<u>The Letter To The Hebrews</u>
The Faith Of Noah
Hebrews 11:7

<u>Introduction</u>

This week a news organization ran a poll asking "Will God save atheists who do good?"
43% said Yes. 47% said No.
What would *you* say — and what Scripture would you use to support your conviction?
Hebrews 11:6 answers this clearly — the only way anyone can be saved is by faith.
But the author of Hebrews knows that v.6 raises a troubling question —

<u>How much faith do I need in order to please God</u>?

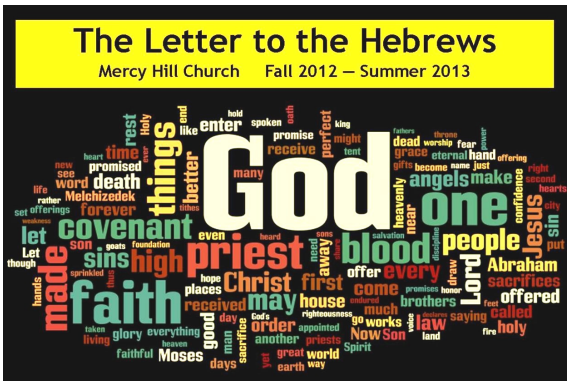
One reason the author tells the story of Noah is to answer this question.
God called Noah to build an ark to save himself and his family from God's judgment.
Noah believed God's Word, and by that faith he became an heir of the righteousness that's by faith. He inherited perfect righteousness before God.
The only way that could happen was because of what Jesus would do on the Cross.
The moment Noah had faith in God all his sins were punished in Jesus, and Jesus' perfect righteousness was given to Him — and forever he would be pleasing to God.
That's true for all of us. Our first act of faith makes us heirs of Jesus' perfect righteousness.

<u>How did Noah do something as hard as building an ark</u>?

It would have been hard for Noah to build an ark because of how foolish it would have looked.
His building of the ark was a statement to everyone that God was going to judge the world.
That's what the author means when he says Noah "condemned the world."
So how did Noah do something this hard? V.7 says he did it "by faith."
Faith is not shorthand for will-power, or just gritting our teeth and doing something.
Faith means turning to Jesus Christ just as I am, confessing my sin, and trusting Jesus to forgive me, help me, and use His Word to strengthen my faith.
So, when Noah turned to God by faith, trusting His help, God would have commended him as righteous (v.2), poured His love into Noah's heart, and strengthened Noah's faith through His Word so Noah would be able to do the hard work of building the ark.

<u>What does this mean for us</u>?

The author tells us about Noah to help us see what's going on today.
God is going to bring a flood of eternal punishment to everyone who is not saved from their sins.
The ark of Jesus Christ is open.
But no one will enter unless we share the Gospel with them.
So be like Noah. Do what looks foolish and tell people about Jesus.
It won't look foolish when the rain starts.



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

Why is it that God does not save atheists who do good? How would you explain that to someone?

Do you sometimes wonder if you have enough faith to please God — to be saved — to know for sure that you will be forgiven and with God in heaven forever? How did the story of Noah help you with this?

Is it really true that the moment you trust Jesus Christ you immediately become and heir of Jesus' perfect righteousness? Why is that so important to understand? What could happen if we don't understand it?

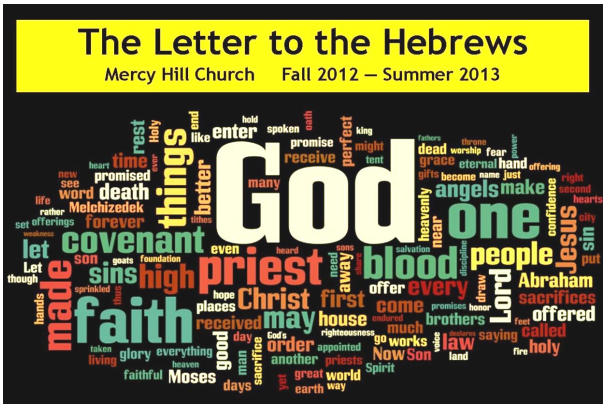
In the past, what have you thought it would have meant for Noah to build the ark "by faith"? Do you agree that it means turning to God, confessing your sin, asking for help, trusting that God will help you, and praying over God's promises until the Spirit strengthens your faith? Why or why not?

How much of your Christian life is "by effort" and how much is "by faith"? What happens when we just live by effort? What difference does it make to live by faith?

What happened when you sought to do the hard work of sharing the Gospel by faith? What did the Holy Spirit do in your heart as you prayed over the passages listed below?

How are you going to (by faith) do the hard work of sharing the Gospel this week?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.

Passages I have found helpful to strengthen my faith regarding evangelism:

Matthew 28:18-20
Mark 1:17; 4:26-29
Luke 6:22-23
Acts 1:8; 16:5; 16:14
1 Cor 9:19-27
2 Cor 4:3-6
2 Cor 5:10-11
1 Peter 4:14
Rev 12:11