

Welcome all nations to my home among the orange groves here in Silves.

I expect that, like me, you have been following along with the daily devotional?? It is interesting to hear the different voices of friends from all nations.

However it is not enough.....Let me explain what I mean by this....

I remember the last I visited a restaurant. After placing our order, Vivaldo came to the table with a tiny amount of food and said here is a present from the chef. It was lovely but imagine if Rogerio had said that is all you are getting!! We would still have been hungry and we would have needed to eat somewhere else, wouldn't we?

So it is like that with the daily devotional. It is just the taster to make us hungry for more!! So this morning I would like us to continue looking at Hebrews 11. Let us start at v13. (You have had the taster I hope you are hungry!)

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.

All these heroes of the Faith had not received what we already have which is 1, an assurance of our salvation, and 2. The Holy Spirit of God living within us!! We are in a much better place than any of these guys!! As Jesus Christ said about John the Baptist in Luke 7v28

<sup>28</sup> I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

Wow!! That's you and me!! I wonder sometimes do we truly understand the reality of what we already possess sometimes.....

The key verse in Hebrews 11 is of course v 6

Without faith living within us it would be impossible to please God. For we come to God in faith knowing that he is real and that he rewards the faith of those who give all their passion and strength into seeking him.

Of course we all have a measure of faith. We have come to God and we received the reward of our salvation. And the Holy Spirit is in us!! This has happened. But there is also an ongoing application here, the idea is of continually coming to God and walking by faith day by day and receiving the reward of his presence and power in our lives!! It is ongoing day by day.

As Vinu Paul said in the very first devotional, we always need faith NOW, each day, and there is only one source of faith!! Amen!! Let us look and rediscover the source of faith.

Now if we take an overview of Hebrews 11, the pattern is clear. For each act of faith or action there is the same pattern:

1. They have an encounter with God.
2. They hear his voice and receive his promises and instructions.
3. They believe that he is able to do what he promises!!
4. They obeyed his instructions and the outcome the miracle, etc. was in God's hands!!

So we can see a process or pattern.

The actual source of our faith then is having an encounter with God in order to hear God's voice as he speaks to us –Romans 10v17,

**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

The Greek word for word here is *rhema* which means the spoken or breathed word of God or Christ. The other Greek word for word is *logos*. The *logos* of God is the bible, our handbook of the general will of God for believers. But God also wants to speak to us through his Holy Spirit to bring alive particular promises for us as a church or us as individuals. Beyond this he wants us to learn to hear his voice day by day.

A couple of Days ago Mary was a bit frustrated!! “How can I pursue acts of faith if I cannot even leave the house!!” I thought about this and remembered Enoch in v5. We know nothing about Enoch except Genesis 5v24 “He walked with God” Any acts of faith he did were secondary to this. His very life pleased God v5 Passion.

**<sup>5</sup> Faith lifted Enoch from this life and he was taken up into heaven! He never had to experience death; he just disappeared from this world because God promoted him. For before he was translated to the heavenly realm his life had become a pleasure to God.<sup>1</sup>**

A life surrendered to God but focused on and lived in the daily presence of God, hearing God speaking to us, “chatting” father to son or daughter, that is our highest goal. Think of Adam & Eve walking in the garden before the fall.

So if we are talking about walking by faith, being a pleasure to God, what we are really talking about is walking in and with the Holy Spirit. God gave us the Holy Spirit as our helper and guide, he is the one who brings the bible alive to us and speaks to us and guides our steps and choices, as we allow him!!

The Holy Spirit also gives us practical gifts to us to help us bridge the communication gap, where we, as imperfect beings, need help sometimes...1 Corinthians 14v1

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.

So what is prophecy really like in the New Testament?

01 Cor.14 V3 simply says, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.

That is they speak words from God for others, not their own words and ideas.

We are all missing coming together, but at times like this when we have time to spend with God, we can be proactive and practical even in lockdown!! Let's ask the Holy Spirit for words of encouragement, comfort and strength for others in All Nations. Let us each ask God to help us learn to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking through us to help others.

As we grow in our ability to hear and walk by faith, we can help others grow in their faith. One proviso is that what we hear will always be in line with v3- a word of comfort, encouragement and strengthening-

Mary will be speaking more about this next week....In the meantime let's give time to practice hearing the Holy Spirit and developing a practical walk of faith with him.

I expect that, like us, many of you have listened to messages from other churches over the internet during this time. In a sense you could say that those are more universal teachings, good for all believers. What I have shared today is nothing new but what I believe the Holy Spirit is saying to us, our little fellowship, today. Amen!