

Encouragement for Faith

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Date: 19 May 2019

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[0 : 00] We're in for a lesson on faith this morning and we turn to the great chapter on faith, Hebrews chapter 11. I'm going to read the first two verses and then we'll jump down to verse 32 and read to the end.

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. Now verse 32.

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised, who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword, whose weakness was turned to strength and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.

Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released so that they might gain a better resurrection.

Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned. They were sawed in two.

[1 : 27] They were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted, and mistreated. The world was not worthy of them.

They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and in holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith. Yet none of them received what had been promised.

God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect for us so that only together with us would be made perfect for us.

To see what we could do to help out so Pastor John could be freed up. So I'm thankful for Jason and his willingness to preach for me so that cooperating together we could make this work today. I hope to be back up in a couple of weeks on your Lord's Supper service as well. And I want to talk more this afternoon about that partnership that we share in the gospel, that fellowship that we have in the gospel.

[2 : 56] So if you stick around for after lunch, we'll talk a little bit about that. But this morning we're going to parachute into Hebrews chapter 11. Dropping in towards the end of the chapter from verses 32 to the end.

Now, when you parachute into the middle of Hebrews period, you might need a little context for what the author is trying to do with these Hebrews. We don't know who the author is.

We have some guesses. We have some educated guesses. And we just don't know, frankly. So I can't say Paul or I can't say Matthew. It's just the author because we don't know.

But we ultimately know, as with all the books of the Bible, the author is God himself. And so we're glad to receive his word. But this human author is writing to some Hebrew early Jewish Christians who it seems were in some danger of turning away from the faith.

They had followed after Jesus Christ and something was enticing them to go back to the old way of Judaism. To go back to their Jewish religion devoid of Christ. Which is impossible to do because Jesus fulfilled it.

[4 : 05] There's nothing to go back to. But they were being tempted to go back in danger of falling away. And the author is showing them that Jesus is better in every way than everything that they had under the old covenant.

The new covenant, the new mediator of the covenant, Jesus Christ is better in every way. He's better than Moses. He's better than the law. Better than the angels. Better sacrifice. Better priest. He's better in every way.

Don't go back. This is the message of Hebrews. But some are in danger of that anyway. And so he says at the end of chapter 10. We're in chapter 11.

Look at the last verse of chapter 10. He says, but we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed. But of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

And it's almost as if when he says that, those who have faith, he pauses and he says, you know what? Let's talk about faith for a minute. Let me tell you what it is. And then let me from your own history, you Jewish Christians, from your history, let me give you some witnesses to the reality and the value and the importance of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[5 : 13] You're Jewish believers. You're thinking about turning away from Christ. Your own ancestors trusted in Christ. Let me tell you about some of them. Let me remind you about some of them.

And so he talks about Abel and Enoch and Noah and Abraham and Sarah and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Moses and Rahab. And the rest of them, all of them are testifying in Hebrews 11 to these early Jewish Christians.

Don't abandon your faith. He's calling witness after witness to the witness stand. In chapter 12, he calls them witnesses. He says, surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses.

He's like, let me bring somebody else to charge you not to abandon the faith. Here's Abraham. He put his faith in me. In the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ.

And so they're being challenged by these witnesses of faith in Hebrews 11 and examples of faith. They challenge us as well. They testify to us and they set an example for us of what it means to live a life of faith.

[6 : 15] And this morning we're picking up in verse 32. And I love what he says here. Look at that with me in verse 32. And what more shall I say? Time would fail me to tell of.

And then he, like a good preacher does, like I don't have enough time, but I'm going to go ahead and take a little bit more time. You ever done that? You get into a story and you realize if you keep going at this pace, at this length, this much detail, you're never going to get done.

So we have an expression. To make a long story short. And we shorten it up. And that's what he's doing here. He's been, he spent a lot of time on Abraham and a lot of time on Moses.

He spent some time with, with Abel. He spent, and now he gets, it's like he gets to this point and he goes, if I keep going at this level of detail, Hebrews is going to be a lot longer than 13 chapters.

Look over at Hebrews 13 with me for a minute. This is all just sort of for, for fun. You try to, you know, God inspires this word, but he used very human authors to do it, to, to communicate his word to us.

[7 : 20] And in verse 22, he says of Hebrews 13, he says, I appeal to you brothers, bear with my word of exhortation for I've written to you briefly. If he had kept going in Hebrews 11 at the pace he started at, he couldn't have said that.

It wouldn't have been brief. It would have been a word of drowsiness, maybe, instead of a word of exhortation. And Hebrews really reads like a sermon. It's like a sermon maybe that was written down for us.

It's a word of exhortation. And so he gets on into chapter 11 here. Come back to chapter 11 with me. And he's like, I can't go at this, keep going at this pace.

So I'm going to speed it up. And he does. And that's, that's what we want to look at. His, his brief summing up here.

It's like the, the guy in the princess bride. He says, let me explain. Let me explain. And he says, no, there's too much. Let me sum up. And that's what he's doing. He's going to sum up these witnesses of faith.

[8 : 24] In verses 32 to the end. And what I want us to see is there are great accomplishments by faith. There's great suffering by faith. And then there's great encouragement for us in contemplating both of those.

When we think about one, if you like alliteration, one commentator said, triumphs by faith and trials by faith. So great accomplishments and great suffering and great encouragement out of that for us. Now, it's, it's, as he shortens this up, it's almost like he expects them to make the connections. He's going to give them a name and they need to think about how they exercise faith. So as we go, even before I get out, you can see if you can think of why would, why would Jephthah be in the, in this hall of faith and this examples of faith?

Why, why this person? Or when he talks about events, see if you can associate a particular person or time with the event that he talks about before I explain a little bit of maybe who some of these folks are, what some of these events were.

So we start in verses 32 through the first part of part of verse 35 with great accomplishments through faith. There's individuals, first of all, in verse 32.

[9:34] Let's look at that. But what more shall I say for time with family to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah of David and Samuel and the prophets. So he grabs a sort of a non chronologically ordered kind of like we do.

We just, oh, he's from the times of the judges and Kings. He's grabbing some names here and they're not all in order and that's okay. But think about these folks with me just real briefly. Gideon in faith, he pulled down the altar of Baal and took on the Midianites with only 300 men.

You think that took faith to take on an entire army with 300 guys armed with pitchers with torches inside? You bet it did. Demonstrating again that God and his power is the one who delivers.

You can read about him in Judges 6 through 8. Barak led Israel to take on Sisera and a great Canaanite army that had 900 iron chariots. And Barak by faith leads them into battle and God routes them before Israel.

Judges 4 and 5. Samson, you remember his incredible physical strength that God used to judge the Philistines in Judges 13 through 16. Jephthah was a great warrior used by God to lead Israel to defeat the Ammonites.

[10:52] Judges 11 and 12. Where do you begin with David? There's so much that we could say about David, the man after God's own heart who also led Israel in defeating the Philistines.

He enjoyed great success in defeating Israel's enemies. He's Israel's greatest king before Christ would come and be the great king to occupy his throne forever.

Samuel was a righteous man who led the transition from that period of the judges to the kings, followed God's commands. And the prophets, Moses, we could talk about Samuel again, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, the others that have books of the Bible named for them with their prophecies contained in them that we could think of.

These messengers of God reminded Israel and Judah about the covenant God had made with them. They pronounced judgment on Israel and Judah for violating the covenant. Some of them performed great miracles.

Some of them foretold what was to come and all of these did this through faith. You see that in verse 33, who through faith. And then he tells some of the things that they did.

[12:00] But before we get to some of those things that they did that are listed here with almost every one of these people that he named specifically, there are issues, some glaring issues where they showed a lack of faith, where they were not people of great faith, which actually really tracks with the rest of Hebrews 11.

Moses had moments of weak faith. Abraham moments of weak faith. Sarah is in the hall of faith, commended for faith, but she too. And so think about some of these folks, not just of their their great faith, but some of their flaws.

Gideon had the fleece that showed how weak his faith was. If it's really your word, make the fleece wet and the ground dry. Okay, you did that fleece dry ground wet.

And he's seeing his you're seeing that's that's not a way to interpret God's providence. That's that's not trusting God at his word. Later in life, Gideon creates an ephod that leads himself and Israel astray into idolatry.

Barak wouldn't go into battle without Deborah. And so Deborah says, all right, that's fine. I'll go with you. But but Sisera, the commander of this great Canaan army, is going to be given into the hand of a woman.

[13:20] Not you, Barak. And J.O. Pins Sisera to the ground with a tent peg and a hammer. Samson. Where do you start with him?

He's a mess. His weakness for Philistine women. Lack of self-control. Jephthah makes that tragic vow to sacrifice whatever comes out of his house first on his return if they were victorious.

Now comes his daughter. David has the blot of Uriah and Bathsheba on his record with his proud census later at the end of his life.

Nothing really glaring jumps out about Samuel, but he wasn't perfect either. We know his sons didn't walk in his footsteps. It's possible there may have been failures in his parenting. We're not

told that. We don't know. But we know that Samuel wasn't perfect.

The prophets, by and large, in Scripture are viewed favorably. But don't forget Elijah's despair. His fear of Jezebel. Jonah running away from God to do the opposite of what God had told him to do.

[14:25] And yet these are all still commended for their faith. The great heroes of the faith are flawed, which goes to remind us of the reason that we need faith.

Our faith looks to one who is not flawed in any way. The Lord Jesus Christ. If we didn't have flaws, we wouldn't need Jesus. We wouldn't need faith in Jesus.

That's the nature of people of faith. They're flawed. And so they look to someone else who is not. Who is able to deliver them. Who is able to save them. And so these Old Testament saints were looking forward to the one without any flaws.

And they're commended for their faith. And that encourages us and gives us hope with our own flawed faith. If you are here today with maybe just the smallest grain of faith.

You feel the weakness of it. And you feel like you might lose hold of it in any minute. Even that little faith is a gift of God. And it's laying hold of the one who is not going to let go of you.

[15:35] He won't. He can't. If you're here with faith but plenty of flaws, you are in good company. And that object of your faith, Christ, has no flaws.

And he will sustain you in your faith. So there's some people of faith. But then he talks in verses 33 and following what they did. Verse 33.

See if you can make some connections here. And with some of these, it appears that he's drawing on some material from the time between the Old Testament and the New Testament. And so if you don't immediately recognize some of these events or some of the suffering that's identified here, that's okay.

We don't have some of it set down for us in the pages of Scripture. But he's drawing on some from the Apocrypha. But old history between the two Testaments that our author knew of.

So if you don't recognize everyone, don't go, oh, I'm a failure at Bible trivia. That's okay. You're not. But it might not be something our Bible speaks about except for right here by the inspiration of the Spirit.

[16:42] So what did these folks do? Verse 33. They, who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, remained strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

Women received back their dead by resurrection. And I want to pause there. So they conquered kingdoms. You could say that about different people that he lists here in verse 32.

Certainly fits the days of the judges when after a time of oppression, a leader like Gideon or Samson or Jephthah would come along and be raised up to throw off an enemy nation. David did this as well.

Who worked righteousness or enforced justice by faith. Even in Israel's dark days of rebellion, there were those who worked righteousness. Those who governed justly.

God would raise up ones who would do that. And so you think of righteous Samuel or you listen to what said of David. Second Samuel 8 and verse 15. So David reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to all his people.

[17:48] All right. So when you read that, you think that's true. This person did that by faith. They obtained promises. Verse 33. The end of this chapter is going to remind us that ultimately all of these died without having received the full and final fulfillment of the promises.

You see that in verse 39. And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised. They didn't get the fullness of it. But in time or in history, they did receive answers to some promises.

You think of God granting deliverance through the judges. David did come to sit on the throne as God promised. Stop the mouths of lions.

Who does that make you think of? Daniel. Daniel. Yeah. Could be talking about the shepherd David. Killed lions with his bare hands.

Samson killed a lion. Or most likely Daniel. One of the prophets. Who refused to stop praying at the decree of the king.

[18:53] Was thrown to the lions. And God shut the lions mouths. So that Daniel didn't get eaten in that den of lions. But lived. Delivered by faith.

Quenched the power of fire. Who's that? Daniel's three friends.

Yeah. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Better known as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Yeah. There's a story.

So I think maybe coming right on the heels of what looks like a reference to Daniel. Was shutting the mouths of lions. Even though Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah aren't named in this list. They were associated with one of the prophets.

Daniel. Could be a reference to them. But they were thrown into the fiery furnace for not worshipping Nebuchadnezzar's image. And Jesus came and walked with them. In the fire.

[19 : 50] And they came out of a blazing hot furnace. Not even smelling like smoke. I'd call that quenching the power of fire.

That's some faith. That's a story to tell. That's a powerful God and a faith that's not misplaced or put to shame. Hey, Hebrews. Early Jewish Christians. I hope you're listening.

Don't. Look. These guys didn't turn back. And Jesus came and walked with them in the furnace.

He'll walk with you. He'll not leave you. Your faith is not misplaced.

Escape the sword. Could be various instances. David escaped Goliath and Saul. Elijah escaped Jezebel's sword. Strengthened out of weakness in verse 34.

More general statement that might recall Samson. Who was made weak. And then had his strength restored at the end. To bring great judgment on the Philistines. Might again just be a more.

[20 : 48] A more general statement. Isn't this the case in every exercise of faith? That God does in and through us. What we could never do. In our strength. You know what Paul says.

Very familiar to us. To the Corinthians. In 2nd Corinthians 12. 9. Paul asked for this thorn in the flesh. To be removed. But he said. Jesus said to me. God said to me. My grace is sufficient for you. For my power is made perfect in weakness. And then Paul says. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses. So that the power of Christ may rest upon us.

Should give us great comfort and hope. God grants strength to the weak. And the weary. We receive it by faith. So if you're here today.

And you're thinking. Oh these great feats that were done. These mighty men. Women. They were weak. And God demonstrated his strength.

[21 : 45] In them. We admit our own weakness. We own it. Which may be humbling. But that's okay. Again. The point of faith is it looks away from us. To the one who's able to deliver.

To the mighty God who strengthens us. In our weakness. Others were made strong in battle.

Enrouted armies of foreigners. Verse 34. That could refer to different people in the list.

The women receive back their dead. Who do you think of there? Is it Elijah that did that? Or Elisha? It's both. They both did. Elijah raised the dead son of the widow of Zarephath.

And Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite woman. The Shunammite woman of faith. Do you remember her? She kept saying. All is well. Even when her son was dead.

All is well. Imagine faith like that. And Elisha raises him from the dead. They receive back their sons by resurrection.

[22 : 45] Through faith. So if your heart is encouraged at these great ventures. And victories. And faith. Get ready now to come crashing back down to earth.

This is a remarkable list. Of people and feats of faith. But the ride is about to get a little bit of. A little bit bumpy. People of faith are not promised.

A steady string of triumph. And joy. And great stories. And victory. Because it's also through faith.

That we suffer great hardship. And so there is a dramatic shift.

In the middle of verse 35. I don't know if you noticed it. It took me a long time before I realized this list. It takes a hard right. These great heroes of the faith.

These great things that they accomplish. And then. So women receive back their dead by resurrection. What's next? This should be in bold face.

[23 : 47] Draw a line in your Bible. Right in the middle of verse 35. Some were tortured. Refusing to accept release.

So that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking. And flogging. And even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were killed with a sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats.

Destitute. Afflicted. Mistreated. Of whom the world was not worthy. Wandering about in deserts. And mountains. And in dens. And caves of the earth. See the difference?

Starting right in the middle of verse 35. Great triumphs of faith. And now great trials. By faith. Great suffering for faith. Let's think about that secondly.

We've seen these great accomplishments. These great triumphs. Now suffering. And trials. We like great accomplishments. Right? That's fun to talk about.

[24 : 46] This list. Not so much. But just as realistic. Tortured. And here's where you may not recognize some of the things that are mentioned here from the Old Testament.

That's okay. Tortured. Released. Or excuse me. Refusing release. And obtaining a better resurrection. That torture seems to invoke an image of being stretched out on a wheel and then beaten.

Even facing that. There were those who declined being released. How would they have been released? By denying their faith. So they said no.

That's what we assume. That's what we know of stories of martyrs. In the. After the New Testament time. They would be offered release if they deny their faith. And they didn't.

And they were killed. And that's the sort of thing that seems to be in view here. They refused release. Probably because they refused to deny their Savior.

[25 : 48] Their God. So that they might obtain a better resurrection. What does that mean? It might just be. This is one possibility. It might just be comparing this better resurrection to the resurrection mentioned in the first part of verse 35.

Women receive back their dead by resurrection. Those sons that they received back by resurrection. They went on to die again. That was a temporary resurrection. The resurrection that these receive for dying.

And all of God's children who die. The resurrection they receive will not be temporary. It won't be to die again. It will be forever. One day. Once you are in the grave. Jesus is going to come again. And he's going to raise you from the dead. Forever. And you'll be with him always. I think that's probably the best understanding of better resurrection there. They were anticipating eternal life one day.

As we do. When Jesus comes again. It was mocking. Flogging. Chains. And imprisonment. In verse 36. Listen to what it said about Jeremiah. I'm going to read you a little from Jeremiah 20.

[26 : 52] And a little bit from Jeremiah 37. So in Jeremiah 20. In verse 2. It says. Then Peshur beat Jeremiah the prophet. And put him in the stocks. In Jeremiah 37.

And the officials were enraged at Jeremiah. And they beat him. And imprisoned him in the house of Jonathan the secretary. For he had been made a prison. Could be said of others as well. Stoned. In verse 37. It mentions being stoned. And Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest. Suffered that fate. At the command of Joash. You can read about it in 2 Chronicles 24.

Sawn in two. Tradition has it. That Isaiah was sawn in two. At the command of wicked King Manasseh. We don't know that for certain. That's what tradition has handed down. But we can't say that for certain.

But that's possible that Isaiah is in view there. Killed with a sword. Verse 37. This is where this list is really very helpful to me.

[27 : 53] It's easy to read right over this. Killed with a sword. Yep. We know people die for their faith. But don't forget. That just moments ago in verse 34. It said.

Escape the edge of the sword. Some people by faith. Escape the edge of the sword. And some people by faith. Die by the sword.

The thing that distinguishes them. Is not their faith. That's what they have in common. It's not that the one with faith. Escape the sword. And the one that didn't have very good faith.

Died by the sword. No. Their faith is what they had in common. It enabled them to do those things. Triumph and trial. Great accomplishment. And great suffering.

Listen to this. From Jeremiah 26. There was another man. Who prophesied in the name of the Lord. Uriah. Alright.

[28 : 48] So you got Jeremiah. But there's another man who prophesies in the name of the Lord. Uriah. He prophesied against this city. And against this land. In words like those of Jeremiah. You think he was very popular?

Jeremiah wasn't. So neither was this guy. The king wanted to kill him. He flees to Egypt. They chase him down. And then we read this later in Jeremiah 26. And they took Uriah from Egypt.

And brought him to King Jehoiakim. Who struck him down with a sword. And dumped his dead body into the burial place of the common people. But the hand of Ahicham. The son of Shaphan. Was with Jeremiah.

So that he was not given over to the people to be put to death. Oh. Okay. So Jeremiah had faith. And he lived. And Uriah didn't have faith. So he was killed.

Nope. They both had faith. Jeremiah had plenty of his own suffering. But in that instance.

[29 : 46] He was spared the sword. And Uriah was not. God calls us to face different things. At different times. As we his people.

Walk by faith. If you are suffering now. And no doubt. Some of you are. Different ways. If you are suffering now.

It's not automatically to be assumed. That you lack faith. Don't be thinking today. I'm suffering because I don't have enough faith. If that was true.

These people wouldn't be. Witnesses of faith. For these early Hebrew Christians. It's not for you to question why. Then you have it worse than that person over there.

But to accept our circumstances. Trust that God knows better than we do. And pray for his sustaining grace. And strength. And if you're conquering now by faith.

[30 : 46] Things are going well. Encourage. Triumphs by faith. It's not for you to look down your nose. At the sufferer. As though your faith is greater.

And if they just had more faith. They would be in a position more like yours. In fact. It may take stronger faith to suffer. Than to conquer. Some of the greatest men.

And women of faith. Have faced some of the greatest suffering. This levels the playing field.

Brothers and sisters. There's. There's no. Room for pride.

Among people of faith. None. If you are these days. More on the conquering side. It doesn't mean that you're any better. Than those on the suffering side.

And vice versa. The other way around. If you're more on the suffering side of things. It doesn't mean that. That you're better. Or worse. And you may soon trade places.

[31 : 45] Some by faith escape the sword. And others by faith are killed by the sword. This is really important. This. We don't have time to get into this. This destroys any notion of a prosperity gospel. Where if you just have enough faith.

You can have whatever it is that you want. You name it. You claim it. No. You by faith might be called to suffer. And this person might by faith be called to triumph.

If you don't. If you don't get anything else today. Get. Get this. Here in this remarkable list. Some people die. For their faith. And some people accomplish great things by faith.

And their faith is the common denominator. It's not what separates them. Others it says in verse 37. We're wearing sheep or goat skins.

Destitute. Afflicted. Ill treated. The prophets were known for their clothing like this. But God's people at various times have been persecuted and afflicted. And left with little or nothing. They've wandered about in deserts and mountains and dens and caves.

[32 : 47] Think of Obadiah hiding the prophets of the Lord from Jezebel by 50s in caves. Elijah fed by the ravens in the wilderness. And it's interesting.

It seems that these suffered for because of their faith. It shouldn't surprise us. The unrighteous don't like the righteous. They don't like to be exposed by the light and the truth that the righteous bring. As they reflect the light of Christ. So they push back against it. They persecute righteous people of faith. But those who suffer because of faith also endure that suffering through their faith.

They suffer for their faith. Because of it. And they suffer through it. That's how they're able to bear up in the suffering. It's by faith. Because they're not looking at themselves. They're not depending on their own strength.

They're not thinking, I can do this. I can get through suffering. I've got the strength of Samson. No. That's the nature of faith. It looks away from themselves. I can suffer through faith because there's someone greater.

[33 : 51] Who gives me grace. Who gives me strength. And my faith is looking to him. So which will be the reality for you?

Will you conquer kingdoms and wander about? Or will you wander about hiding in caves with nothing to your name? Will you escape the edge of the sword? Or die by the sword? The reality for many may be that our faith will lead to fairly ordinary lives in between those extremes.

And that too is a way to walk by faith through the world. Sometimes God won't give you either extreme. Sometimes he might have you up high one moment and down low the next. As you walk by faith. He may call a person of faith to accomplish great things or to suffer great things. And both bring glory to the object of their faith. The faithful God. And I hope that gives you great encouragement. There's great triumphs of faith. There's great suffering. Trials of faith.

[34 : 54] And now I hope there's great encouragement to your faith. I hope there has been as we've gone. Notice a thing I skipped over in verse 38. Of whom the world was not worthy.

A lot of commentators really delighted to point this out. So I want to point it out too. I see why. See the world didn't think these people who suffered were worthy of the world. You're not worthy of this world.

So we're going to persecute you and hopefully drive you right out of this world. We're going to kill you. You're not worthy to be here. God's evaluation? God says they've got it backwards. The world is not worthy of them. The only appropriate place for them is glory. God placed them here for a time and used them to serve his grand purpose and plan.

But their home was heaven. And so suffering saint today for reasons not entirely clear to us. God has called you to face suffering in this life. God has called you to face suffering in this life. God has called you to face suffering in this life.

[35 : 49] God has called you to face suffering in this life. And as you do so, by faith in him, you show, by his grace, that in some ways the world is not worthy of you. And it's not your home. Heaven is waiting for you. And until that day, your faith in the faithful God is a great demonstration of his power and grace and mercy.

The world may not be worthy of you, but it is the better for having had you walk through it. By God's grace. Remember, faith looks away from yourself. You can't say, I have such great faith.

As soon as we're proud of our faith, we're misunderstanding faith. Faith inherently is saying, I can't do this. I need you. But I love that God commends people.

He gives us encouragement in our faith. The world is not worthy of such people. And so he will bring us all safely home to glory. Such people are commended.

Verse 39. And these, though commended through their faith. That's where Hebrews 11 begins. Back in verse 2. It says, In verse 4, he says about Abel.

[36 : 56] God commending him by accepting his gift of Enoch. He says in verse 5 that he was commended as having pleased God. Be encouraged today, saints. We understand that we do nothing to contribute to our salvation.

We can't claim an ounce of it. But God comes along and encourages the people to whom he has given the faith. He commends them in their exercise of that faith.

Be encouraged. You're to be commended for your faith. By God's grace. These were commended through their faith. He bears, God, this is really interesting.

He commends them. He bears witness about them. These saints are bearing witness about their faith. Encouraging these early Hebrew Christians. But God is bearing witness about them. And that's true for you today as well.

It should encourage us to persevere in that faith. Our Heavenly Father sees and rewards it. And ultimately you will receive that glorious resurrection. But these, it says in verse 39, didn't fully receive the promise.

[37 : 59] They didn't get it in their lifetime. Abraham in his life didn't receive a lot of what was promised. Earlier in the chapter it says this. In verse 13, these all died in faith, not having received the things promised.

But having seen them and greeted them from afar. Abraham was promised many descendants in a great nation. Land.

You know what land Abraham had when he died? He had a burial plot. But did God keep his promise?

Abraham's looking for a better city. City's architect and builder is God. They didn't receive the fullness of the promise in their lifetime.

You got some of it. David ruled over that land that God had promised. Eventually he did give them that land. But even though they obtained some of the promises, the ultimate was still waiting. God had something better.

[38 : 59] Verse 40. For them and for us. Since God had provided something better for us. That word better in some ways is the theme of Hebrews. Jesus is better. Don't go back.

Don't go back. Don't. You've already got the best thing in Jesus Christ. He's given us something better. The fulfillment of all of those promises in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's better than the prophets and the angels. And Moses sacrifices the priest. He is the perfect high priest. He's the once for all sacrifice for sinners. Jesus has brought a better hope. Mediates a better covenant.

So he's got something better for us. We're privileged to be on this side of the cross. Those Old Testament saints. They saw faintly and dimly through clouded mirrors, types and shadows and pictures.

We look back. We see it so clearly. And God's given us his word to explain it to us. And yet even with the coming of Christ, there's there's something still waiting.

[39 : 59] We don't have the fullness of the promises yet. Just just look around. You'll see somebody that's hurting deeply. That's suffering.

Sickness, illness, broken relationship, lost loved one, financial ruin. There is still hurt. Plenty of brokenness because of a rebellion.

But Jesus is going to come again. And he's going to finish what he started. And then we will have those promises in fullness. Verse 16.

But as it is, they desire a better country. That is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God. For he has prepared for them a city. God's provided something better.

We're awaiting the fullness of it. But it's surely coming. Even more, these Old Testament saints were awaiting. They were awaiting Christ. They were waiting for the first coming.

[40 : 55] And so the author of Hebrews says to these early Jewish Christians who are thinking about abandoning the better Jesus. And going back to the types and the shadows and the darkness and the and the worse.

Says no, no, no, no, no. God has something better. Don't you abandon it. Your own ancestors testify to the importance of persevering in the faith.

And not abandoning Christ. What a challenge to them. And so again, verse 39 at the end of chapter 10. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed. But of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

And you. This is not just for early Jewish Christians. It's for 21st century Bremen Christians. If you're enjoying triumphs of faith.

Maybe you're not conquering kingdoms or shutting the mouths of lions. But maybe you've seen real spiritual growth in your life. Recently. Maybe God has used your witness and your testimony to bring someone that's lost to Christ.

[42 : 01] You've enjoyed the blessings of faith. Praise God. Praise God for that. Remember. It's not you. Remember. Faith looks away from itself. From yourself. To the object of your faith.

Your good triumphing experience right now speaks to the reality of a mighty God. Who is strengthening you. So the praise goes to him. If you're triumphing by faith. Again.

All praise. All praise to God. In whom my faith rests. It's not. It's not about me. It's about him. And if you are going through dark trials.

It's only by faith in Christ. That you persevere. That's the only way. It's at these times that we will be attempted. We'll be tempted to abandon our faith.

How's this faith working out for me now? Suffering. I thought God promised to deliver me. And I don't feel very delivered. Like.

[42 : 57] What am I? You'll be tempted. These Hebrew Christians. We're. We're about to. Or we're suffering persecution. That's why they needed these examples of faith as well.

They're being tempted to abandon it. Chuck it. And you may be as well. And these witnesses say. No, no, no, no, no, no. What you must hold on to in the midst of those.

Is Christ. Don't turn away from him. Because. It's by faith both. That you triumph. And that you have trials. So you look to him.

The one who's able to preserve. And an encouragement. These witnesses are to us. To persevere. And for the suffering too. Again. That faith looks away from us.

How am I going to deal with these circumstances? You can't. But God can give you strength. He can in his strength. These are commended.

[43 : 56] They're for their faith. And you. Dear people of God. Are to be commended as well. Remembering that apart from God's grace. You would have no faith. The reality of faith.

Is that we acknowledge. We could do absolutely nothing. Apart from the faithfulness of God. So you know what comes in the next verses. You've still got your Bible open. Look there with me. Chapter 12.

Verses 1 through 3. Therefore. Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses. All these witnesses in chapter 11.

He's just called to this stand. Let us also. Like them. Lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely. And let us run with endurance.

The race that is set before us. Looking to Jesus. Is that what faith is? Looking to Christ. Looking to Jesus. The founder and perfecter of our faith.

[44 : 54] You see. It comes from him. And he's going to give you the grace to bring it to fruition at the end. All the way. Who for the joy that was set before him. Endured the cross.

Despising the shame. And is seated at the right hand of God. Consider him. Think about Jesus. You ever do that? Just think about Jesus. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself.

So that you. May not grow weary. Or faint hearted. Our faith must be constantly looking to Christ. This message is. Been for believers.

Who have their faith in Christ. But. If you have never looked to this Savior. I've been preaching on and off from this pulpit. Since 2002.

17 years. I wonder if there's anybody here. That has heard me for 17 years. Or Pastor John for.

[45 : 55] A lot more than that. Who's heard me plead with you to come to Christ. Again. And again. And again. You're still there. And you're still there.

Without faith. Still trying to do it on your own. You come to Christ today. Maybe this is the last chance I'll ever get. To plead with you to come to Christ.

So do it. God be merciful to me this sinner. And then you can walk this life of faith. Yeah. But there might be trials.

Yep. But you will have everything that you need to face them. You come to Jesus. I think it's not so much. It's partly this.

But not so much dare to be a Daniel. As without Christ. There are no Daniels. And so I hope you're looking to him. May God make us like these.

[46 : 55] That we've read of in Hebrews 11. Admitting our weakness. Our total dependence on the Savior. Whether you're conquering or suffering. Facing triumph or trial. We wake up each morning.

And acknowledge that we can do nothing. But are totally dependent on God's grace and strength. That's what our faith says. 1 John 5. 4 and 5. For everyone who has been born of God.

Overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world. Our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Except the one who believes.

That Jesus is the Son of God. May God give us grace to exercise that faith. In him. Let's pray. Father we pray that you would strengthen our faith this day. Use these examples.

These witnesses to the reality. And the great benefit of faith. To encourage our faith. And bring some to faith for the first time we pray. In Jesus name.

[47 : 50] Amen. Amen.