

Introduction:

- Webster defines Adventure - as a venture/activity involving danger or risk. Faith loves that! In fact, you would be hard pressed to find faith in the Bible that is absent of danger or risk.
- For most people, starting that adventure means work. If you are taking a step then you are beginning to do a work for God.
- That is our subject for tonight: Faith is Work. And to many people that is a 4 letter word.
 - *"For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead."* (James 2:26, ESV)
 - James is big on faith and works working in tandem together. IE. Tandem sky dive.
- *"It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before. By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith."* (Hebrews 11:7, NLT)
- If there is one thing that stands out about the Lord of the Rings series is that the adventure of the Hobbit was work!

I. Adventures In God Begin With Work

- A. Lets begin by defining work: Webster - *"work is to perform or carry through a task requiring sustained effort or continuous repeated operations; to exert oneself physically or mentally especially in sustained effort for a purpose or under compulsion or necessity."* IE. Pulling weeds.
1. When we look at the Hebrews 11, one thing stands out for sure. These giants of the faith worked hard therefore they got their name in the Book. They were not working to get their name in the Book. They were working in response to God's leadership in their lives.
 2. These giants of the faith exerted themselves in continuous effort to reach a God given directive.
 3. They lived with a divine tension between faith and working. *"True faith and works go together. Yet as faith without works is dead, so works that do not proceed from faith are dead"* (Heb. 6:1); they do not lead to life. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). TDNT (p. 254). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
- B. All adventures in God always leads to work. The believing leads to doing. And the doing is fruit of believing. Many live with disconnect between believing and doing...especially when the work aspect is considered. IE. That's too hard. That takes more effort than I want to do.
1. It is nice to walk with God. That is what Noah was doing. *"This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God."* (Genesis 6:9, NLT) Good start - Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living, walked in close fellowship with God... beautiful!!!
 2. Out of all these 'kudos' and good feelings, God says, "Build a boat." Now the work really begins. Before, he was working to provide for his family. Now he still has that job plus!!! Are you starting to smell 'work?'

3. Adventures in God start out in visions of grander. They are fun to talk about but they lead to work. Lots of work. Lots a hard work. Faith is work. Faith costs us. Faith is a choice to walk with God, according to His ways. Now we are starting to see why many really never venture into the place of faith. Build a boat. I never built a boat. IE. Lester Sumrall buying a ship. "I had to learn!"
- C. Three Phases of work IE. Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the wall.
 1. Start is the dream phase, and work begins. "... *Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace!*" Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king. They replied at once, "Yes, let's rebuild the wall!" So they began the good work." (Nehemiah 2:17-18, NLT)
 2. Half way – self realization phase. At this point you have to decide if continuing is worth the effort...because it is now work, hard work.
 - a) "*At last the wall was **completed to half** its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm.*" (Nehemiah 4:6, NLT)
 - b) "*the people of Judah began to complain, "The workers are getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be moved. We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves."*" (Neh 4:10 NLT)
 - c) Complaining is when the vision no longer carries you. Complaining begins when you are exhausted and losing site of the value of what you are doing. Lies begin to fill your head and if you are not careful you will begin to say, "*We will never be able...*"
 3. Finish - the God realization phase.
 - a) Nehemiah encouraged the leaders.
 - b) Nehemiah stationed them by tribe and families on the wall. This gave them vision/a reason why we need the walls. They now had a sword in one hand and trial in the other.
 - c) Nehemiah reminded them that God was working with them. "*When you hear the blast of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. Then our God will fight for us!*" (Nehemiah 4:20, NLT)
 - (1) "*Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work."*" (John 4:34, NLT)
 - (2) Jesus is telling his disciples that there is a strength and joy that comes from doing the will of God and finishing.

II. Noah A Man Of Faith

- A. Noah was a man of faith. Hebrews 11:7 says he received a righteousness that comes by faith. Abraham is not the first to obtain this. Therefore it gives us hope to receive righteousness the same way, by faith.
 1. Noah had never seen rain. Noah had never seen a boat. (Not just any boat, but a boat so big that another one would not be built that big again until 1850.) What is God asking you to do that you have never seen?

2. The faith that Noah had caused him to work for God at a task he had never experienced personally. This activity of Noah, (activity is action) this activity was work. How do you build something you have never seen in preparation for something that never has been?
 3. This is faith in action or faith working for God. Faith is a work!
 4. Faith does not come because you pray for it. It comes by hearing the Word! The Rhema of God. And it comes by obeying the word that you hear.
- B. God told Noah.
1. God said it would rain and that He would open up the fountains of the deep.
 2. Noah put faith into action by building a boat and preaching to the masses as they came to see what he was doing. He was obedient and put his faith to work. Gen 6:22; 7:5
 - a) *"So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him."* (Genesis 6:22, NLT)
 - b) *"So Noah did everything as the Lord commanded him."* (Genesis 7:5, NLT)
 - c) Obedience at work!
 3. Heb 11:7 He was warned of things to come...things not seen.
 4. By faith he started building.
 - a) Build a boat.
 - b) In a corn field.
 - c) "I will bring the water to the boat."
 5. Faith is work. It is doing what God tells you to do. IE. Bruce and Darla, AMT, recon Malawi.
 - a) Faith is not praying, "Lord, give me faith." A living faith IS a faith that will change the world.
 - b) Unless you move/walk with God in the area of the unknown, you will never know if you have a living, vivacious faith in Him.
 - c) God said, build a boat. Faith made it happen along with hard work!
 - d) Faith is not just a vision, it is a work. Faith is a reality. Faith is living. Faith is the substance of things hoped for.

III. Faith Is An Act

- A. Very simply, it is a work. That brings us back to *"So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless."* (James 2:17, NLT)
- B. Faith is a living sacrifice. It costs you. You have to give up something in order to trust God.
- C. Faith is a walk. It steps out in faith and keeps on walking with God in close fellowship.
- D. Faith is a work. What matters is faith expressing itself in love. *"We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, ESV)

Conclusion:

- Faith loves an adventure but adventures are work.
- Just ask the Hobbits.