard, onto his garments, and onto the floor.

It never touched his flesh. Never. There's no anointing of flesh.

You say that man's talented. If he got saved, listen, that man's talents may be his biggest hindrance to God. It's self-sufficient.

He's trained. He's confident. He isn't afraid of God.

He's been a politician. He can argue. He can reason.

He has a good memory. And maybe those things are in his way. God says, no, I'm not taking Ishmael.

Oh, he would have been glad to get rid of Ishmael at this state. Take thou thy son, thy name is Elijah, whom thou lovest. See, there it is.

And get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer for him on a burnt offering upon one of the mountains. I will tell thee of. Let's say, for instance, here is, for argument, here's a mountain.

God says you to go up there. He's down here. And it tells you that he takes a three-day journey there.

Verse 3, Abraham rose up in the morning and saddled his ass and took his young men with him. And Isaac, his son, and prayed the wood for a burnt offering and rose up and went into a place which Abraham, God had told him of. On the third day, Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.

I don't know whether you use a little graphic thing like this we do in England. They say there's many a slit between the cup and the lip. Do you use that phrase? You don't? Well, the educated people at the front do and the people at the back don't.

Some went to night school so they can think at night. The others can only think in the day, you see. There's many a slit between the cup and the lip.

The famous C.T. Studd changed that. He said there's many a slit between the call and the ship. That wonderful old man I fellowship with him many times.

The founder of the Prairie Bible Institute. I believe one of the greatest Bible schools in the whole world. You can send your children there at ten years of age they can still stay there till university age.

It's one of the finest schools. It's discipline, Marco. But he told me once, he said when we have our great conferences out of every hundred people that come to the front to go to the mission field only ten of them ever go through and only one out of the ten go to the mission field then the nine stay at home.

Out of a hundred. Oh, yes, yes. When we were youngsters there used to be a song called Just a Pair of Sparkling Eyes and a Pair of Ruby Lips.

And it doesn't take the devil some girlfriend can knock you out for the rest of your life or some sparkling young fellow. This is a chance of a lifetime. Get married.

I preached at a certain university a few years ago. It was packed. About nine hundred students there.

I got late and I came in and sat at the front bowed my head and somebody knocked my knee. I looked and there was a woman who asked, God, this young woman I've never seen. Do you remember me? I said, no.

Oh, she said, just over three years ago you preached when I on Isaiah 6. Roll, roll, go. I said, I preached that a few times around the world. She said, well, you said, look, leave it in the hands of God.

Don't dare to move unless you're absolutely certain. And you said, you go home and put your name on the top of the paper and put down what's wrong with you. And then when you've run out of material pray and ask God, what else is wrong? Well, the Lord showed me these things wrong.

This thing wrong. One thing impatient. I was going to marry the most handsome man in America.

And you said, you talked about a vision of a holy God, a vision of a lost world and a vision of self. And you said, that world is calling and God is calling you. But go home and talk to God.

So she said, I went home. And the Lord said, no, no dating with that fellow. And she said, but Lord, he's the most handsome man in America.

Any girl will want him. She said, well now, he's coming. And I looked, here's this handsome young guy coming.

And she said, three years afterwards I went to a meeting and he came to me and said, Hi, remember me? Yeah, I remember you all right. Why do you remember? Oh, wait a minute. Honey, I want to tell you something.

The night that Ray Mill preached, I went home. I said, Lord, that's the girl I'm going to marry. He said, yes, that's right.

Three years from now. And he said, I've come to tell you I want to marry you. And he said, I went home and said, Lord, she's the most beautiful girl in America.

Every guy will want her. I'll never get bored. He said, I'll keep her for you.

So three years after they met. And the Lord had told each of them the same thing. Three years from now you can get married.

So some of you bachelors cheer up. Three years from now you may make it. Some of you girls take off your robes of misery.

You see, there's an appointed time. I'm the one who believed in the sovereignty of God over the world. I believed in the sovereignty of God in my own life.

There's a timing in the affairs of men. It's not just as the point says. There's a Shakespeare, but I won't quote him anyhow.

But you see, there's a timing. Okay. There's men who slip.

He's down here and he has a three-day journey up there. Let's say for a moment he sleeps at night and he wakes up and the room's shining on the boy. And God has said, Take thine own miss.

That's my darling child. My wife won't have any more babies. She's a hundred years of age.

Didn't you think he went through misery? Don't you think he could have said why? Don't you think he could have offered a hundred excuses? But he sleeps. He keeps going on. You see, something happened to him as I mentioned last week.

Cain, Cain built a city. John saw the city. Abram looked for the city.

And it was a fact that he had a promise of God. I am with thee. He says, I will be with thee.

I will strengthen thee. I will help thee. And because of that he has come to them.

When we were talking about Noah, you remember Noah building his ark for a hundred and twenty years. Don't you think he went through a million heartbreaks, headaches, tummy aches, heartaches, headache? A hundred and twenty years people scorned him. They ridiculed him.

Don't miss the beat there. He said it's going to rain. It has never rained in the history of the world.

Dew fell every morning and watered the earth. And this crackpot preacher says there are going to be holes in the sky and holes in the ground and the water is going to go up and the water above is going to come down and he is going to go sailing in a boat. Isn't that wonderful? They have never even seen a boat.

Now don't think God is going to go before you and iron out all the difficulties. He's not. There's a testing of faith and for a hundred and twenty years.

Well, why did he hang on there? I'll tell you why. Number one, said his family would be saved. Number two, God said he would destroy the earth.

Number three, he said my spirit shall not always strive with men. Well, why in God's name is the church so bankrupt today? Because Jesus says as it was in the days of Noah. There's a doomsday hanging over the world right now where time is running out and we're doing nothing.

I've told you, if you know a church on fire for God, tell me and I'll go. A church where when you come in you don't go out the same. The brooding of God is there.

You've been in his holy presence. Not every day he goes. If you'd heard him whipping that saw you'd have heard his groanings of his spirit louder than this saw.

He's building a houseboat for himself. He's building a casket for the rest of the world. Every day he goes to work.

This is one day and then a judgment. One day and then God's mercy is running out. And God says to our generation and I remind you again of all these people in Hebrews 11.

Not one of them ever had a Bible. They subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Women received their dead raised to life again.

Of course they lived in lovely homes, air-conditioned. The women all wore fur coats. Sure they did.

They wandered about in sheepskins and goldskins. Those were their fur coats. Now the pastor's wives go to Neiman Marcus and buy one.

They wander about, destitute, afflicted. And the world says let's get rid of them. They're not any good.

And God says of whom the world is not worthy. Just a different angle. All people say, Well, who wants to be insane? If the world is insane, I'm glad to be... If the world is sane, I'm glad to be crazy.

Who wants to be like those clowns? So clever with their B.A. degrees. They just know how to get B.E.D. and they know how to get A.I.D.S. and they know how to do every devilish thing but they can't break the power of sin in their lives. There's only one that's able to do it and that's through the old rugged cross.

So for three days he takes the girl every step. Verse 4 says, And the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place with fire. Abraham said to his young men, Abed, ye here with us, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again.

Isn't that safe? We'll come again. You stay here. You know, you can't do all your dealings before people.

Some things are privately with God. There's no showmanship here. I and the lad will go yonder.

We'll come again to you. Abraham took the wood and the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son and he took fire in his hand and a knife and he went both of them together. Well, isn't that something? Isaac spake to Abraham his father and said, My father, and he said, Here am I, son.

And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lung for the burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lung. Go quickly. Don't look at it.

The seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles says what? That God Almighty, the Holy God, appeared to Abraham where? In a hell hole called Mesopotamia. It was a super night club. It was an enlargement of, what do you want to call it, Las Vegas? And all those other dirty holes.

They had all the sensuousness and they worshipped demons and they worshipped snakes. And then in that rotten place, God appeared to Abraham. It doesn't say that.

It says the glory of God appeared to him. Do you think he's so right into eternity? What's the glory of eternity? There's a lad in the midst of a thorn. You see, we're so short-sighted.

We're so rationalistic. We're so thoughtful. We've so many fanciful, wonderful interpretations of the Scripture.

Friend, you don't always need the Scripture as a sedative. There are times when you need the Scripture to bind up a broken heart. There are times when I need it to pierce me with its sharp-twedged sword and God to work on me.

We're only here a little time. Remember, friend, once I will pronounce this death over you, there's no U-turn. If you're on the broad road at least to the extent you've never held, there's no U-turn.

Once you die, there's no turning the road. Once you die on the narrow way, there's no turning the road. It's straight on the narrow road to the judgment seat of Christ.

It's straight on the broad way to the great white throne. That's going to be the most staggering thing that's ever happened. He talks about the King of kings and Lord of lords.

He's the judge of judges too. And his sentence is final. There's no court of appeal beyond it.

Once the sentence is passed, boy, it's doomsday. You'll never persuade me in a hundred attempts. You can't persuade me that the Church of Jesus Christ today, I don't care how fundamental and apostolic it professes to be, you'll never get me to believe that the Church today believes in hell.

This one thing needs to stick in your mind. It's in mine. It's been for months.

Hell has no exits. A million roads in, not one road out. It says concerning heaven they go in and out, day and night.

It doesn't say that about hell. Once in hell, it's forever and ever and ever. It's doomsday.

No repentance, no preachers, no mercy, no love. All the human depravity, exaggerated as you like and there it is. In that sense, hell to me is the drainage pool.

You have a cesspool to your house. Hell is the cesspool of the ages. Even demons are going to be there.

I believe that the moment hell is empty, I believe the first person into hell will be the false prophet and the beast. But anyway, it's going to be occupied finally. Okay.

Verse 9. He came to the place which God had told him of. Notice he's taking directions from God. Look at verse 11 for a moment.

The angel of the Lord called to him, Out of heaven, Abraham, Abraham. Look at verse 15. The angel of the Lord called unto him, Out of heaven.

Isn't that amazing? You don't find that again until the heavens are open and Jesus is being baptized and a voice from heaven says, This is my beloved son. And God has given the same thing to Abraham here. You're my son.

I'm asking great things. Verse 9. He came to a place which God told him of and Abraham built an altar. Look at it.

He's building an altar. What do you do? He goes to his son. He says, Isaac, get over to the end of that rock, that flat rock, and they build an altar.

Wouldn't that be agony for the father? Don't you think his son is thinking, What in the world is all this about? But he says, Daddy, you've got a basket. You see, they used to carry a basket like you do, but it was a basket made of metal and they carried fire in it. That was a custom.

And he said, Daddy, you've got the basket there with the fire. You've got the dagger in your hand. Where is the lamb? God will provide himself a lamb.

But again, think of the boy. Supposing you went to your 18-year-old boy and said, Come on, we're going up hunting. And you said, Let's build an altar.

Then you said, Lay down. Do you think he knew that you were coming? Then he tied his feet up and he died. Do you think he'd punch you on the nose or kick you out of the way? He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.

He's typical of the Lord Jesus Christ. What do you think he felt like lying there on his back with the sun blazing down on him? Daddy has a big dagger over him. You know, Doro wrote that, gave us that first picture of the praying hands.

Doro, the German. He also has a fantastic picture of Abraham, a long bearded man, and the boy is laid out on a stone slab and he has a dagger in his hand. What do you think the boy felt like?

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