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**"POWER UP!"**

- Powerful Insights From Some Ancient Saints -  
(Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6:9-22)

**Intro** ... This morning we continue in our brand new series of messages entitled "**POWER UP**" ... plugging into some powerful insights for living provided by some ancient saints. This little series will take us right up to and through Easter.

Each week we will focus our attention upon one of those 'ancient saints' and the insight for living that can be drawn from his/her life. Initially we will work from the Heroes of Faith recorded in Hebrews 11.

Here's how Hebrews 11 begins ...

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

Each week we will examine the various "faith actions" that brought such commendation and we will draw from those actions powerful "*insights for living*" - insights that will cause God's Commendation - His Smile of Approval - to rest upon our lives as well.

Last week's commended ancient saint was **ABEL** the son of Adam and Eve. Here's the "faith action" that brought him God's commendation. Hebrews 11:4 ...

"By faith **Abel** offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead."

Here's the "*Power Insight*" that we imagined coming from his mouth ...

"Give God what He wants -  
Present Him with sacrifices that will please Him!"

As we 'plug ourselves into' that insight for living our lives will take on a most commendable quality - we will live with the smile of God's pleasure upon us.

Today our eyes move down the page just a few verses further and we discover our next ancient saint's name in verse seven ...

By faith **Noah**, when warned about things not yet seen,  
in holy fear built an ark to save his family. (NIV)

By faith **Noah**, being warned of God of things not seen as yet,  
moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. (KJV)

**By faith** ... Noah ... believing what God had said ... **built an ark**.

Now what I want us to focus on this morning is not "**what**" he did but "**why**" he did it; for it's out of the "**why**" that today's powerful insight has arisen .

So what was the "**why**"? It's right there in the verse ...

"By faith Noah ... **moved with** (motivated by) **fear** ... built an ark."

Here then is today's powerful insight from Noah ...

**Today's Powerful Insight From NOAH ...**

**FEAR** is one of life's most powerful **MOTIVATORS** ...  
Don't **IGNORE** it!

So what was he so fearful of ... What was the fear that motivated him to devote himself to a lifetime of ark-building ... a lifetime that was no doubt filled with the ridicule of his neighbors, if not his own family?

The fuller story is told in Genesis 6: 9-22 ...

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.

So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.

I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark - you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Well there it is ... Noah had been brought face to face with a most angry God - a righteous God whose patience with man had reached its limit. The entire population of earth was going to be destroyed in an awesome display of God's judgment against sin. Only Noah and his family and members of the animal kingdom would be spared and they would only be spared ... if Noah built the ark.

***And so ...***

"Noah, being warned about things not yet seen,  
***in holy fear*** built an ark to save his family ..."

And as a result he saved not only his family but yours and mine as well. He saved the entire human race! He enabled the marvelous plan of God to continue to work his way out in this world. He was the most critical person on the face of the earth at the time and he pulled off his task perfectly. No wonder he was "commended" - no wonder he's listed along with these other "commended saints".

And it's with a few hairs no doubt still standing up on the back of his neck that he would say to us ...

***"Fear is one of life's most powerful motivators.  
Don't ignore it!"***

***Fear*** can be a powerful motivator ... Genuine godly fear can motivate us to do some things that we might normally not have the courage to do and that same genuine godly fear can keep us from doing some things that we might have a natural tendency to do.

So is there a place for such motivational "fear" in a Christian's Life?  
I would say, "Yes there is" and I would share two such places with you this morning.

***Two Big Fears that can powerfully motivate your life:***

***1. THE FEAR OF UNDESIRABLE OUTCOMES***

(Matthew 10:28; Romans 6:16; 1 Corinthians 5:6; Romans 2:14-15)

***Consider*** the undesirable outcome called ...

***\* CONDEMNATION***

(Eternal matters are at stake)

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.  
Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.  
(Matthew 10:28)

The night that I got saved as a 9 year old boy, the evangelist made good use of our Hebrews verse about Noah ... He pointed out that it's a good thing to be scared of Hell ... That it's perfectly fine to come to Christ because we are afraid of going to Hell - that's why he is called our Savior - we need to be saved from God's condemnation upon sin.

The evangelist's goal that night was to literally "scare the Hell right out of us" and in my case he succeeded. When the invitation was finally given to receive Christ as Savior from Hell's horrors, my hand shot up into the air. I've not been scared of Hell since but thank God I got good and scared of Hell that night!

Noah would say to us ...

"A healthy fear of hell can help put you on the path to heaven!"

Spending eternity in Hell is without question the most undesirable outcome that a human being will ever experience. Fear of that outcome can motivate a person to seek out the Savior. However, once saved that fear should be removed from a believer's heart. God's gift of forgiveness provided through faith in Christ takes us out from under condemnation (Romans 8:1) ...

"There is therefore now *no* condemnation  
for those who are in Christ Jesus"

However, Hell is not the only undesirable outcome that needs to be dealt with ...

Here's one that we believers face every day of our lives.  
Here's a place where godly fear can serve us well.

**Consider** the undesirable outcome called ...

\* **CONSEQUENCES**

(Temporal matters can be really messed up)

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey - whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

(Romans 6:16)

Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?

(1 Corinthians 5:6)

Ungodly, sinful behaviors can really mess up our lives. Things done unthinkingly, things done rebelliously, things done out of spite all bear consequences - consequences that we might have to live with for the rest of our lives.

**Fear** of consequences can help keep us on the "straight and narrow".

As a boy growing up, it seemed (at times) as though my mother's favorite Bible verse was "*be sure your sin will find you out*" (Num 32:23). The implication was that "such discovery" would not go well for me!

It's always better to allow fear of consequence to **keep** you out of trouble than to trust the Lord to **get** you out of trouble once you are in it. The trouble itself always leaves a scar of some kind.

And now consider the undesirable outcome called ...

\* **CONSCIENCE**

(I might never be able to forgive myself)

Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them. (Romans 2:14-15)

It's that "accusing function" of the conscience that I would have us focus upon this morning.

The emotional landscape is cluttered with the rubble of distraught Christians who, having made a mess of their lives, seem doomed to forever re-play the tapes of their biggest mess-ups.

Though they know (theologically at least) that God has forgiven them, they also know that the deeds have been done and the outcomes have been experienced and the pain has been caused and their sorrow remains.

Fear of such a life lived under the "*Accusing Sting of Conscience*" could serve to keep one from so violently violating their conscience in the first place.

*Proper Godly Fear* can provide powerful motivation for us to avoid undesirable outcomes. That's a most *helpful fear* to maintain.

Here's the second of the *Two Big Fears* that can properly motivate us as we walk our way toward heaven.

## ***2. THE FEAR OF A NON-PRODUCTIVE CHRISTIAN LIFE***

(1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Now that has always been a scary passage for me.

Now I know that some of us might say ...

*"Hey, as long as I make it to heaven,  
I don't care if it's only with the shirt on my back."*

But when you think about it ... Is that what you really think? When you picture your first encounter with your Savior do you want to be wearing nothing but that still smoldering shirt?

Can you picture yourself saying in effect ...

"Yes, I know that you died for me and all but I just got too busy running my life that I didn't have time to do anything for you."

That's the situation that Paul is basically saying that some Christians will be in ... To me that's always been a "scary scenario".

So what can we do? ...

Well, this would be a good time to re-apply last week's insight for living and just resolve to "give God what He wants" and stack up for ourselves piles of spiritual "gold, silver and costly stones" to present to him when the moment comes.

Here's a bit of a **checklist** that I have prepared - the types of things that will offset the fear of facing the Lord empty-handed.

\* Have I been a genuine **worshipper** of God?  
(That's what the Father is seeking - John 4:23-24)

At the heart of our church's mission is the development of a body of genuine worshippers ... men and women who have come to understand what it means to open their hearts as well as their minds to the awesomeness of God - to be deeply touched by His Greatness and Goodness. Have you become one of those? Such worship is a precious jewel.

\* Have I been a faithful **reader** of His Word?  
(Do not let this (Word) depart from your mouth/mind - Jos. 1:8)

God gave that instruction to Joshua long years ago ... the Bible was a lot smaller then. Last week we reminded ourselves that God would have us present ourselves to him as competent "handlers of His Word". We may never understand it thoroughly but we can commit ourselves to reading it regularly and allowing its truths to guide our lives. "Word-Awareness" is a jewel in its own right.

\* Have I been a responsible steward of His Resources?

(The earth is the Lord's and everything in it - Ps. 24:1)

The thought "none of this stuff is my stuff" is revolutionary. That thought reminds me that I am simply a "keeper" - a "user" - a steward" of God's stuff. I must use it in ways that honor him and never in ways that dishonor him. Conscientious handling of life's resources is another God-Honoring spiritual treasure.

\* Have I been a committed follower of His Son?

(The work of God is this - Believe in the one he has sent - Jn. 6:29)

"Simply" believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God sent from heaven to earth is a priceless jewel. That act of faith demonstrates a great victory over the blindness that envelopes the earth. To believe in Christ - to seek to walk in His Ways - to trust in Him alone for your salvation is a treasure above all measure.

\* Have I been a good member of Christ's Church?

(Love one another - John 13:34)

Now our membership list won't actually be shipped up to heaven at the end of this month but your name on it says that you have made a decision that you will live your life in fellowship with Christ's people in this place at this time. And the number one thing that Christ asks us to do is "love one another". Stand by one another - bear with one another - encourage one another. Recognize that each of us plays a role in the actual "treasure producing" process of all the others. "Loving one another" is gold, silver/precious stones all rolled into one.

\* Have I been a willing spokesman for His Cause?

(You shall be my witnesses - Acts 1:8)

When the situation has presented itself have I borne witness that I am a Christian and have I been willing to share the essential truths of the Gospel with those who inquire. Have I encouraged others to follow Christ even as I am seeking to do? The "witness we share for Christ" will surely emerge from the fire of God's evaluation glowing brightly.

And so we come to our final thot, one surely endorsed by Noah himself.

**Final Thot ...**      **FEAR** - properly employed - can be most  
**USEFUL** in keeping our **LIVES** on track.