

**Monday, 22 January 2018** Hebrews 11:6-7

*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. 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.*

This is a clear demonstration of the cyclical nature of faith/belief/trust/commit/obey/faith... All these elements are either named or implied in this passage.

The Scriptures are filled with warnings from God of coming events; do I take them seriously and modify my life accordingly as did Noah. I strongly suspect that the ridicule of family and neighbors had no impact at all on his conviction to build the ark. As I live out these last days am I warning others of the events to come?

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**Tuesday, 23 January 2018** Hebrews 11:8-9

*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.*

How often do I query God and try to demand that He lay out every step for my approval? He said to Abraham go, and he went. He said to Jonah go, and he went. The other way! I don't find Jonah anywhere on this list of those who obeyed and went.

How long is the list of Jonahs? Those who resisted and disobeyed but eventually did go and obeyed? There is a name there, highlighted, in italics, underlined and in bold. But eventually I obeyed but do still struggle at times.

Praise the Lord; He does not give up.

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**Wednesday, 24 January 2018** Hebrews 11:39-40, 12:1-2

*And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him*

*endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

That great cloud of witnesses did not receive the whole package; God's plan for the restoration of His Creation which needed to be completed through the work of His Son on the Cross. But they are cheering us on, we who came after the Resurrection, who are running the race set before us. In a sense, we are the culmination of their faith lives. We, as we live out the Kingdom in the here and now, are the evidence that their faith was not in vain.

Have you ever watched and listened at the end of an Olympic marathon as the runners entered the stadium? What an uproar. But can you envision how much more joy-filled it will be as each one of us enter? As you enter a stadium that has been filling with those who have gone before since Abel?

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**Thursday, 25 January 2018** Hebrews 13:17

*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

A lot packed into this first sentence, both instructions to the flock and to those who are called to shepherd. One thing to note is that leadership is plural. The local congregation is not called to be a hierarchical structure based on the American business model, but an assemblage of leaders called to mutually keep watch over and be accountable for the health of the congregation.

The congregation is called to follow and submit to the Godly leadership, keeping in mind the example of the Bereans (Acts 17:11). The leaders are called to encourage the congregation to search the Scriptures.

The entire effort should come together in a spirit of joy without moaning and groaning. Over the years as innkeepers, we listened to a lot of ministers moaning about their flocks, but I don't recall a single instance where the complaining pastor expressed concern about their shepherding.

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**Friday, 26 January 2018** James 2:19-24

*You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by*

works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

I wonder if there is any sentence in the entire Word of God that more emphatically demonstrates the invalidity of the Sinner's Prayer. "Even the demons believe—and shudder." What an awe-filled sentence. What is lacking that the demons believe yet are still filled the knowledge that they face an eternity in the absence of the LORD, God the Almighty?

Stay tuned, same station, same time tomorrow.

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**Saturday, 27 January 2018 James 2:19-24**

*You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.*

Other ways to say the same thing. Faith without results is a fraud. So is works without faith. There is no salvation without results. Genuine faith will always lead to obedience. Faith and works are flip sides of the same coin.

We are called to love our neighbor. Go ask the Lord, as did the lawyer, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29) The answer might surprise you.

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**Lord's Day, 28 January 2018 Psalm 119:114**

*You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in your word.*

Lord, I need that hiding place, that place of peace and calmness. Help me, Lord.

# VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



January 22-28, 2018

**Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: Ephesians 3:13-16**

So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory. For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

LORD, we come before You in thanksgiving and praise, for we have been grafted into Your family. We are no longer sinful scum, but are called into a glorious ministry of reconciliation so that Your Kingdom will be advanced in the here and now.

In recognition of that calling, we are called by Your Name, Your glorious and powerful Name. Amen

**Creational Theology hint for the week--Prayer of Belief**

*I believe, O God of all gods, /That You are the eternal Creator of life. /I believe, O God of all gods, /That You are the eternal Creator of love. /I believe, O Lord and God of the peoples, /That You are the Creator of the high heavens, /That You are the Creator of the skies above, /That You are the Creator of the oceans below, /I believe, O Lord and God of the peoples, /That You are the One who created my soul and wove its threads, /Who created my body from dust and from ashes, /Who gave to my body breath and to my soul its possession. /Creator, bless to me my body. /Creator, bless to me my soul. /Creator, bless to me my life. /Creator, bless to me my belief. **Anamchara Books. Earth Afire with God: Celtic Prayers for Ordinary Life (Kindle Locations 431-439). Anamchara Books. Kindle Edition.***

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