**Emmanuel Service**

**14.2.21**

**Service Order**

Welcome

Song: Joy

All Age – Apostles' Creed

Apostles’ Creed

Interview with Leon Newell

Prayers: Max and Ann Pudney

Henneke Cook’s hero of the faith

Introduction to the sermon series: The Faith Honours List

Reading: Heb 11:1-7 Henneke Cook

Sermon

Song: By Faith we see the hand of God

Close

**Sermon Notes:**

**The Faith Honours List**

The life of faith is a marathon not a sprint.

* So how do we keep going for the long-haul?
* Hebrews 11 is a much needed drink for our souls along the route.
* In it the writer lists heroes of the faith to inspire those he is writing to who have started well (see Heb 10:32-33) but are in danger of giving up (10:35-39).
* We will be going through Hebrews 11-12:3 over the next few weeks to give us fuel to persevere.

**Hebrews 11v1-7**

The writer gives his teaching points at the start (2 of them) and then gives examples (4 of them).

**1. Faith is about not yet and not seen v1**

* It has a future gaze on what is not yet
* And it focusses on what is not seen

This is not all there is to say about Faith

* These are characteristics of faith not a complete definition
* A bit saying ‘dogs have 4 legs’ – it’s true but there is more you could say about dogs.
* Let’s see our first example:

**Creation v3**

* ‘We’ are the first people who exercise faith in the list.
* Faith that God created the world
* This is right at the start of the Apostles’ Creed we have been looking at in our all age slots.
* It is fundamental to our faith that we believe God created everything even though this is something we haven’t seen.
* Others think there are other origins of the universe.
* But be aware what they say is also a faith – it involves things they did not see!
* Many believe the universe just happened by chance.
* But the chances of all we see around us just happening are incredibly unlikely.
* Like the chances of a whirlwind going through a scrap metal yard and ending up with a fully functioning plane as a result.

**Noah v7**

* Noah is an example of someone who believed in what he had not yet seen
* Read about him in Genesis chapter 6 and following.
* God warned him about the flood and he took action.
* His neighbours must have thought he was crackers – they weren’t anywhere near any water!
* But he trusted God and built the ark.

Much of what we believe is unseen and not yet (just go through the Apostles’ creed – most is either things you haven’t seen in the past or things that haven’t happened yet).

* That is the nature of faith – it is about the not yet and the not seen
* And, like Noah, we need to take action on the basis of what is not yet.
* How? Well, for instance, we keep supporting people like Henneke Cook (did the reading for us today) and Leon Newell (interviewed earlier in the service).
* You could spend your money on a nice holiday but in the light of coming judgment we believe people need to hear the gospel so we keep supporting them.

**2. Faith is essential for acceptance by God v2**

* The point is made in verse 2 that the ancients were commended for their faith. This is expanded with 2 examples:

**Abel**

* Read about him in Genesis 4
* He and his brother both presented offerings to God: Cain brought crops, Abel brought meat
* God looked with favour on Abel’s offering but not on Cain’s. Why not?
  + We might be tempted to think this just shows God prefers meat!
  + But Hebrews 11 tells us the big difference was Abel’s faith.
  + That is why he was accepted, and that is what made him ‘righteous’.

**Enoch**

* An interesting choice – not much is said about him in Genesis (see Gen 5:21-24).
* He walked with God for 300 years (that’s long-term endurance in the faith!) then God took him away so he didn’t experience death.
* What is the point Hebrews is making?
  + That Enoch pleased God (evidence: he ‘walked with God’ - see Genesis)
  + And it’s impossible to please God without faith
  + So Enoch was a man of faith!

With both Abel and Enoch the argument is that only those who have faith are accepted by God – and they were both accepted so must have had faith.

* Which means this has always been the way God deals with people
* God didn’t change in the New Testament to accepting people by faith – he has always consistently dealt with people that way, even back to Abel.
* So we too need faith to be accepted, faith in Jesus.
  + And it must be faith in Jesus
  + See Hebrews 12:1-3 – we remember other heroes of the faith but we fix our eyes on Jesus, the object of our faith.
  + Faith in him is the way to acceptance with God.

So let’s emulate the persevering faith of Abel, Enoch and Noah by looking to Jesus – trusting in the unseen for the not yet and knowing it is the only way to acceptance by God.