**Examples of Faith October 31, 2021**

**Hebrews 11:4-12**

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith he still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken so that he did not experience death; and "he was not found, because God had taken him." For it was attested before he was taken away that "he had pleased God." 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. 7 By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith. 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11 By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old — and Sarah herself was barren — because he considered him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, "as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore" (NRSV).

On All Saints Sunday we recognize and honor the believers that are members and active participants that have passed during the past year. During morning worship the names are read and the congregation reflects upon each person and their contribution to the faith.

The book of Hebrews addresses faith more than any other New Testament book. It teaches us that faith is an act of obedience and that people of faith persevere in face of difficulty. The writer of Hebrews cited Old Testament heroes, or saints, as examples of faith in order to illustrate that faith requires active obedience. What is significant about these Old Testament saints is that they had an active response to their faith. So, it is crucial to not just have faith but to have an active and appropriate response to faith.

The Scripture does not define faith; it gives us examples as testimonies to what faith is. The Scripture speaks directly to us so that we can connect these examples of faith to our own faith. The examples of the godly are: Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. Abel was the son of Adam and Eve that was murdered by his brother in an act of jealousy. His offering to God was approved as righteous. His response to faith was that he presented his 1st product and gave to God the very best that he had to offer. Enoch had distinctive spirituality that pleased God so much that God took him directly. His response to faith was that walked with God for 300 years. Noah was a righteous man that lived in violent and wicked world. He was singled out by God to preserve life on the earth. His response to faith was that he remained true to God in a corrupt world, trusted God, respected God’s warning, and obeyed God. Abraham was a man of profound faith. His response to faith was that he trusted God and obeyed God.

Throughout history the one that has always been faithful is God. As Israel was repeatedly unfaithful, God always remained faithful. The very best example of faith is Jesus. After citing the example of biblical saints, the writer of Hebrews gives the ultimate example of faith. Jesus is not only a testament to ideal faith like the biblical saints but is himself the ultimate example of faith for us to follow.

What we learn from the examples of faith of the Old Testament Bible saints is to be steadfast in faith. However, through Jesus - the very best example of Faith - we learn much more. How you perceive Jesus is very important. The New Testament world 1st saw Jesus as a teacher and they were astounded by his teaching. They also recognized Jesus as a great healer and miracle worker. A great number of people understand Jesus as the Messiah and a few realized that he is indeed the Son of God. It is imperative that your view of Jesus is as the Son of God. He is resurrected and alive and fills you with the Holy Spirit. This is significant in that you now have the Spirit of God and the character of Jesus as a genetic predisposition. Disciples follow Jesus, not just follow along with the crowd, but follow his very nature and his character as a role model for your life.

We are followers of Jesus but not just in word alone. Following Jesus also requires action on our part which includes having the right heart and attitude. We follow the teachings of Jesus and the actions of Jesus. There are many degrees of faith. The world is full of people who, no matter how strong or weak their faith is, they tend to think that it is good enough. However, there are several places where the Bible teaches the necessity of having strong faith. The person of faith draws near to God, seeks after God, and commits the self to Jesus Christ with full attention and heart. Faith does not guarantee a bed of roses. Faith does not guarantee prosperity and success according to the world’s standards. Faith will not deliver you from suffering. In fact, many times people encounter opposition and mistreatment due to their faith because evil seeks to attack good. What faith does is sustain the believers. When we face the world’s hostility our faith enables us to persevere in the midst of suffering.