

Text: Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

I. Introduction

- A. We live in a consumer oriented world today. A world in which we expect to be served and expect others to please us.
1. Fast food restaurants exist because we don't have time for the traditional meals. Drive-thrus because the family car has replaced the dinner table.
 2. Nordstroms, Dillards, JC Penney and Wal-Mart exist to provide us with clothing that our grandmothers and great-grandmothers used to make on an old fashioned device know as a sowing machine.
 3. Our children expect to be driven to a school that is but a couple of blocks away from the home when they could walk or ride their bikes.
- B. And sadly when we come to the Lord's house, instead of “. . . entering His gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise . . .” (Psalms 100:4a, NIV), we bring our consumer attitudes to the pew and boldly ask God and the church, “How are you going to service me today?”
- C. Weekend Focus: Entering The Throne Room, Seeking God's Overflow. Scripture emphasis has been on Heb 11:6.
- D. Context of today's passage: Hebrew writer's discussion on faith and the beginning list of persons in the Hall of Fame of faith.
- E. Faith is a required component of the Christian life:
1. Romans 1:17b (NIV), “The righteous will live by faith.”

2. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV), “We walk by faith, not by sight.” (Show Indiana Jones III movie clip of walking by faith)
- F. What is faith? Hebrews 11:1 says that faith has two components:
1. “being sure of what we hope for”, i.e., having confidence in what we have not yet attained; and
 2. “certain of what we do not see”, i.e., trusting/affirming in that which we cannot physically see.
 3. Definition heard on Enjoying Everyday Life, “Faith is living as though we believe the Word of God.”
- G. Prov 3:5-6 (NIV), “Trust in the LORD with **all** your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”
- H. In order to acknowledge God in ALL things, we need to develop a relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. That relationship with God comes through:
1. Learning about who God is (God's word and the throne room experience of prayer) and
 2. Experiencing God in everyday life (Christian walk).
- I. The Hebrew writer would have us to understand that a pleasing faith is an important part of the throne room and overflow experience. Pull up close to this text and let's see what the Lord has to say to us today.

II. “Without Faith It Is Impossible To Please God”

- A. Critical element of this phrase: “pleasing God”. Is that your

attitude?

1. Illustration: Me pleasing my dad when diving in HS; Me preaching before my dad at his retirement (1999)
 2. Side note: Can or Do our kids please us? They need to know when they have done so for encouragement's sake.
- B. Jesus' focus in His life was in pleasing God and accomplishing the will of the Father.
1. John 5: 30 (NIV), "By myself I can do nothing; . . . for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me."
 2. John 8:29 (NIV), "The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."
- C. You have to make a choice that you want to please God.
1. Psalms 147:11 (CEV), "The LORD is pleased only with those who worship him and trust his love."
 2. Living the Christian life is not automatic. The Holy Spirit does not override our free will. You have to make a decision that you are going to make pleasing God a priority in your life.

III. "Without faith it is impossible . . ."

- A. Many times we focus on the things that are possible and that is good but here we find a case where the impossible is stated.
- B. Why is it impossible to please God without faith?
1. Romans 14:23b (NIV), ". . .and everything that does not come from faith is sin."
 2. If to operate apart from God is sinful, God can never be

pleased with sin.

3. 1 John 1:5-6 (NIV) says, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth."
 4. Darkness is not a place where God dwells. Sin is a missing of the mark. The mark being the perfect and sinless life of Jesus Christ.
- C. Faith in our lives should be like the air that we breath. We cannot live without it. Illustration: Time I ran out of air SCUBA diving.

IV. "Come to Him"

- A. The Hebrew writer begins to lay out some prerequisites for pleasing God with the first being "Coming To Him".
- B. The idea of coming to God implies that either you have a relationship or you desire to have a relationship. You can't approach those with whom you have no relationship.
- C. How do we come to God?
1. Thru His Word.
 - a. Romans 10: (NIV), "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God"
 - b. I-Pods / Podcasts / Blackberries / Automobile University
 2. Thru daily conversation, i.e., prayer.
 - a. Hebrews 4:16b (NIV), "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence . . ."

- b. When you have a relationship with Almighty God, you can ask Him for anything with confidence.
- 3. By funneling all of life through Him and not just the emergency moments. Our God is not a fire insurance salesman just to keep us out of Hell.
- D. Our coming to God in the Throne Room shows our dependence on Him. God desires to work mightily on behalf of those who love and depend on Him. So to please God we first must “Come To Him” and then . . .

V. “Believe That He Exists”

- A. It’s not enough just to have head knowledge about God. It’s not enough just to subscribe to a bunch of facts. You have to know that you know that God exists and is real.
- B. All around us there is evidence of God’s existence. We are without excuse:
 - 1. Romans 1:20 (NIV), “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”
 - 2. The intelligent design of the things in this world is a testimony to God’s creative hand:
 - a. Complexities of the this human body
 - b. Creative hand in nature
 - c. Orderliness of the universe and this planet (e.g., seasons, planet rotations, miracle of birth, etc.)
- C. You don’t come before a robotic deity that must be appeased with some kind of sacrifice. But you come before a loving

heavenly Father who has your best interest at heart.

- D. You please God first of all when you come to him with a whole hearted belief in who He is. But secondly you please God when you come before Him understanding that . . .

VI. “He rewards those who earnestly seek him”

- A. Our image of God at times is one of a stern and stingy Father who is always looking to slam His hand of justice. Nothing could be further from the truth in this passage.
- B. We have to understand that we serve the God of the universe who loves us. How much?
 - 1. John 3:16 (NIV), “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”
 - 2. Romans 8:32 (NIV), “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”
- C. That confirms what the Hebrew writer has been talking about in that we serve a God who rewards those who earnestly seek Him. Who diligently desire to walk in His ways.
- D. There have been times in my own life when I’ve had to earnestly seek Him. How about you?
 - a. When there was more month than there was money.
 - b. When relationships crashed on the rocks and broke up.
 - c. When loves ones who were close to me went home to be with the Lord.

- d. When expectations and dreams were unmet and seemed out of reach.
 - e. When children that you've taught to do right have decided to do wrong.
- E. But no matter what I keep coming back to “. . . Him who is able to keep me from falling . . .” (Jude 24) and cause overflow in my life.
- F. Do you desire God's overflow in your life? Stop chasing the reward and seek out the reward giver:
1. Proverbs 3:9-10 (NIV), “Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”
 2. Psalms 23:5 (NIV), “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”
 3. Psalm 34:10 (NIV), “The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.”
 4. Psalms 22:26 (NIV), “The poor will eat and be satisfied; they who seek the LORD will praise him”
- G. Listen to the testimonies of how God has rewarded those who have diligently sought after Him:
1. Moses and the children of God backed up at the Red Sea - Overflow.
 2. Three Hebrew boys thrown in the fiery furnace - Overflow
 3. Daniel thrown in the lion's den for praying to God -

Overflow

4. Cleopas and his companion on the Emmaus Road in Luke 24 - Overflow
5. Thief dying on the cross next to Jesus - Overflow
6. John 14 - Ultimate Overflow which will take place not on this side of the Jordan but on the other side.

VII. Conclusion

- A. No one likes to be used including God. When we focus more on the overflow than we do in the God of the overflow, our priorities are out of whack.
- B. When our priorities are out of whack, we chase the material things of this world and that gets weary.
- C. Jesus extends an invitation, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matt 11:28-30)
- D. Satan will have you running around seeking to acquire all of the things that make up the “good life”. All that running makes you weary.
- E. Jesus offers us the opportunity to come to Him and be at rest. Rather than the burdens of this world, Jesus offers us rest and a light burden. When you walk obediently with Jesus, the overflow comes automatically as Jesus has come “. . . to give us life and to give it more abundantly” (John 10:10)

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| Date Preached | Place Preached |
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| March 30, 2008 | First Baptist Church of College Hill, Tampa, FL |
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