

## Faith

*7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.*

Hebrews 11:7

**NUGGET** – I know this is only the next verse after last week's – but what a verse! There are 5 times that the phrase 'by faith' is used in this one verse of 2 sentences. Not once does it say 'by works'! And yet there is one of the most famous 'works' ever done that is prominent in this verse.

Noah built an ark! We're not told he built the ark to please God or appease Him. We're not told that he built ark to gain God's favor or to merit God's righteousness. No, we're told that "*By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark*". So it is an act of faith and of holy fear by which Noah built. It is FAITH, which, through Noah's action, caused the ark to be built.

Faith is not something that excludes action. Far from it. Faith encourages *acts* of devotion, love, obedience and a host of any other godly actions. But those *actions* are not the content of faith. Again the writer of Hebrews is helping us to see that faith is that which defines our relationship with the God of all creation - *faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see*.

Faith always has an object. Faith is directional and it is focused. We do not 'hope for' something that IS NOT. For us, as it was for Noah, the content of faith lies in the word of God. It lies in God Himself. Look at the result of the faith Noah expressed in the building of the ark. The world was condemned and Noah became an 'heir of righteousness'.

Why was the world condemned? Because, in the people of the world there was no faith, no 'confidence' in God. So Noah 'by faith' – by having, by expressing faith in God – Noah was not as the rest of the world. And so though he was the smallest of minorities, yet 'by faith' he condemned the world for its lack of faith.

As to being an 'heir of righteousness' that too was 'in keeping with faith'. Again, Noah did not earn or merit being an heir – no one ever does. Being an heir comes from your relationship with someone who dies. And Noah had a relationship with the God of creation who sent His only Son to die for the sin, for the lack of faith, in the world. That death, of Jesus Christ is what made Noah an heir in keeping with faith. Just as it does for you and I.

### **APPLICATION -**

1. This one is up to you. How *do* you apply faith in your life? Consider the 10 Commandments as a guide for this. How are you doing on... pick any commandment and give yourself an opportunity, like Noah, to act 'by faith' on that commandment. For further help on that see Luther's Small Catechism with the explanation.

**PRAY** – Oh God the Father, the Creator of all, You granted to Noah faith and holy fear and You gave him strength and guidance to be able to act. Grant to us also Your merciful hand to guide and direct us, that by faith in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ, we may honor Your gift of faith in our lives. In Jesus name we pray, amen.