

Living by Faith

Lesson 2: Faith That Worships and Walks with God: Abel and Enoch -- Hebrews 11:4-6

Imagine two men standing at an altar. The fire is lit, the smoke curls upward, and each one has come to bring something to God. From the outside they may look nearly the same, two brothers, two offerings, two acts of religion on the same morning. But God sees a difference we would have missed entirely. One offering rises to heaven as a sweet aroma, and the other does not. The same God, the same place, the same family, and yet two worshipers who could not be further apart. What separated them was not sincerity or effort. It was faith.

Hebrews 11 has just told us what faith is. Now it begins to show us what faith does, and the first thing it does is worship. 'By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.' Long before there was a temple or a tabernacle, there was a man who came to God on God's terms and was counted righteous for it. And the writer adds a haunting note: 'through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.' Abel's body has been in the ground for thousands of years, yet his faith is still preaching to us this morning. A faithful life is never wasted, and it never truly falls silent.

Then comes a second man, and with him the whole picture lifts from the altar to the open road. Enoch 'walked with God,' Genesis says, and one day he simply 'was not, for God took him.' Here is faith not in a single dramatic moment but in ten thousand ordinary ones, a man who kept step with God day after day until heaven felt so near that he crossed over without dying. We tend to admire the spectacular. God seems most pleased here by the steady. Enoch did not split the sea or face down a giant. He just walked with God, and that was enough to please the One who matters.

Between these two men the writer lays down a truth that will not let us go: 'without faith it is impossible to please him.' Not difficult. Impossible. You may bring God your best efforts, your warmest feelings, your most heartfelt intentions, but if faith is not in them, they cannot reach Him. This lesson asks us to look honestly at how we come to God and how we walk before Him. Do we worship as Abel did, by faith and on God's terms? Do we walk as Enoch did, close enough that God Himself is our destination? The God who rewards those who seek Him is inviting us to find out.

Group Discussion: Both Cain and Abel brought an offering to God, yet only one was accepted. What does this tell us about the difference between simply being religious and actually pleasing God, and why might that distinction be uncomfortable for us today?

Personal Reflection: Enoch is remembered for one thing above all, that he ‘walked with God.’ If your closest friends had to describe your daily walk with God, what do you think they would say, and what would you want them to be able to say?

Read Hebrews 11:4–6

Study Questions

1. Hebrews 11:4 says, ‘By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.’ What made Abel’s sacrifice ‘more acceptable,’ and why does the writer credit faith rather than the sacrifice itself as the reason God commended him as righteous?
2. Think about how you approach worship and giving to God. Do you tend to bring God your best, or whatever is left over and convenient? What might your habits reveal about the faith behind them?
3. The text says that through his faith Abel, ‘though he died, he still speaks.’ In what sense does a faithful person continue to speak after death, and what does this suggest about the lasting influence of a life lived by faith?
4. Whose faith from a previous generation still ‘speaks’ to you, even though they may be gone? What part of their walk with God do you most want to carry forward in your own life?
5. Hebrews 11:5 says Enoch ‘was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him.’ Genesis 5 tells us simply that ‘Enoch walked with God.’ What does it mean to ‘walk with God,’ and what kind of daily life does that phrase describe?

6. Be honest about the rhythm of your week. Where in your ordinary days do you sense you are genuinely walking with God, and where have you let the relationship drift into routine or distance?
7. Verse 5 says that before Enoch was taken, 'he was commended as having pleased God.' Why does God place such value on a life that simply pleases Him, and how is pleasing God different from merely impressing people or keeping up religious appearances?
8. Where in your life are you more concerned with pleasing people, or being seen as a good person, than with actually pleasing God? What would change if pleasing Him became your first concern?
9. Hebrews 11:6 says, '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.' The account of Cain and Abel shows that not every offering is acceptable, and Jesus taught that the Father seeks those who worship 'in spirit and truth' (John 4:24). How does this verse, together with Abel's example, teach us that acceptable worship must be offered by faith, that is, according to what God has actually revealed in His word rather than according to our own preferences?
10. Looking back over Hebrews 11:4–6 as a whole, in the example of Abel who worshiped by faith or Enoch who walked with God, name one concrete way you sense Jesus is forming you. What is one step you will take this week to worship Him on His terms or to walk more closely with Him?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Genesis 4:1–8, the offerings of Cain and Abel and the warning that sin crouches at the door; Genesis 5:21–24, Enoch who walked with God and was taken; John 4:23–24, the Father seeks worshipers who worship in spirit and truth; 1 John 3:11–12, Abel's righteous deeds set against Cain's evil ones; Jude 14–15, Enoch's prophetic witness that still speaks of the coming of the Lord.