

CAN WE PLEASE GOD? (Hebrews 11:6)

I. Yes, God can be pleased.

- A. When noticing this, two dangerous extremes need to be avoided.
 - 1. At one extreme is the self-righteous approach.
 - a. The Pharisees believed themselves to be righteous and were out of touch with the reality of their own sinfulness.
 - b. This idea is not biblical (Isaiah 64:6; Luke 17:10).
 - 2. The other extreme is the doubting approach.
 - a. This person is not in touch with the reality of God's grace.
 - b. He might doubt anyone can please God, or he may just doubt he can please God.
 - 3. When we fall into either of these traps, we are either prideful or discouraged.
- B. The Bible teaches that God can be pleased.
 - 1. Hebrews 11:5 - the word pleased means "well-pleasing."
 - a. God was well pleased with Enoch's life.
 - b. This doesn't mean Enoch was sinless.
 - 2. Numbers 6:24-26.
 - 3. Psalm 149:4.
 - 4. Matthew 25:21.
 - 5. The possibility of me and you pleasing God should give us great confidence.
 - 6. If someone else can please God, we can as well.

II. It is our faith that pleases God.

- A. What does it mean to please God by faith?
 - 1. There are only two ways someone can be righteous before God.
 - a. The righteousness of law.
 - b. The righteousness of faith.
 - 2. These are the only two ways one can be righteous.
- B. The idea of the righteousness of law is to have never broken God's law - one has to keep it perfectly and completely (Leviticus 18:5; Galatians 3:10-12).
 - 1. When we sin, this path is closed to us and all have sinned and come short of God's glory (Romans 3:23).
 - 2. If we try to use the Law of Christ as a means of accomplishing our own salvation, we make the same mistake the Jews made: we reject faith and depend on law (Romans 10:1-8).

3. There is no way to keep God's law perfectly (Romans 7:19-24).
 4. There is no hope for those who base their confidence strictly on their keeping of God's law.
- C. The good news is that God is willing to accept us on the basis of our faith in Him and not on the perfection of our law keeping (Romans 5:1-2, 1:16-17; 4:3-5).
- D. God could not have done this if Jesus hadn't died for our sins (Romans 3:25-26).
- E. Since Christ died for our sins there is a new kind of righteousness made possible and that is the righteousness of faith.
1. This is the hope of the gospel.
 2. Philippians 3:9-11; Hebrews 9:15.
- F. Hebrews 11:5-6 is simply asking us to believe what the rest of the New Testament is teaching: by faith we can please God!
- G. Abraham is the great example of the righteousness of faith.
1. It was not the perfection of his obedience that God counted as Abraham's righteousness.
 2. Rather, Abraham "believed in the Lord, and he accounted it unto him for righteousness (Genesis 15:6).
 3. This text is quoted at least four times in the New Testament (Romans 4:3-5, 20-22; Galatians 3:6-9; James 2:23).
 4. Abraham, then stands as the spiritual forefather of all, from creation until now, who have sought to please God as he did: through faith (Galatians 3:6-9).
- H. The vital issue is trust - if we trust God as did Abraham, then we can please God (Hebrews 11:8-19).
1. Eve and then Adam failed to trust in God and it is trust to which we must return if we are going to please God.
 2. One can describe obeying the gospel as trusting in Christ (Ephesians 1:12-13).
- I. We add to our confidence in God a large dose of humility (Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 4:17-19).

From a sermon by Gary Henry