

Faith in Action

Week 9: Faith That Moves

Hebrews 11:8-10

It's hard to believe, but MCCSC starts back up this week, RBB next, which means that summer break is coming to an end for students AND teachers. And in the sea of brave souls washing up to shore to educating our children, there will be a new face...our own [Ken Grile \(show picture\)](#).

I've jokingly fired Ken from stage on more than one occasion. I even had someone say, "Does Ken appreciate that joke, because if I were him, I'd be pretty offended." I was like, "Sarcasm is Ken's love language!"

As much as we give him a hard time around here, Ken has been an invaluable part of our team and we are really going to miss him. But, when he told us what he's going to do and why he's doing it, it was hard to blame him. Ken's going to be the new Media Production Teacher for Edgewood Jr. High, which, he's going to rock.

When I talked to Ken last week, he said, "Man, it doesn't make sense. I'm doing what I love here at Sherwood Oaks with people that I love." He said, "I'm stepping out in faith, not knowing if I'm going to succeed or even been good at this!"

When I asked him what the catalyst was that put all of this in motion he pointed back to a sermon from a couple of months ago that convicted him to get out of his comfort zone and be more of a spiritual influencer on those around him. And then he pointed to Saige Erickson, the young man who served on our production team and passed away last month. Ken said he wanted to be a positive influence in the life of more students his age.

He made it clear, there was no voice of God telling him to go. He just has the burden, the passion, and the opportunity, so he's stepping out of faith to see where God is leading. I love that.

Let me ask you. [What's a step of faith you remember taking?](#) Maybe it's right here, right now. You're at church today and that was a HUGE step of faith for you. Maybe you said yes to serving in a ministry or leading a group, even though you felt underqualified and underprepared. Maybe it's a time when you talked to someone about faith or invited them to church with you. What's a step of faith you remember taking? A time when you put your foot out not fully sure where it was going to land, but trusting God anyway.

That's faith. One commentary put it like this, ["To leave the certainties one knows and go out into what is quite unknown – relying on nothing other than the Word of God – is the essence of faith."](#)

Leaving a job that you love and people you love...who tolerate you...to become a teacher because you feel like that's where the Lord is leading you; that's faith. To get out of the comfort

of your bed to go to an unfamiliar place because something inside you desires a deeper relationship with Jesus; that's faith. Stepping off the sidelines and getting into the game by serving in a ministry; that's faith. Faith is leaving behind the certainty you know and stepping into the unknown.

All summer long, we've been looking at men and women who have walked with that kind of faith. If you have a Bible, or Bible app you like to use, turn with me to Hebrews 11. We're in week 9 of our summer series, Faith in Action, and the entire series has really been a commentary on **Hebrews 11, verse 1...(READ)**

We show our faith by putting it into action. Faith is not just a set of beliefs we hold onto. It's not what we believe, it's what we do because of what we believe. Just believing something is not faith, it's belief. Belief becomes faith when we put it into action. When we take a step of faith in confidence and assurance that the Lord will lead us. In that sense, faith is more of a verb than a noun, which is how we typically use it. It's an action.

The men and women of Hebrews 11 were not commended because of what they believed, but because they put what they believed into action and walked by faith. In other words, faith moves. It takes you somewhere as you learn to lean into the Lord and trust where He's leading you through His Word and the Holy Spirit.

That's faith, and it's the faith we see in Abraham. We looked at Abraham a few weeks ago when we talked about walking in faith when God seems silent. I want to circle back around to him again today because about half of Hebrews 11 is devoted to Abraham and his wife, Sarah. Look at what the author says in verse 8...**(READ Heb. 11:8-10)**

In Genesis 12, God calls Abraham to pack up his stuff and start walking to a place he'd show him. Just keep moving until God tells him to stop. And, in our day, people pack up and move all the time, even across country, so we don't think much about this. But, for Abraham to actually follow through on what God called him to do is remarkable. He's not just leaving his home and his family behind, he's walking away from his comfort and security. In his day, physical protection was found in your family and community. Abraham's turning his back on what's known and safe and feels familiar. He's trusting God as he walks into the unknown.

And, it's not like he sat around and wrestled with what he was going to do. I heard someone say once that Abraham **"[he] obeyed the call while it was still ringing in his ears."** He wasn't like an unnamed daughter of mine who hears us ask her to do something, but then ignores it until we've asked her 5 times and she keeps telling us, "I forgot!" Abraham heard the call, got up, and started walking, not knowing where he was going, but trusting in the One who did to get him there.

And what the author of Hebrews tells us is that Abraham wasn't just looking forward to a new home on this earth that God would bring him to. He had his eyes and his heart fixed on a greater home. It was the place that Canaan represented – the city of Heaven coming to earth

and God redeeming and restoring all of creation. Abraham put his hope in God to bring him to an eternal city, where tents are traded for firm foundations and ruins are replaced by what is secure, unshakable, and cannot be destroyed.

With each step that Abraham took away from what was known, he took towards greater confidence and assurance in the Lord. He walked in anticipation that God would be faithful to his promises. Abraham was faithful in the present because of his confidence in what God would do in the future.

So, what does all of this mean for our own faith? I think some historical context for the book of Hebrews gives us some clues. The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who were being persecuted for following Jesus and were being pressured to abandon their faith and turn back to Judaism. To give up the grace they'd found in Christ to go back to living under the burden of legalism and the law again. Those things that Christ has set us free from.

In other words, it was written to people who were being threatened to turn back to what was known, familiar, and safe instead of following Jesus. And, the question that the book of Hebrews leaves the original audience with, and us, is this... **Are you going to follow Jesus, or are you going to stick with the certainties you know?** Are you going to play it safe and stay in a place that feels comfortable, or are you going to step out on faith and follow where the Lord is leading you, trusting in Him to get you there?

You see, God is always drawing us into deeper levels of faith in Him and we can only get there by stepping into the unknown with Him, trusting He will meet us there. It's how our faith grows. Faith doesn't just grow when we gain more head knowledge *about* God. Faith grows when we experience the faithfulness and goodness of the Father as we walk into the unknown with Him. Faith grows when we find ourselves in places where we don't know where we're going or what we're doing, but we're trusting in the One who does to come through for us.

That's faith. And it's what the spiritual journey is all about. In fact, Scripture is filled with men and women who left everything to follow God. Abraham and Sarah left Ur. Moses and the Israelites fled Egypt. Esther left the safety of silence to speak truth to power. The prophets left the life they knew to speak for God. Jesus gave up the comforts of Heaven and took on flesh. The disciples dropped their nets and left their fathers to follow Jesus.

Without confidence in what they hoped for and assurance about what they didn't see, Abraham and Sarah would have stayed. Moses would have kept tending sheep in the desert. Esther would have remained silent. The disciples would have kept fishing. But each of them had faith to step out and move in the direction the Lord was leading them. In essence, they became pilgrims, like Abraham, in a land that was not their home, trusting that God would lead them to the heavenly city that awaits.

What Hebrews 11, in general, and Abraham, specifically, teaches us is that **Faith moves**. It doesn't stay still or else it becomes stagnant. It doesn't turn inward or else it becomes useless

to us and others. Faith moves in the direction God is leading. It walks until God says stop. And, in doing so, the one who walks by faith experiences a joy that is greater than anything the comforts and security of this world has to offer. It's not always easy, and it might not turn out the way you expect, but the sandcastles of this world pale in comparison to the heavenly city that awaits those who put their faith in Him.

How would you define your faith today? Is it moving you somewhere? When's the last time you took a step of faith and had to trust God to come through? Maybe it's time to put your faith into action and move.

The Lord might not be calling you to pack it all up and leave everything you know, but He might be calling you to start serving somewhere. He might be leading you to use your gift and the passion He's given you to come alongside of others. And you might be wondering, "How do I know what the Lord is calling me to do?" I think if it's in His Word, we've been called to do it! We overcomplicate it sometimes thinking we have to hear the voice of God before we move, but that's not faith. What if faith is just moving until God says stop? Doing what His Word says. Stepping out, not knowing, or needing to know, all the answers?

In my experience, both personally and from those I've talked to, taking a step of faith usually isn't about NOT knowing what to do, it's about having the courage to do it. Having the courage and the trust in the Lord to leave the uncertainties we know and go out into what is quite unknown.

So, what step of faith is the Lord calling you to take? Will you be like Abraham and obey while the call is still ringing in your ears, or will you "forget" and stick with what you know? The choice is yours, but if you want your faith to grow, it's time to move.