

(Hebrews 11:1-4, NIV84)

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

Perhaps you've seen the drawing that depicts those two brothers so long ago -- Cain and Abel. They are both making a burnt offering to the Lord, but only the smoke of Abel's offering is rising to God. The smoke from Cain's offering is just blowing across the ground. The Bible says that God looked with favor on Abel's offering, but not on Cain's offering (cf. Genesis 4:4-5). We might misunderstand that God did not look with favor on Cain's offering because of WHAT he offered. That is not the case however. Cain's offering was unacceptable to God because of HOW Cain offered it. It was offered without faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). "By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did."

So too, the offerings that you and I bring to God are only acceptable if they are brought in faith. Certainly we want to bring to God our best, but HOW we bring our offerings is even more important. In faith we express our thanks to Him and our trust that we can never out-give God. Great is His mercy and faithfulness.

So as you consider making an offering to the Lord, first contemplate how He has so richly blessed you -- life, forgiveness, salvation, etc.... Then bring your gift as an expression of love for Him who first loved us.

Richly blessed with you in Christ,
Pastor Golm

August 12

Does My Life Really Have a Purpose?

Through faith we understand... Hebrews 11:3

A few years ago an extraordinary paper, written by two London scientists, slipped almost unnoticed into modern scientific literature. Marshalling a list of fantastic "facts", they had come up with a "new" theory explaining

the origin of the universe.

Perhaps the most significant statement of the book, especially for the Christian believer, comes in the final chapter. It reads: "The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless." What a depressing thought for the person who is struggling with the vexing problems of life and the inevitable approach of death. If the entire universe is pointless, what is the point of continuing the daily struggle?

The believer's outlook on life, however, is not based on the speculations of fallible men. The Scriptures tell us: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." What is more, we are told that the world continues to exist for a purpose. Paraphrasing the words of Paul (Romans 8:18-25), the entire creation continues to exist for the ultimate demonstration of the complete redemption of all who are in Christ. Or, in simpler terms, the world continues to exist (and we continue to live) in the sure hope of the triumphant return of God's eternal Son. Then "the ransomed of the Lord shall return . . . with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).

But while we wait and hope, we must also work, for that is part of God's purpose for our lives. We are to be "co-workers together with God", helping to achieve his purposes. Like the Savior, we also must say: "I must work the works of him that sent me." For, indeed, we have been "sent"; and, having been sent, we are to contribute to the final attainment of his purpose. Each morning as we face the duties of another day, we well might pray:

Dear Lord, I know You have a purpose for me today. Grant me a willing heart so that I may serve You faithfully. Amen.

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman W. Gockel)