

HEBREWS: REPLACING MAN'S RITUALISM WITH CHRIST
"Part XVIII: Submitting By Faith To God For Family Provision Needs"
(Hebrews 11:8-16)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Just to reveal the stresses some of our church families face, here is a list of some tangible, earthly needs represented in our congregation:

- (1) Several heads of households with dependent children in our Church are without jobs at this time. That affects income and future plans, leading to a potential for worry and insecurity.
- (2) A woman in our Church was counting on obtaining a job when she discovered that an associate who heard her tell of the job went ahead and landed what might have been that job herself.
- (3) Someone in our Church had cancer surgery this past week. The prognosis was unsure at the time this introduction was written, and the party privately requested prayer and encouragement.
- (4) Another party found out that the housing they thought was going to be theirs to rent for an indefinite period of time is going to be taken away from them. They have to move, even though they have spent quite a bit of money fixing the housing up for themselves, but they do not know **where** they will end up!
- (5) Some extended family members of people in our Church have drilled hundreds of feet in their well and have not found any water. This year's drought has dried it all up. Their neighbors don't have water, either, and there is no provision for them to hook up to their city water. Besides, they have small children where the need is great.
- (6) Another head of household discovered last week that the company that hires him was bought out. That means job uncertainty.
- (7) A missionary whom we support, Sharon Bouffard has just learned that the treatment for her hepatitis "C" condition is so painful that she has decided to skip treatment altogether. She is just going to do the best she can to function as long as she can under God's leading, and leave the outcome with the Lord!

In view of these crises, each one affecting FAMILY life and family MEMBERS, HOW do we FUNCTION with blessing?!

(We turn to the sermon's "Need" section . . .)

Need: Providing for a FAMILY'S needs can seem impossible to do well in today's world. Cultural decay counters parents finding good child-rearing environments, and job market uncertainty produces added family MOBILITY and insecurity for children! Any ideas?!"

- I. **The author of Hebrews urged Jewish Christians to worship Christ rather than using the temple rituals under godless peer pressure, Heb. 9:7-10, 11-14 (sermon XII); Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, p. 1729.**
- II. **Accordingly, these believers were to LIVE by FAITH in Scripture versus yielding to this godless peer pressure, Hebrews 11:1.**
- III. **In an APPLICATION of this, they were to follow Abraham and submit to God, leaving all their FAMILY needs with Him, 11:8-16:**
 - A. The writer of Hebrews noted that Abraham was called by God to move to a place God promised to make his inheritance, Heb. 11:8a.
 - B. Abraham **obeyed** God's lead though doing so created **many great** risks to Abraham's ability to address his **FAMILY'S** needs as follows:
 1. Heeding God risked **insecurity** of **home identity** for the family:
 - a. When God called Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees, He did not immediately tell him **where** Abraham would **GO**, 11:8b!
 - b. Since Ur was then in its golden age of economy and literature, **wherever** Abraham was to go would provide **less** than the comfortable setting he then enjoyed, cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, fn. to Gen. 11:28. That would be stressful to his family!
 2. Heeding God risked job change **uncertainty**: since God did not say **where** Abraham would go, there was no way Abraham could prepare **before** he moved his family to his new **job** site!
 3. Heeding God risked **relationship alienation** for Abraham's family:
 - a. Abraham was to leave the culturally, nationally, linguistically and militarily familiar, secure Ur for a land where he would have no protective supporters to celebrate his arrival, Hebrews 11:9a!
 - b. This was later illustrated in Abraham's need to fight in the land against five city states to rescue his nephew, Lot, Gen. 14:1-16!
 4. Heeding God also risked a drop in the family's standard of living:
 - a. From living in progressive Ur, Abraham ended up moving about as a nomad in a tent when he arrived in Canaan, Hebrews 11:9b.
 - b. From Ur's economy built on a stable water supply, Abraham was left at greater financial risk in Palestine's fickle climate: (a) Ur was located by the River Euphrates with its steady water supply and irrigation

provisions, Macmillan Bible Atlas, p. 16; (b) Yet, God led Abraham to a land that had its water needs met mainly by rain. That left Abraham vulnerable to vegetation shortages, Gen. 12:10. (c) Since Abraham's business was **livestock** (Gen. 13:2) Palestine was much riskier as a business location than Ur.

5. Heeding God risked added stresses for Abraham's family's future:
 - a. Besides Abraham, his son, Isaac and grandson, Jacob also were left dependent on God's provisions for assistance in the more difficult, new Canaan experience, Hebrews 11:9c.
 - b. One challenge these men would have faced was the lack of a good pool of qualified women for spouse selection, Gen. 24:1-3.
- C. The **reason** Abraham led his family "out on a limb" with meeting their earthly needs to heed God was that he longed for God's **eternal** family blessings above what **this life** could offer him, Hebrews 11:10, 13-16.
 1. Abraham looked for the stability, love, provisions and security of **God's eternal** city for him and his family, Heb. 11:10 (Rev. 21:2)
 2. Accordingly, his wife, Sarah, **learned** by faith to join her husband in faith and wait upon God to end even her childlessness, 11:11-12.
 3. Thus, Abraham and Sarah, along with son, Isaac and grandson, Jacob (Heb. 11:11, 9) all died **still awaiting** the establishment of their **HEAVENLY** city home promised by God, Heb. 11:13-14.
 4. We know from Revelation 21:2-3 that God's **HEAVENLY** Jerusalem will one day descend to land on the earth to be with man, and Abraham and his family with all other believers will dwell there!
 5. Thus, Abraham kept his **back** to cosmopolitan Ur of his day to stay in Canaan awaiting resurrection to a heavenly Jerusalem, 11:15-16.
 6. For this faith, God is glad to be named as Abraham's God, 11:16b.
- D. Time shows Abraham made the best decision for his **family**: not only does Genesis 12-50 record **God** met **every earthly** need listed above, but **today**, Abraham's **former** residence, Ur is in **ruins** in the desert of war-torn **Iraq** (Z.P.E.B., v. Two, p. 417), and he and his kin are dead **but** awaiting **resurrection** into Christ's coming **Kingdom!** (Matt. 8:11)

Application: *God's program for meeting a family's needs today is for its individual family members to HEED God as priority one, and (1) believe in Christ for salvation from sin, Jn. 3:16. (2) Then, we must obey God's leading as FIRST priority and trust God to lead in meeting all the family needs arising in the process of that obedience.*

Lesson: *The Jewish Christian readers of the epistle to the Hebrews were to follow honored patriarch, Abraham's example of heeding God, leaving to God to supply the family needs arising in the process of that obedience!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

While preparing to come to Nepaug to candidate, my wife, Nadine and I with our children stayed in my parent's home in Dallas. They were off in Africa on business with their missionary responsibilities at the time. I didn't have a job, and our meager savings dwindled way down due to unusual costs. Nadine was expecting, Greg had received stitches over his eye and I had fallen and needed a plastic surgeon to fix my facial wound, all in the previous three months which had drained our savings to practically nothing.

It was December, close to my birthday, and Nadine wanted to get me a present. I needed a razor, so she went out and spent \$49 of the \$50 total savings we had left to get me that Remington razor!

I recall trying to correct her for spending so much money on that gift! But Nadine's response was, "Honey, you **need** to **shave**, and the **Lord** has to supply the rest, anyway! That's why I bought it!"

She left me to brood in the room and ponder it all! I knew she was right, but it was so **hard** when I had a family with great needs, had no job and only **one dollar left** in which to care for them! So, feeling I had no other choice, I decided to let her keep the razor, and thus lean **full length** on the Lord!

Well, did God ever provide! (1) My brother in California sold his van and loaned us \$2,000 of its proceeds until we could get to Nepaug and pay him back! (2) Paul spent the rest of the van earnings to fly us round trip from Dallas to California for Christmas, and then we were flown up to Nepaug by the Church to candidate and move here! (3) Though I had **not** been **paid** any Church salary checks as yet, the **bank** in Wolcott, Connecticut set aside the money for me to buy our house in Torrington! (4) By April 15 of 1982 when I figured out my 1981 year's 1040 tax form, I found that in spite of having had no regular job for 7 months in 1981, \$36,000, or **double** the cash flow had come and gone our way of what had been my \$18,000 annual salary at the **last** church, and much of it was **non-taxable!** **God had provided more than we would have IMAGINED!**

We need to obey the Lord and let HIM handle whatever stresses and pulls that obedience puts on our FAMILY lives. In the end, HE will take care of us and our families so that His glory will be gained in it all!