

# **Hebrews 11:8-19**

## **“It can be done” Part 2**

### **October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2011**

#### **Introduction**

- Ø On one of the days of our recent staff retreat, after Bible study in the morning and talking and praying with one another and developing as a staff, it was time to jump off rocks together into a lake
  - Telling my wife this story, she said, that lake is where I used to go in High school – and high schoolers would jump off those rocks into the lake – what made you guys think a bunch of old guys should do that
  - I was hurt, but she was right
- Ø The afternoon started off with the youth pastors jumping off
  - And it was easy for me to justify my non participation, I am not really a youth pastor
  - But the reality most of those guys are my age, within a year or two – so that excuse wasn't going over real well
  - Plus it looked fun – I'm not total dork and so something manly about jumping off a perfectly good cliff into a lake

#### **So eventually I climbed up**

- Ø and if you have ever participated in this irrational behavior then you know, what it looks like from down below, is not what it looks like when you get up there
  - so I climbed up to the top of the cliff and looked down and right then I knew this was probably going to be more thrill and less fun of an experience

**But I had a choice?**

Ø listen to the Jamies and the Haimes of this world and believe – it is really fun – do it, jump into the unknown

- or listen to inner old man that says – what are you doing? This is ridiculous, this is not going to be fun, this is crazy – and just climb down
- on the top of the rock I had choice to make

**And as we go through life, we have a choice to make**

Ø now I get accused of not finishing my stories and that is because the point is not in the end of the story, but in the story itself

- but so I don't have to answer the question, yes I jumped off the cliff
- I tried to jump feet first as I was told by said youth pastors – but I am not as aerodynamic I was a few years ago, parts of me are pulled harder by gravity than others and I ended up landing on my hip instead of my feet – but that is not the point
- The point is the decision we all have

**In this life there are two ways to live**

Ø the most common is to live by sight

- only by what I can handle and touch and see
- this rock is too high, this is not a good idea, I don't really trust Jamie and Haime
- we have a choice to live by sight

Ø or we can live by faith

**And whether you like it or not, the Christian life is supposed to be a life of faith**

Ø I mean none of us have seen God

- We have not seen the original manuscripts of the Bible
- We did not witness creation

**So much of this though absolutely reasonable, I believe we have a reasonable faith, as opposed to the guy I was talking to one time who told me we were seeded here by aliens**

Ø I believe in contrast to that – we as believers in Jesus Christ have a very reasonable faith – there are good, solid reasons to believe what you believe and if you question that, you visiting, I would love to share with you afterwards – because it is a reasonable faith

- But it is still faith

**And Hebrews chapter 11 is all about faith**

Ø It's been called by some bible teachers, the Hall of faith

- because it lists men and women who faced situations usually much greater than we will ever face
- but who speak to us – in our lives where we can draw application – that is can be done – you can live this Christian life even in the face of tremendous opposition and trial

**And we saw last week and Pastor Rob began this series with Able, Enoch and Noah**

**Hebrews 11**

**Able speaks to us about the priority of faith**

Ø He is persecuted, killed by his brother Cain because he was doing things God's way

- He was approaching God through the way God has laid out
- And He was killed for it

Ø And God speaking to us, through this chapter – hey are you tempted to give up and give in because it is hard to do things God way – Able is speaking to us saying – it can be done – you can live for the Lord even in the face of a brother who is upset at you for

doing so – it can be done – you can please the Lord even in the midst of that difficult circumstance

### Hebrews 11

#### Able speaks to us about the priority of faith

#### Enoch speaks to us about the passion of faith

- Ø Enoch just walked with God in a world where it wasn't easy to walk with God
  - And He did it for a long time
  - And maybe you are trying to walk with God and its difficult and its been a year
- Ø Enoch says – it can be done – you can walk with God even when it has been hard for a while
  - It can be lived day by day, by grace even for 300 years
  - And some of you need to hear that

### Hebrews 11

#### Able speaks to us about the priority of faith

#### Enoch speaks to us about the passion of faith

#### Noah speaks of the perseverance of faith

- Ø Noah lived and walked with God even when no one else in the world did
  - And He speaks to me on how I can walk with God even if I'm the only one at work, at school, in my family – Noah says it can be done – He doesn't say it will be easy – He says it can be done
- Ø Able, Enoch and Noah, rise off the pages of Scripture say to us, it can be done, you can live this Christian life by faith even in the most difficult of circumstances
  - You can live by faith which is the Christian experience

Well this morning we come to, hands down, the greatest example of faith of the Bible

- Ø the one the Word calls the father of faith, Abraham

- Abraham was from the city of Ur
- Ur was one of the city states of the first major population centers of man – Sumer**
- Ø located in what is today Iraq near the Euphrates River
    - and Ur was a wicked place, and pagan place
    - they worshipped many gods but the chief one was the moon god – Nanna
  - Ø archeology has discovered that their royalty were buried with brutal acts of human sacrifice
    - and it was in this pagan, brutal, wicked society that Acts chapter 7 tells us

**“The God of glory appeared to... Abraham... and said to him, ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.’” – Acts 7:2-3**

- Ø and in this command of God, given to Abraham in this brutal place where we begin to learn more about this walk of faith
  - two things if you’re taking notes this morning from the two characters I have been assigned the privilege of teaching on today
  - Abraham and Sarah, teaching us that this walk of faith is...

**Hebrews 11:8-19**

**#1 – Abraham – Faith is willing to obey – Hebrews 11:8-10 & 17-19**

**#2 – Sarah – Faith is willing to wait – Hebrews 11:11-16**

- Ø lets consider these one at a time

**Hebrews 11:8-19**

**#1 – Abraham – Faith is willing to obey – Hebrews 11:8-10 & 17-19**

- Ø We notice several things in these verses, we notice that Abraham...

## Abraham's Obedience

### #1 – He was willing to go

- Ø He was willing to go, Hebrews 11 tells us, without knowing where he was going
  - That is huge – nobody I know enjoys moving – oh the prospect of something new is interesting, but the actual process of packing, of lifting or trying to convince your friends to help you – who likes that
  - It is tough enough to go when you know what the plan is
- Ø When the Lord tells you where, and what the next 10 years are going to look like – this step will lead to this and this to that – oh I love that
  - I love living by faith

### **That is not faith, that's a plan**

- Ø But even with a plan its difficult to go
  - Imagine without a plan, imagine at their age, I mean they are in their 70's – I don't mean to offend anyone, but if I'm still around in my 70's, which is a statement of faith, with my family medical history, but If I'm around in my 70's, I hope to be clipping coupons and enjoying the senior menu at Denny's
  - I don't want to be moving, starting a new season of my life – especially if God is not giving any details

### **Can you image how that went down with Abraham and Sarah**

- Ø Hey babe God appeared to me, He told me we are moving - Oh – that was just the pizza
  - No – its not the pizza, it's the Lord
  - Oh – where did God tell you to go?
  - Didn't say – just pack up and go
  - Oh you're right, that wasn't the pizza that was the divorce paper speaking – what are you crazy

- He didn't tell you where?????

**But listen very carefully to me right now, the vagueness of God's command forced Abraham to trust in one thing, in one thing alone – The Word of God**

Ø The Word of God and of course the Character of who it was who was speaking those words to him, the character of who it was who was commanding him

- That was all Abraham had to go on

**You see if God was to give you the five year plan**

Ø well then you would be relying on the plan – oh I see how that works

- this will lead to that, and that will lead to this
- but it becomes the plan I come to rely on

Ø But plans fail precious friends

- Man and his ideas, they let us down constantly
- But in those let down, there is one constant – the Word of God, the nature of who it is who is speaking to me

**And I can obey, I can be willing to go, even when I don't know where and how**

Ø because I know who it is, who is commanding me

- and that is why, myself, Pastor Rob, are always encouraging to grow in your personal walk with Jesus
- because listen friends, in order to trust God when it doesn't make sense – you need to know God

Ø I don't really trust people I don't know

I personally love to study out and about, like at restaurants for three reason, I love to eat, I get to know the people who work there and eventually share Jesus, but mostly because I am so ADD that in an office, I start looking around – the noise helps me focus in

Ø but the one bummer is eventually you have to use the facilities, and I'm wondering what to do with my lap top, do I save everything shut it down, put in my back and take the whole thing to the restroom - I don't want to, because dude looks weird walking to the bathroom with a

backpack in a restaurant, secondly, someone is going to take my spot at Panera

But then – what if I leave it out – and someone swipes my computer, my life is on my computer

Ø and I worry because of those people who are sipping ice tea around me

Now you contrast that with studying in my office, and I get super distracted, but I am not worried about losing my stuff

Ø my office is across the ally with Pastor Rob and Margee, I am not worried about Pastor Rob stealing my computer – a little bit recently because I know he is having MAC envy with me – but I know him – I know Margee, they are not going to rip off my MAC

- the youth pastors – you never know
- but I know Pastor Rob – there is a relationship there and I trust him

Some of you read the story of Abraham and you think – there is no way

Ø I would never, especially at 75, leave my city and go someone that God will tell me later

- No way
- And I hear you on that – that would be difficult for all of us – but do you feel that way simply because its crazy
- Or do you feel that way – because you need to grow in your knowledge of who God is?

And this is so important precious ones, because faith is going to require you to obey, and sometimes it will make sense and often times it won't

Ø but your willingness to obey will be directly tied to how much you trust the character of the one who is calling you to obey

- some of you, I say because I love you, you need to grow in that area – you need to make a

decision to get to know the God of this book better than you do right now

- how do I do that??

**You get into this book – this book is about Him. I think we get confused on that in this day and age, that this book is about us, some sort of self help manual**

Ø this book is primarily about Him

- and as I get to know Him, I will be willing to obey even when it doesn't make a lot of sense.

### **Abraham's Obedience**

#### **#1 – He was willing to go**

#### **#2 – Abraham was willing to stay**

Ø Abraham was willing to go, but just as important, Abraham was willing to stay and sometimes that is the harder part

- When I was down in Costa Rica with Pastor Phil McKay I was talking with him about ways as a church we could help the Williamsons be ready to go to Argentina
- What ministered to him before he left, what was important to him in the first year

Ø And he said to me, something I will never forget because it is so true

- He said you tell Danny, it's easy to go, its hard to stay
- It's easy to go – there fan fare, hey we're with you, praying for you
- It's hard to stay – when the calls stop coming in, people stop checking in – and you are there, running a slow marathon, because God said so
- It's hard to stay

**But Abraham was willing to stay in the land God had called him to – why???**

Ø because He liked it – the Mediterranean climate was so amazing compared to UR – who wants to live in a place called UR anyway

○ No way – I hope you don't think that

**Hebrews 11 tells us why Abraham was willing to stay, look at verses 9-10, look at verse 13-16**

Ø He was willing to stay because Abraham understood this life, this world was not his forever home

○ He was looking for a city that had foundations

○ That verse literally reads in the original language,

**“He was looking for a city that had the foundations”  
– literal rendering of Hebrews 11:10**

Ø You see what God has for us is not just one of the things that has foundations, it's the only thing that has foundations

○ And we have to get this into our hearts and minds

○ Because if we are looking for fulfillment in this life, in this life's experiences, relationships, vocations, vacations

○ You will always come up short – something will always seem like it's missing

**But when you get into your heart and mind – I was made for another place - I was made for heaven**

Ø Oh that doesn't mean you become ineffective in this life, no I believe the opposite, you are more able to walk by faith in this life – because you aren't looking for this life to fulfill you

○ You can be obedient – to not just go, but stay because you realize –the key is to obey God, not to find fulfillment here and now

Ø So Lord no matter I'm feeling, no matter what I'm experiencing – I can trust you and stay where you have me

- Because this life isn't it – it's not the place where the foundations are – that's coming – so help me to be faithful, where ever and when ever until then

### Abraham's Obedience

#1 – He was willing to go

#2 – Abraham was willing to stay

#3 – Abraham was willing to lay down, even the greatest promise of His life

- Ø Oh we will get to the promise as we wrap up this study in just a few minutes, but most of you know what the greatest promise of Abraham's life was
  - He was going to be dad, He was going to have a son
  - The childless man in his 70's, in his 80's and in his 90's even when going to become the father of many nations
- Ø And oh when that day came when Abraham finally had the child of promise
  - Some of you know what it's like – if not with children –with something – God promises you a relationship, a job, an opportunity
  - And it happens and so blessed – and then it comes where the promise starts to look like it is fading, and then you hear God whisper to your heart – you need to put that promise on the altar

**For Abraham this was not abstract, God told him as we read in verses 17 – 19 – you need to sacrifice your son**

- Ø and as I often say, we read our Bible with our lattes, with our jammies on, next to the fire – oh crazy, sacrifice your son
  - and we read it this way because we know how the story ends

- but do you remember the first time you read that
- can you image what it would have been like for Abraham

**To sacrifice an animal meant you slit its throat, and then you disemboweled the animal and put the flesh on the alter and watched it burn**

Ø now I'm sorry to gross you out on a Sunday Morning, because I know we are all well to do American Christians, and you can't use a word disemboweled on a Sunday

- but you need to understand what Abraham was called to do
- what Abraham understood he was going to have to do to his son
- because then you marvel – for Abraham who we all know had lapses of faith in his life, with this one, there was no arguing, no trying to get out of it – he just got up and got going in obedience

Ø And again the reason Hebrews tells us Abraham concluded – God is going to raise him up

- I am going to go through with this horrible act, but God has made me a promise, that through Isaac, through the son of promise, a great nation is going to come – so God has to raise him up
- Again Abraham is relying on the character of God, the character of the one who made the promise
- The character of the one who was calling him to obey even when the obedience seemed crazy

**Often we don't understand – why would God ask Abraham to do that – It seem so out of character**

Ø of course we forget – it was a great big picture of what God actually did

- He stopped Abraham from offering his son

- But God actually went through with it
- Ø Oh how we casually let roll off our tongues, God offered His son – we forget the gravity of that act
- That heinousness of the sacrifice of Jesus

### **God will test your faith**

- Ø and God does it because it is often in those times of testing that we see the work that God has really done
- from our younger days when we would shake our fist at the heavens – to now when we stop questioning, stop trying to get out of it, and just get up and obey
- God uses the test to show us how we have grown

### **But more than that, when you do obey, even when it's hard, what a picture of Jesus you become**

- Ø Pastor Rob talked with us last week about the thread of redemption that is woven all throughout this chapter
- The pictures of what Jesus for you and me seen in the lives of these men and women of faith

### **Ø And to me there is no greater picture of Jesus, then when Abraham said – yes, I will obey**

- Even when you are not telling me where I am going
- Even when it is hard to stay in that obedience because it isn't fun and new
- Even when you ask me to do something that makes no sense at all and even seems out of character with God
- I will obey, like Jesus obeyed

### **Abraham rises from the pages of Scripture and says to you and me – it can be done**

### **Ø you can obey the Lord even when it doesn't make sense**

- you can stick with that obedience even when it gets difficult

- it can be done, it can be done, it can be done – it's not always easy – that is not what Abraham is saying – he is saying – it can be done

Ø don't you give up – because Faith is willing to obey

**Hebrews 11:8-19**

**#1 – Abraham – Faith is willing to obey – Hebrews 11:8-10 & 17-19**

**#2 – Sarah – Faith is willing to wait – Hebrews 11:11-16**

Ø faith is not just willing to obey but faith is also willing to wait

**Now this is hard enough to obey but waiting can be even harder, because none of us like to wait**

Ø people talk about my traveling all the time and they say, you have got to hate so much time on a plane – hey I love my time on a plane

- the cell phone doesn't work, its generally quiet, great opportunity to share Jesus, or just take a nap – which is awesome

Ø I love my time on the plane – it is everything else about traveling I despise and it normally has to do with waiting

**You show up at the airport and you wait in a line to check in**

Ø then once you check in you wait in a line to go through security

- and you get through security, now virtually naked with your belt off, shoes off, water gone, the pictures they just took of you on those new machines up on some screen and guess what you get to take your naked self and do – you get to wait some more
- because the only time they board on time is when you are late – can I get a witness for that

Ø if I'm on time – the plane's not here yet, oh it arrived, but now all the people get off the plane, now we have to clean the plane – now the first class which are you not you, get to get on the plane, now the platinum people - but when I'm not on time... passenger Duff  
**But most of the time – I'm waiting to board**  
Ø and even when you are boarding, you get to wait some more...

- You get on the jet bridge and you wait while everyone who is trying to avoid the checked bag fees now carries everything on to the plane, two bags, backpacks, animals, small children– so you have to wait

**When you finally get in your seat, well guess what, some more waiting, “hello this is your captain, we have a check engine light on – that will be a few minutes to get that fixed, I'm sure its nothing, just go ahead and... wait**

Ø Then when you finally get out to run way and that is followed by... more waiting - we are currently 15<sup>th</sup> in line for takeoff, it will be 45 min of... waiting – hummmm

**Now the plane is up in the air and you are thirsty because you had to throw away your water but you have to do what? – wait,**

Ø wait until you are at the right altitude, wait until they come to your row, wait until they ask, would you like a beverage,

- Yes I would like a beverage – a diet coke and, since I won't see you again for the next couple of hours – some water – some of you didn't know you can order two – you can and I do

Ø But beware – because you have ordered two beverages the time will come on the flight – you have to go.. so you walk to the back of the plane and

because there are 2 bathrooms for 300 people you again have to do what – wait...

- I don't like waiting
- But often the life of faith is exactly that

**Abraham and Sarah had been given a promise – a promise that they would be parents but a promise that they had to wait for, for 25 years**

Ø I don't like 25 years of lag time in my promises from God

- You – you like 25 year lag time?

**And it wasn't just the lag time – Sarah had this promise that she didn't even hear from God at first, at first it was just Abraham who had heard from God**

Ø and if that wasn't enough, it was a promise that had no apparent, visible, possibility of coming true

- Abraham and Sarah were old – in fact Hebrews says it best, verse 12, look at it – they were as good as dead
- Now that is Biblical honesty for you, that is God not beating around the proverbial bush

**I hear some people say – oh you don't understand - people lived longer in those days - so Abraham at 99 living to 175 is the equivalent of someone being 42 is today in today's life span, that is not a miracle, that sort of normal**

Ø now I don't really know what to say to that

- I don't really know why they are trying to diminish the glory of God's Word
- But even so – the Bible says, not billy says, the Bible says – he who was as good as dead – so you can say all you want, he wasn't the equivalent of 42

Ø But the Bible said, “he was as good as dead” – I don't know how old that is, but if that is what people and God think of you – that guy is about to die, God says,

he is as good as dead – if that is what they are saying? – it’s probably not time to start a family

**Abraham and Sarah trusted God with a promise – a promise that had no tangible way of coming true**

Ø and a promise they had to wait 25 years to come to pass, (no, it was only.. hey, God in Genesis 12 said, “I am giving this land I am calling you to, to who – your descendants, that promise came to a childless 75 old man and Isaac was born when Abraham was 100) – 25 years of waiting

**How in the world does someone like you and me who don’t like to wait 10 minutes, wait on God for 25 years**

Ø listen carefully friend

○ Abraham and Sarah trusted even though they were as good as dead because they weighed the impossibility of their situation with the possibility of God not keeping His word

○ I’ll say that again...

Ø Abraham and Sarah thought – that is no contest we are about to die, but compared to the chance of God not keeping His Word – we are in like Flynn – I don’t know what that means but you understand

○ They believed, they believed, they believed, but they still had to wait

**And maybe God has made you a promise – and you see it as impossible, but you start to compare it to the possibility of God not keeping His Word and you realize – this is going to happen**

Ø And to that I say “Amen” – but that doesn’t mean you will not have to wait

**God often will make us wait, because it is the process that we need, it is not really the fulfillment of the promise so much that we need, we need more**

than anything else, the process, because we need Him

Peter said to people who were suffering, and having to wait for the promise of God to come to fruition

“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” – I Peter 5:10

Ø Peter says – you are going to suffer for a while

- And in that time, in that process – you are going to be perfected
- That word means to mend nets that are broken
- God is going to mend those things in you that need fixing

Ø God is going to strengthen you, build you up spiritually

- And then, and only then – He will establish you – He will bring about the promise
- And in the waiting is the process of drawing us to Himself – which, precious ones, is what we need so much

In the meantime we need to be willing to obey because we know who it is who is commanding us, we need to be willing to wait, because we understand we need the process

Ø but precious ones, don't be discouraged

Are you having trouble being willing to obey and wait on the Lord???

Ø can I encourage you before we go our way - so did the hall of faith

- you know I read this chapter as a Bible guy and sometimes I think, really, that is not how the story really happened

Ø Abraham obeyed when God called him to go

- Really? – He actually waited in Haran for years before going to Canaan

### **Abraham dwelt in the land of promise**

Ø Really? I remember him heading down to Egypt, not once, twice

- Egypt is not in the land of promise
- He did not always dwell in the land of promise

### **Abraham waited for the promise of God**

Ø Really? I recall Sarah coming to him and saying, we need to help God. take Hagar

- And correct me if I'm wrong because some of you have been Bible students longer than me – Abraham did not say – no – we are going to wait Sarah – he said, sounds good to me

Ø Abraham in reality was slow to obey, He did not always dwell in the land, and he did not always wait on the Lord's promises

### **Sarah did not exactly judge God faith to come through at first, she laughed at God, remember....**

Ø God comes to Abraham again to promise him a son, this time Sarah is in ear shot in the tent – and what is she doing – she was judging God's faithful to come through

- Ah – no – she was cracking up at the idea of God coming through

Ø And not to steal from Rob's text for next week, but I'm sorry – verse 20 - Isaac didn't exactly bless Jacob by faith, he had to be tricked into it, Jacob, man himself in freak show to fool his blind dad into thinking he was Esau

**Now some of you are saying – Pastor Jason are you contradicting the Word – no –the Bible meant to say what it did**

Ø My point is not that Word is wrong – my point is God is extremely gracious - He is like a Father looking to reward his kid for something, anything – ah – you know your name – good

**You see precious ones**

Ø Faith is willing to obey

Ø Faith is willing to wait

○ But if then enemy is tearing you down saying – and you are not willing to do either of those things

○ I say to you – take heart

Ø Often time, neither were Abraham and Sarah

○ But you get back up, you child of faith

○ And you let God and His grace dust you off, forgiven your lapses of faith

**And you get back to realizing this morning – it can be done! – I see from Abraham and Sarah**

Ø I can obey - Even when you are not telling me where I am going – because I know who is calling me

Ø I can obey - Even when it is hard to stay in that obedience because it isn't fun and new – because I know this world isn't my home

Ø I can obey - Even when you ask me to do something that makes no sense at all and even seems out of character with God – because I know you

Ø I can wait – Even when it seem impossible – because I have waited the impossibility of my situation with the possibility of God not keep His Word – and it isn't even a question

Ø It can be done, it can be done, it can be done

○ Abraham and Sarah raise from the pages of Scripture and say to you and me who are sinners and failures just like them

○ It can be done – because we serve a great, and gracious God

**It can be done**

**What is your story going to be, church?**

**You know Revelation 15 talks about us in heaven singing the songs of Moses and Abraham**

**And I remember first reading that and thinking, why are we singing about Moses, Abraham, I thought it's just Jesus**

Ø but here is how I imagine it goes– I imagine that we will be singing songs about Jesus and then Abraham stands up and says, let me tell you – God told me to go and I asked where, and He said – go,

Ø He told me I was going have kids and I said how, and He said believe,

Ø He told me to sacrifice and I said I don't understand and He said, trust

○ And God led me to the promise land, and I had a son Isaac through whom came Jesus Christ and when God asked me to offer him, He didn't make me go through with it, but instead my family became a great picture of the sacrifice of the heavenly Father and Son

○ And heaven erupts – yeah – let's sing that song

**But what will your song be?**

Ø I don't know what it will be

○ But I know one thing for sure – it will always, always, always be rooted and grounded in the experience of faith, not sight

○ You have a choice, just like I had a choice to jump or climb down from that rock - some of you are thinking was that this study, preacher boy, you have gone long for one who is normally short, in size and in Bible study length

**Oh I'm sorry – no I'm not...**

Ø This is important - You have a choice – by sight or by faith

**Ø And Your song will always, always, be rooted in the  
things you did that were rooted and grounded in faith  
So go for it, it can done, not because you can do it -  
but because we serve a great and gracious King**