

Head 'Em Up....Move 'Em Out....

When I was a Kid one of the highlights of Weekend TV were a couple of Western Series.

One was 'Rawhide.' The series launched a young Clint Eastwood into stardom. It was the story of the cattlemen taking a herd of steers to the railhead... of course there were all sorts of problems, fights, Indians, accidents... but the cry that made it all so memorable was.....

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The other series was called 'Wagon Train' the story of settlers making their way West to a new future opening up in The wild west of America. They had all sorts of problems too, as they travelled into what was, for them, unknown. Raging rivers, Arid deserts, Dangerous mountain passes. And of courseIndians! Famous for '**Wagons Ho!**'

These were pioneers... who believed that a better life awaited them in the west.

The wagon trains first began heading west in the early 1820s with the opening of the Santa Fe Trail from St. Louis, Missouri. The emigrant trains to Oregon and California had their origins in the mid-1840s, hitting their peak during the 1850s following the California Gold Rush.

After the Civil War, the transcontinental railroad was completed. Some emigrants still came by wagon train, but most of the newcomers arrived by rail. In fact, the railroad companies had been awarded large land grants, so they recruited people from the U.S. and Europe to head west by train and purchase land from them.

A lot of people couldn't afford train travel. There is a sign on South Pass that says the last wagon passed there in 1925.

For those heading West it was a heroic endeavour that needed a good deal of Faith.

It's not too difficult to make the connection between the wagon trains of the old west & Rawhide and us here at the Lighthouse... for we like them we are on the move! Interestingly we are also heading WEST! For us this is just as much a 'Faith' endeavour as Heading west was for the pioneers. They were looking for a better land. So are we!

I want us to read a chapter from Hebrews & make some comments about it as we Go..

Hebrews 11: 1-16, 24-40 NiRV Selection

- 1 Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of what we do not see.*
- 2 That is what the people of long ago were praised for.*
- 3 **We have faith.** So we understand that everything (including time) was made when God commanded it. That's why we believe that what we see was not made out of what could be seen.*

4 **Abel had faith.** So he offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did. Because of his faith Abel was praised as a godly man. God said good things about his offerings. Because of his faith Abel still speaks. He speaks even though he is dead. (The First Martyr!)

5 **Enoch had faith.** So he was taken from this life. He didn't die. He just couldn't be found. God had taken him away. Before God took him, Enoch was praised as one who pleased God.

6 **Without faith** it isn't possible to please God. Those who come to God must believe that he exists. And they must believe that he rewards those who look to him.

7 **Noah had faith.** So he built an ark to save his family. He built it because of his great respect for God. **God had warned him about things that could not yet be seen.** Because of his faith he showed the world that it was guilty. Because of his faith he was considered right with God.

8 **Abraham had faith.** So he obeyed God. God called him to go to a place he would later receive as his own. So he went. He did it even though he didn't know where he was going.

9 Because of his faith he made his home in the land God had promised him. He was like an outsider in a strange country. He lived there in tents. So did Isaac and Jacob. They received the same promise he did.

10 Abraham was looking forward to the city that has foundations. He was waiting for the city that God planned and built.

11 Abraham had faith. So God made it possible for him to become a father. He became a father even though he was too old. Sarah also was too old to have children. But Abraham believed that the One who made the promise was faithful.

12 Abraham was past the time when he could have children. But many children came from that one man. They were as many as the stars in the sky. They were as many as the sand on the seashore. No one could count them.

13 All those people were still living by faith when they died. They didn't receive the things God had promised. They only saw them and welcomed them from a long way off. They openly said that they were outsiders and strangers on earth.

14 People who say things like that show that they are looking for a country of their own.

15 **What if they had been thinking of the country they had left?** Then they could have returned to it. (Maybe you like the 'good old days' when we sang hymns etc... well you could go to an Anglican Church... but you haven't!.... you're here! And you're here because you want something better...)

16 Instead, they longed for a better country. They wanted one in heaven. So God is pleased when they call him their God. In fact, he has prepared a city for them.

24 **Moses had faith.** So he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. That happened after he had grown up.

25 He chose to be treated badly together with the people of God. He chose that instead of enjoying sin's pleasures for a short time.

26 He suffered shame because of Christ. (That was Prophetic!) He thought it had great value. He considered it better than the riches of Egypt. He was looking ahead to God's reward.

27 *Because of his faith he left Egypt. It wasn't because he was afraid of the king's anger. He didn't let anything stop him. He saw the One who can't be seen. (Jesus)*

28 *Because of his faith he was the first to keep the Passover Feast. (That was Prophetic too!) He commanded the people of Israel to sprinkle blood on their doorways. He did it so that the destroying angel would not touch their oldest sons.*

29 **The people had faith.** *So they passed through the Red Sea. They went through it as if it were dry land. The Egyptians tried to do it also. But they drowned.*

30 **The people had faith.** *So the walls of Jericho fell down. It happened after they had marched around the city for seven days.*

31 *Rahab, the prostitute, had faith. So she welcomed the spies. That's why she wasn't killed with those who didn't obey God.*

32 *What more can I say? I don't have time to tell about all the others. I don't have time to talk about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah. I don't have time to tell about David, Samuel and the prophets.*

33 *Because of their faith they took over kingdoms. They ruled fairly. They received the blessings God had promised. They shut the mouths of lions.*

34 *They put out great fires. They escaped being killed by the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became powerful in battle. They beat back armies from other countries.*

35 *Women received their dead back. The dead were raised to life again. Others were made to suffer greatly.... But they refused to be set free. They did that so that after death they would be raised to a better life.*

36 *Some were laughed at. Some were whipped. Still others were held by chains. They were put in prison.*

37 *Some were killed with stones. They were sawed in two.(tradition says this is what happened to Isaiah) They were put to death by the sword. They went around wearing the skins of sheep and goats. They were poor. They were attacked. They were treated badly.*

38 *The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains. They lived in caves. They lived in holes in the ground.*

39 **All of those people were praised because they had faith.** *But none of them received what God had promised.*

40 *God had planned something better for us. So they would only be made perfect together with us.*

*Hebrews 12:1-2 (NirV) A huge cloud of witnesses is all around us. So let us throw off everything that stands in our way. Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly. Let us keep on running the race marked out for us. **2 Let us keep looking to Jesus..** He is the author of faith.*

What have we got to loose? its out there... and it can be ours.... All we have to do is Go & take hold of it.... Yes we may have to move out of our comfort zone... but **that's where the Miracles happen!**

Let's 'Head 'Em Up and Move 'Em Out....! (Last Slide)