

Be the Sea – Hebrews 11

1. If you are joining us on our Midweek Bible Study, you have already been confronted with the teaching of the Book of James, and I use the word “confronted’ on purpose.
2. James does not let us off the hook. We are live what we believe. We show our faith with works. Martin Luther hated the Book of James for most of his life, for he had discovered grace in the Book of Romans and the Gospels. He felt that James contradicted the rest of the New Testament.
3. I don’t believe James contradicts Paul or Jesus and, if you look at those studies, you will see grace flows all through James. Luther later came around to accepting the book, but he didn’t like **James 2:14-24**.
4. This gets us ready to see something in a chapter I would imagine you’ve read or heard sermons on dozens of times. It is one of the highlight chapters in the New Testament, one that we return to time and again. Go to Hebrews 11 and scan something there with me, if you would. I’ll be in the 2011 NIV here but this will work with whatever version you are using.
5. First, **Hebrews 11:1-3**. Scientifically correct, I must say, and rather well phrased. Now...we scan...”by faith”
 - a. By faith, Abraham Abel brought...
 - b. By faith, Enoch was taken because he pleased God.
 - c. By faith, Noah built...and condemned the world
 - d. By faith, Abraham obeyed, went, made his home
 - e. By faith, Sarah conceived
 - f. By faith, Abraham offered, embraced, reasoned
 - g. By faith, Isaac blessed
 - h. By faith, Jacob blessed
 - i. By faith, Joseph spoke, gave instructions
 - j. By faith, Moses’ parents hid
 - k. By faith, Moses, refused, chose, left, persevered, kept
 - l. By faith, the people passed through
 - m. By faith, the walls of Jericho fell
 - n. By faith, Rahab welcomed

o. **Hebrews 11:32-40.**

6. You've seen it by now. It can't be unseen. By faith...and then a verb.
7. So...what is your verb? There are usually a few verbs that we have central to our faith. They mark our profession, talents, and situation. We were wired in such a way that each of us has a central verb.
8. Then there are other verbs: what is your verb in this situation? On this day? Around these people?
9. Think of faith as a sea into which water flows. The sea is beautiful and very useful: water always is. Until it isn't. If the water never flows out of the sea, it turns rancid over time. This is the contrast between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.
10. A member of the Church of Christ named Lulie Zahn wrote a hymn about this back in the 1930s. We will use this as a close to today's lesson and as a warning to find your verb so that your life is Galilee and not the Dead Sea.

There is a sea which, day by day, Receives the rippling rills
And streams that spring from wells of God, Or fall from cedared hills;
But what it thus receives it gives With glad, unsparing hand.
And a stream more wide with deeper tide Pours out to a lower land.
But doth it lose by giving? Nay! Its shores of beauty see—
The life and health and fruitful wealth Of Galilee!

2. There is a sea which, day by day, receives a fuller tide,
But all its store it keeps, nor gives To shore nor sea beside;
What gains its grasping greed? Behold Barrenness round its shore.
Its fruit of lust, but apples of dust Rotten from rind to core:
Its Jordan water turned to brine Lies heavy as molten lead,
And its dreadful name doth e'er proclaim hat sea is—Dead!

Remember: find your verb. Be the Sea of Galilee