

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today, we're diving into Hebrews 11:1-16, often called the "Hall of Faith." This passage paints a vivid picture of what faith looks like, rooted in the finished work of Jesus Christ and sustained by the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts. We'll walk through it section by section, with a special focus on Enoch. In these verses we can find encouragement, enlightenment, comfort, and guidance as we trust in God's promises.

### **Hebrews 11:1-2 – Faith Defined**

The writer of Hebrews begins, *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation."* Faith isn't blind optimism; it's a deep trust in what Jesus has secured for us through His death and resurrection. It's like your nephew, Charlie, who, before Christmas, was certain his parents got him that Lego set for Christmas. He hadn't seen it, but he trusted their love. The Holy Spirit gives us that same certainty in Christ's promises—forgiveness, life, salvation—even when we can't see the full picture. Because of Jesus, we're commended, not for our works, but for trusting in His.

### **Hebrews 11:3 – Faith and Creation**

Verse 3 says, *"By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."* The Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see that everything—every star, every tree, every breath—was spoken into existence by God's Word. That Word is Jesus, who not only created all things but redeems us through His cross. Scientists may debate the "how" of creation, but faith shows us the "why"—God's powerful Word, fulfilled in Christ. The Spirit anchors us in this truth, reminding us that our Creator is our Savior.

## Hebrews 11:4 – Abel’s Faith

Verse 4 tells us, *“By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts.”* Abel’s sacrifice wasn’t better because he tried harder; it was accepted because, unlike Cain’s, it was given willingly, with joy and an open heart. It pointed to Jesus, the perfect Lamb who takes away our sin. The Holy Spirit works in us to trust Christ’s sacrifice, not our own efforts. It’s like when you try to fix a leaky faucet and make it worse—you need the plumber. The Spirit leads us to Jesus, our true righteousness.

## Hebrews 11:5-6 – Enoch’s Faith (Expanded)

Now, let’s linger on Enoch in verses 5 and 6: *“By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. 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.”*

Enoch’s story is brief in Genesis 5:21-24, but it’s profound. He “walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.” Unlike most, Enoch didn’t experience death—God simply took him to be with Him. Hebrews tells us this was by faith. Enoch’s faith wasn’t about heroic deeds or perfect morality; it was about trusting God’s goodness and promise. The Holy Spirit cultivated in Enoch a deep relationship with God, a walk so close that God just brought him home.

What does it mean to “walk with God”? It’s not about earning favor but living in communion with Him, trusting His promises. Enoch’s faith rested on the coming Messiah, Jesus, who would reconcile us to God. The Spirit works that same trust in us, drawing us near to God through Christ’s blood. Enoch believed God exists—not just as a distant force, but as a personal, faithful God who rewards those who seek Him. That “reward” isn’t a paycheck for good behavior; it’s the joy of knowing God, fulfilled in Jesus, who is our ultimate reward.

Think of Enoch like an elderly neighbor, Mr. Thompson, who’d walk his dog every evening, rain or shine. He wasn’t in a rush; he just enjoyed the rhythm of the walk, talking to his dog like an old friend. That’s what the Spirit does in us—creates a

steady, joyful walk with God, trusting Jesus every step. Enoch's faith pleased God because it looked to Christ, not because Enoch was flawless. The Spirit gives us that faith, too, assuring us that in Jesus, we're already pleasing to God.

Enoch's departure is a mystery, but it points to Christ's victory over death. Just as God took Enoch, Jesus was taken up in His ascension, having conquered death for us. The Holy Spirit uses Enoch's story to comfort us, reminding us that death isn't the end—Jesus has prepared a place for us. Whether we're "taken" like Enoch or walk through the valley of death, Christ's resurrection guarantees our eternal home. The Spirit stirs in us a longing for that day, keeping our eyes on Jesus.

### **Hebrews 11:7 – Noah's Faith**

Verse 7 says, *"By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen... built an ark to the salvation of his household."* Noah trusted God's Word about a coming flood, even when it seemed crazy. The church is God's Ark, in which Jesus carries us through the flood of sin and death. The Holy Spirit builds that trust in us, even when the world scoffs. It's like a friend who started a community garden in a rough neighborhood. People said it'd fail, but she trusted God's call, and now it's a place of hope. The Spirit gives us faith like Noah's, rooted in Christ's salvation.

### **Hebrews 11:8-12 – Abraham and Sarah's Faith**

In verses 8-12, we see Abraham and Sarah. Abraham left his home, *"not knowing where he was going,"* trusting God's promise. Sarah, despite her doubts, received a son in her old age. Their faith wasn't perfect, but it rested on God's promise, fulfilled in Jesus, the seed of Abraham who blesses all nations. The Holy Spirit works in us to trust God's promises, even when they seem impossible. It's like a friend who adopted a child despite endless obstacles. She trusted God's leading, and now her family is complete. The Spirit points us to Christ, who makes the impossible possible.

### **Hebrews 11:13-16 – A Heavenly Homeland**

Finally, verses 13-16: *"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar... they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one."* These saints didn't see the full fulfillment in their

lifetime, but they trusted God's promise of a Savior. Jesus fulfills every promise through His cross and resurrection. The Holy Spirit keeps our eyes on that heavenly homeland. It's like saving for a dream vacation—you don't have the tickets yet, but you can see it in your mind. The Spirit shows us Christ's kingdom, guiding us there.

## **Closing**

Hebrews 11:1-16 shows us that faith is trusting in Jesus, who secures every promise of God. The Holy Spirit works in us, like He did in Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, to walk closely with God, believing He exists and rewards those who seek Him. That reward is Christ Himself—our righteousness, our life, our home. Whether we face uncertainty, impossibility, or a world that doesn't get it, the Spirit anchors us in Jesus. We're not home yet, but because of Christ, we're headed to God's kingdom of glory. Let this truth encourage, enlighten, comfort, and guide you today and always. Amen.

**The peace of God guard your hearts and minds as you believe and trust in Him.**

Pastor Ron Breight

Christ Lutheran Church Forest Hills, Pennsylvania

*Join us for worship online on our Facebook page, [ChristLutheranChurchfh](#). There you can view our 10 am Sunday service live or view a recording at your convenience. There is no need to register with Facebook or log in to visit our page.*