

Faith Obeying: Abraham

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 July 2014

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] And then we're going to turn over to Hebrews chapter 11. But we begin in Genesis chapter 12. So Abram left, as the Lord had told him.

And Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he set out from Aaron. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people they had acquired in Haran.

And they set out for the land of Canaan. And they arrived there. Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Morah at Shechem.

At the time, the Canaanites were in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, To your offspring I will give this land. And so he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him. And from there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent. With Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.

[1:37] Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev. And please turn over to Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews chapter 11.

We'll be reading verses 8 through 10 and then 13 through 16. So Hebrews 11 and verse 8.

By faith, Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

By faith, he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country. He lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.

For he was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God. Then verse 13. All these people were still living by faith when they died.

[2:41] They did not receive the things promised. They only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one.

Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. We're walking along a road in Mesopotamia, present-day Iraq.

It's 4,100 years ago, and we meet a man coming toward us. A 75-year-old man, along with his wife, his nephew, lots of servants and many possessions, all packed up for a journey.

He's obviously going somewhere. So we greet him and we ask him, Hello, friend, where are you coming from? And he says, Ur, Ur the Chaldeans.

[3:51] Oh, that's a pleasant and prosperous place, we say. Where are you going? I don't know. But I'm going there.

Well, how in the world can you be going to a place if you don't know where it is? All I know, he says, is that God told me to leave my country and to go to a place that he would show me and give to me as my inheritance.

And that which looked so foolish to men was most precious to the Lord, for he saw the faith behind his obedience.

Abraham trusted and obeyed the Lord, and the Lord was pleased with his faith. In our studies in Hebrews 11, we're coming then to the next example of faith.

And as we do, we're leaving behind the pre-flood men, Abel and Enoch and Noah. And we're coming to the patriarchs, those fathers of the Jewish nation.

[4:55] And first in line is Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. And perhaps more than any other man, he is known in the Old and New Testaments as a man of faith.

Paul calls him the man of faith in Galatians 3.9. There's just two ways to live, by faith and by sight.

By sight, by that which you see and your five senses can sense. Or by faith, in that which you cannot see. And Abraham lived by faith.

That means he was sure of what he hoped for, and he was certain of what he did not see. That was the hallmark of his life.

Now, he didn't start out that way. But like all the rest of us, he was a sinner. He lived by sight. He lived for the things that you can see. For temporal things.

[5:57] He lived for himself. He had no saving faith in God. The Bible tells us he lived in the heathen city of Ur, where his family served other gods. But God in grace chose him.

Chose to save him out of that idolatrous place. Called him and drew him to himself. And changed his heart and gave him the gifts of repentance and faith.

So that when God spoke to him about unseen things, he believed God. And acted accordingly. We read in Genesis 15.6, Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Not just once, but ongoingly. Whenever God spoke, Abraham believed. And so he's called in Romans 4, the father of all who believe. Do you believe?

He's your father. The father of all who believe, Jew and Gentile, who also walk in the footsteps of the faith of our father, Abraham.

[7:01] What a fitting example Abraham is, both for the first century Hebrew Christians and for us. We can understand why Abraham receives more comment in Hebrews 11 than any other man.

I mean, how can you just pick out one incident of faith when his whole life was a whole string of events of faith?

Some four times it's said in Hebrews 11 about, by faith Abraham did this. And we're going to look at the first two times, talking about the land this morning.

Hebrews 11.8, Here's faith obeying.

And I must say, obeying a very difficult command. God said, leave your country. Leave your people. Leave your father's household.

[8:10] That means leave home. The place of your loved ones. That place of prosperity and job security. Of familiar customs. That place where you belong.

Those were all powerful reasons to stay put in Ur. And he's to leave all this for what? Nothing but a promise.

That's all. Just a promise. A bare promise from God. That he would show him and then give to him an unspecified land that he'd never seen.

He didn't even know where it was. Now that's the strange. That's the unknown. That's the unfamiliar. That's the uncertain. And it spells insecurity.

John Calvin says, It's no ordinary trial of faith to give up what we have in hand in order to seek what is afar off and unknown to us.

[9:16] We say a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, don't we? What do we mean by that? Better to have less if it's certain, it's in our hand, one bird, than to go after more that's uncertain.

Two birds, but we don't have them. They're in the bush. That's living by sight. By what we see and what we have. That's clinging to what we already have.

Now it's hard enough to move away from home to a strange land, but it's even harder to move from home to an unknown land. Is it not true that we want to know ahead of time what kind of place it is we're moving to?

We don't want to end up in some swampland in Florida. Before we pack and leave home, we want to know what's waiting for us there.

The job, the house, the people. We want to know the end game before ever setting out. That's because we like living by sight. And Abraham was no different from us.

[10:25] But here we read, Abraham obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. Martin Luther says, this is the glory of faith, simply not to know.

Simply not to know. Not to know where you're going. Not to know what you're doing. Not to know how your needs will be met. Not to know what will happen next to you.

Not to know why this trial has been put in your life. Not to know how it will work out for your good.

Not to know how God will get you out of this trouble that you are presently in.

This is the glory of faith, simply not to know. Abraham did not know where he was going. But he did know who had spoken.

Who had promised. And who would lead him there. And that was enough. That's all faith needs to know. Has God spoken? Has God promised?

[11 : 30] Enough. Notice it was nothing but faith that enabled Abraham to act as he did. By faith. Those are the two words that we keep meeting in the 11th of Hebrews.

And that's why Abraham obeyed and went. By faith Abraham obeyed. He obeyed because he believed. He trusted and therefore obeyed.

It's faith that enabled Abraham to obey a most difficult command. Faith made him sure of what God had promised. Certain of what he did not see.

And so by faith he preferred God's promise to all that he had in Ur of the Chaldees. By faith he was willing to leave it all to follow the Lord.

And so Abraham put his hand into God's. And let him lead him whithersoever he pleased. Trust.

That's the same surrender of faith required of you and of me.

[12 : 39] To put our hand into the hand of God's. And to let him lead us. Remember Jesus had his disciples around him in John 14.

And he said do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. In my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so I would have told you.

I'm going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you. I will come back and take you to be with me. That you may also be where I am.

You know the way to the place where I am going. Thomas said to him. Lord we don't know where you are going.

So how can we know the way. Sound like Abraham. Doesn't know the place. How can he know the way. And in essence the Lord Jesus said to.

[13 : 38] Thomas. You don't need to know where. All you need to know. Is that I am the way there. So trust in me.

Follow me. And I'll. Get you to my father's house. You can't be my disciple. No one can be my disciple. Unless he denies himself.

Takes up his cross. And follows me. But if you cling to your life. Life as you want it to be. You will lose it. But if you lose life as you want it to be.

You will find it. If you lose your life for my sake. And the gospel. You will find it. You see without faith. Abraham would never. Have obeyed this promise.

And left home. We do not blindly obey. One we do not trust. You never do that do you. You don't blindly obey.

[14 : 30] Someone you do not trust. And is that why. Not why. Some of you still haven't obeyed. God's command in the gospel. And surrendered your life.

To the Lord Jesus Christ. You don't trust him. With your life. You're afraid. Of where he may lead you. Of what it might mean for you.

To follow him. Blindly. To put your hand in his. And say not my way Lord. But yours. It's one of the greatest obstacles.

Keeping people from coming to Christ. They don't trust him. With their lives. But who else can you trust sinner friend. You can't trust yourself. Your heart is deceitful above all things.

Desperately wicked. Can't trust the world. They too are taking the way. That seems right to them. But it ends up in destruction. You can't trust the devil. He's working overtime. To keep you off the road.

[15 : 29] To heaven. But here's the son of God. Who became poor. To make others rich. The good shepherd. Who laid down his life. For the sheep. He is the way.

He is the truth. He is the life. He is the way. To the father's house. You can safely entrust your life to him. He's such a kind savior.

He seeks your everlasting happiness. He only calls you to leave that which keeps you from your greatest happiness. And so as with Abraham.

He's calling you today to leave the world. To leave your past life. All that life has been to this point. To repudiate it all. To leave your sins.

Your idols. And your self-willed life. And to venture on him. Put your hand into his hand. And let him lead you by his word. Wherever he wants through this life.

[16 : 26] And then to lead you right in. To the father's house. What commands are you finding hard to obey? Repent and be baptized.

You having trouble with that command? Forgive the one who's wronged you. Love your enemies. Honor the Lord with the first fruit of your increase. What commands are you having trouble with? They're hard commands. They're difficult commands. In every difficult situation. In every command. It's faith that will enable us. To bow our wills to Christ. And to say not my will. But yours be done.

So can you see how this example of Abraham. Matches so well the challenge of the first century Hebrew Christians. When to become a Christian would mean being forsaken by your family. [17 : 28] By your country. By your father's household. You. A Jew. Have renounced us for Christ. That Nazarene.

Will have nothing to do with you. And so here's Abraham. Who himself was called to leave his country. His home. His father's house. And who went.

And obeyed. Because he believed. This is the power. Of faith. It enables you to obey everything that Christ commanded. And to endure any hardship.

Of the Christian life. And wherever there's true saving faith. There's always obedience. And abandonment. To God.

Obedience is the proof that faith is genuine. That it's a living powerful principle within. And not just a dead and useless faith. Such as James. Warns us about.

[18 : 28] So faith. Obeying. And obeying difficult commands. Next we see. Secondly. Faith waiting. In long trials.

Do you know that there was an even greater challenge to Abraham's faith. Waiting for him once he arrived in the promised land of Canaan. We were told in Genesis 12.6.

That when he got there. There were Canaanites in the land. Now it's one thing to leave your home in search of an unknown promised land. It's another thing to come into that very land of promise. And to find it occupied. Occupied by others who called it their home. And did not seem to be leaving anytime soon. There was no welcome wagon reception for Abraham and his family when he got to the promised land.

Only the Canaanites dwelling in the land as theirs. And if he thought that when he got there it would become his at once. He would need a quick adjustment on his expectations.

[19 : 36] Because the stubborn reality he met with screamed. Not yet. Not yet. Not yet. God's purposes have not yet ripened.

So what did Abraham do? When he comes into the promised lands and finds it occupied. Did he scrap the whole thing and go back to Ur? No. That would be walking by sight.

Wouldn't it? He had a promise from God. So verse 9 says. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country.

He lived in tents as did Isaac and Jacob who were heirs with him of the same promise. So he's in the promised land. But as Acts 7 verse 5 says God did not give him a foot in it.

Not one foot. So though he's in the promised land he's not yet given it. So what's he do? He lives like a stranger. In the very land promised to be his.

[20 : 38] That means that instead of building a house to enjoy in his old age. He lives on the surface of the earth. Driving down no foundations. He just keeps pitching his tent.

Moving around like a foreign nomad in the land. No settled housing. He lives as a homeless man. In the promised land.

Why does he put up with such a life? Why not go home to what he had before? Why wait? We all know waiting is not easy. So how does he do that?

By faith. By faith. That's the answer. Verse 9. By faith. Faith alone enabled him to exist this way. He may not have had any land.

But he did have a promise. And faith counted the promise as good as the land itself. He's sure it will be his.

[21 : 38] He's certain. Of that. And so he's going to stick around. Even if it means living in tents. Abraham is able to live on a promise.

Are you? You able to live on a promise? Nothing but a naked promise as Luther says. Just the promise. Nothing for sight to encourage you.

Just a promise. Waiting is part of the hard business of faith. And faith enables us to wait.

Now this suits us well. Because believers we too live in the not yet of many promises. Don't we? Not yet. Not yet. Not yet are we saved to sin no more.

Not yet. Are we beyond the reach of temptation and persecution. Not yet do we have perfect health. The healing of all our diseases. And the last victory over death.

[22 : 42] Not yet. Are we in a new heavens. In a new earth. The home of righteousness. Where there's no more curse. No more frustration. And futility. And disappointment.

And decay. Not yet. Not yet. Not yet a perfect society. With perfect relationships of love. Not yet joy unmixed with sadness. Not yet every tear wiped away forever.

Not yet reunited with loved ones who've gone on in Christ before us. Not yet face to face. With our Lord Jesus himself. Not yet.

We've got to wait. And it's faith that says to us. It's worth the wait. Faith makes us willing to wait. And nothing but faith will make us content to wait.

With a little here and now. Living a pilgrim's existence. Because faith looks to the unseen God. Faith knows for sure that what he has promised is coming.

[23 : 47] So what are you being made to wait for? What promises are still not yet in your life? Are you finding it hard to remain faithful day in, day out?

Week in, week out. Year in, year out. As you wait upon the Lord. Let's learn from this second point. That faith is needed not only at the outset of the Christian life.

Not only when God first comes and says, Okay, leave the world. Come and follow me. Not only when the gospel of Jesus first confronts us.

Yes, we need faith then. To put our hand into his and to go. But we see in this that every step thereafter, we need faith. It's a whole lifetime of walking by faith.

Did you know that's why you're called a believer? A believer. Why does the Bible use that?

Because your whole life is one of believing. Of walking by faith.

[24 : 50] Taking him at his word. And it's nothing but persevering faith. That keeps us persevering in hope. And persevering in the way. Do you know how long Abraham waited for the promise?

His whole life. Verse 13 will remind us that at death, he still did not receive the promised land.

In fact, all of Isaac's life, tents, still no promised land. All of Jacob's life, tents, still no. It would be nearly 500 years before Abraham's descendants would begin to possess the land of promise.

So are you finding it hard to wait with expectation? When the waiting is lifelong. Yes, some of the things are lifelong. Some of the waits are lifelong.

Abraham says, by faith you can. This is the power of faith that takes God at his word. Now, the third thing that we see.

[26 : 01] We've seen faith obeying. Faith waiting. Verse 10 spells out in greater detail the secret of Abraham's patient waiting. And I've called it faith longing for God's home.

It says, for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Now, this is how Abraham could live his whole life in tents in the land he would later call home, because by faith he was looking forward to living forever in a city with foundations prepared by God.

Now, what is this city? What is this city? Verse 16 says that he's prepared a city for them. What is this city that he was looking forward to?

Well, we read it's a city with foundations. That speaks of permanence instead of tents. Tents are here and gone the next day. But a house with foundations, a city with foundations, it's there.

So this city has permanence. We're told its architect and builder is God. In other words, it's not an earthly city built by men's hands.

[27 : 14] This is a city thought up, planned, and built by God himself. Hebrews 12, just a page over, refers to it, verse 22, as the city of the living God.

The city of the living God. It's his city. Because in the first place, he built it. So it's named after him.

It's his. But even more so, it's his city, because as the last verse in Ezekiel says of this city, the Lord is there.

The Lord is there. So it is the city of the living God. It's where God, the living God, dwells. Hebrews 13, 34, another page over, we read, for here, verse 14, for here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

What are we told about the city here? It's an enduring city. We don't have one here that endures, but we're looking for one that endures. And it's yet future. It is to come.

Revelation 21, 2 tells us of this city that it's in the new heavens and the new earth after the Lord Jesus returns. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

[28:46] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Now the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with them. This city is the dwelling of God.

It is his city where he dwells and where he lives with men forever and ever in a new heavens and a new earth. And chapter 21 goes on to tell us that the wall of the city had 12 foundations.

Exactly what Abraham was looking forward to. A city with foundations. Our eternal home. So we need to get this.

By faith, Abraham looked beyond anything in Canaan to his future dwelling with God forever. God taught him that Canaan was not the ultimate fulfillment of his promise.

Yes, it was part of the fulfillment, but that the promised land and its capital city of Jerusalem were types, symbols, temporary object lessons that pointed to something better and more lasting, even his eternal home.

[30:01] That's what Abraham's faith beheld. Now we're not told how he came to learn about this eternal city.

We know from chapter 11 that faith always rests on what? On something that God says. So God taught Abraham that the promised land in Canaan was not the end, but pointed to his eternal home. Indeed, 2 Peter 3:13 says, But in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to a new heavens and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

And Abraham grasped the spiritual nature of the promise, pointing to eternal life. So he kept his eyes of faith, not just on that parcel of ground over there in Palestine, but he kept his eyes of faith on heaven as his real home, and that enabled him to patiently endure all the inconveniences and troubles of a pilgrim's existence on earth, a whole lifetime of living in tents.

You see how faith helped him wait. Faith in something better helped him to wait as a pilgrim in tents. When I went to Labrie in Switzerland in 1976 to study for two weeks under Dr. Francis Schaeffer, I was not able to get right into one of the chalets, the families that lived in those chalets.

[31:32] They were all occupied, you see. There was someone there. And so I had to wait for an opening. Well, there was an older lady in the village of Huey Mo that had a boarding room for just that purpose.

Madame Rocher. The bottom story of her building kept her cows, and the upper story of her building had a few bunk beds, and for a little money or in exchange for shoveling manure, you could stay there for a while.

A five-star hotel it was not, but I easily endured for a few nights in the hope of something better, an opening in one of the chalets, the hope of something better coming made me quite content to stay in a place that was rather inconvenient.

And even so, the difficulties of the Christian life in this world, with all their inconveniences and persecution and troubles, are endured with contentment when we are sure, sure, certain of something better, even our heavenly home.

And that's what verses 13 through 16 say to us once more. It underscores that what he has just said is true, and it's true not only for Abraham, but it was also true of his wife Sarah and their son Isaac and their grandson Jacob.

[33:02] He says in verse 13, all these people, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob, all these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised.

They only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. Now here's the power of faith. It enables a man to see far into the future, things yet unseen.

Faith sees them as realities. Faith even welcomes them from a distance. There is a land that is fairer than day, and by faith we can see it afar.

For the Father waits over the way to prepare us a dwelling place there. By faith we see it. We see it. And not only did they see it and welcome it, they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

There's a certain stigma about foreigners living in a land where they don't belong, and we are seeing something of that in our own nation, aren't we? There was a stigma like that in Abraham's day as well.

[34:16] But notice they gladly confessed themselves to be aliens and strangers. They were not ashamed to say, I don't belong here.

I belong somewhere else. And notice they were not just confessing themselves to be strangers in the promised land, but on the whole earth. They admitted that they were strangers on earth.

In other words, their portion was not in this life at all, like others. Their great interest was not at all in this world. They viewed themselves and confessed themselves to be strangers and pilgrims on earth who didn't belong here.

This world is not my home. I'm just a passing through. It's not my home. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. That was Abraham, and he confessed it.

I wonder, do people know that you don't belong here? By watching you, how you spend your time and your money, where you go on Sunday? Do they understand?

[35 : 21] She doesn't belong here. She thinks her home's somewhere else. Have they heard it from you? They confessed that this world was not their home.

They were strangers here. And verse 14 says, people who say such things as that show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they do not view Canaan, or indeed the whole earth as their homeland, but as foreign soil, then there's another place that they must be looking for as their own country.

And it wasn't Ur of the Chaldeans. Verse 15 says, if they had been thinking of the country they had left, Ur of the Chaldeans, they would have had opportunity to return.

But they weren't thinking of Ur of the Chaldeans as their homeland. Or they would have returned. They had plenty of opportunity to return. So neither Canaan nor Ur was regarded as their homeland.

Instead, they were longing for, verse 16 says, a better country, a heavenly one. Now we're still talking about Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob.

[36 : 36] Canaan was not their homeland. Ur of the Chaldeans was not their home. No, instead they were longing for a country, a better one, a heavenly one.

Nothing in this fallen world satisfies them. They've got their hearts set on something better. Would you notice that people of faith do not come out losers?

They hold out for the better. Noah was no loser, was he? Enoch was no loser for walking with God. Abel was no loser for worshiping God by faith. No, and Abraham was no loser for waiting for something better than what earth offers.

A better country. You see, faith has far more than an earthly reward. A heavenly home with God forever. And so Abraham joins that crowd of witnesses that is shouting to us.

[37 : 45] And what does his faith shout to us? Don't settle for anything less than the better country. Keep longing for your heavenly home.

It's always worth waiting on God. And that's why he was content to live his whole life as Isaac and Jacob were in tents, as pilgrims in a foreign land, because they were going home to a better country.

And that's why in chapter 10 and verse 34 of Hebrews, they joyfully accepted the confiscation of their property, because they knew that they themselves had better and lasting possessions.

A better country. A heavenly one. Better possessions. Heavenly ones. And how did they know it? They knew it by faith. They knew it by faith. And so, because they honored God by trusting in his promise of an eternal home, therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.

Verse 16. God is not ashamed, therefore, to be called their God. You put your trust in my promise? Then what did God do? He called himself the God of Abraham.

[39 : 02] He called himself the God of Isaac. He called himself the God of Jacob. And do you know what he does for every single one of you who puts your trust in him?

Do you know what the Lord does? He calls himself your God. Your God. And he calls you his people. Why?

Because he has prepared a city for them. Their faith is not in some mirage. It's true. It's also true. And one day they will have the real city.

A city with glories that will more than repay us for all the sorrows of this life. For I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

So do you see the application for us as for those in the first century who are being tempted to turn back? Oh, it's too hard to go on being a Christian when your family and the country is turned against you.

[40 : 05] Abraham says, oh, you can wait. Your best things are coming. The best country. The better country. So the Lord has called us out of this world like Abraham to be his people and to trust him to lead us through this life by his word and to bring us to our final inheritance and everlasting

home.

And that simply means that this world is not our home. And we must think of it then as a foreign land where we do not belong. And I guarantee if you think of this world in that way it will change the way you live.

This is not my home. We don't belong here. And so we must gladly embrace our true identity as strangers and pilgrims here.

And that means not being surprised when worldlings mistreat us. For our citizenship is in heaven. And our entire life here is but a pilgrimage through a foreign land to that home where God is where we will live with him forever.

You know pilgrims and strangers was not just a term for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It's true of all the people of God. David took it upon himself. Peter writes his first epistle to believers and he calls them strangers in the world.

[41:22] And he says in chapter 1 and verse 17 live your lives as strangers as pilgrims here in reverent fear. Why should you live as a stranger?

Because you are a stranger to this world. And he says in chapter 2 and verse 11 I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul.

Don't live like the locals. You don't belong here. You don't belong here. Don't live like them. So live like a stranger and an alien to this place.

Live as a pilgrim of what? Of the holy city. Returning to whom? To your holy, holy, holy God. So be willing to endure some hardships on your way home through enemy territory.

It were a well-spent journey those seven deaths lay between. Be content to not always know what God is doing with you on the journey. Why this and why that?

[42:20] Enough to know that he's leading you home. His way. Stick close to his commandments not drifting out of the way of his word.

Hold the things of this earth with an open hand. And though we today do not live in tents but in homes with foundations we still must regard them and view our homes as mere tents putting down no deep roots anywhere in this world because this is not our home.

We're just moving through to a better country. And don't miss the role of faith in all of this. By faith. By faith. Faith is critical.

Why? Because our home is not yet seen. It's yet future. But faith makes it sure. Faith makes it certain. It makes it real to us.

As real as everything else is to us. It's as our faith grows weak and we lose sight of our eternal home that we begin to make our home in this world.

[43:29] And we start settling down here. And we try to get comfortable here. And we try to be liked here. And we seek ease and rest here. It's when our faith loses its clear view of heaven and where we are going that we then find it too hard to wait.

Then we give up the difficult life of a pilgrim. We quit obeying God's hard commands and we start living for the things of time. And we become conformed to this world. To its values and habits and thoughts and pursuits.

And it's then when faith in the coming home is weak that we no longer seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. It loses its priority with us.

And the baubles of vanity fair hold a fatal attraction upon us. This is the victory that overcomes the world.

Even your faith. Your faith. So train your eyes of faith on that better country that heavenly one. Forgetfulness of our real home is dangerous.

[44:36] So let's let all the troubles of this week all that makes you groan and sigh and cry let it turn your eye away from anything here below.

Let it train your eye on heaven. What God is preparing for us there for our light and momentary trials are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen because what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal.

The first step toward heaven is to fall into the arms of Jesus. A guilty, weak, and helpless worm on thy kind arms I fall and you throw yourself into his arms and you put your hand in his and you trust him to save you.

And he will lead you all the way through this life and into the Father's house by faith. Throw yourself on Christ this morning.

[45:53] Let's pray. Our Father in heaven thank you for a book that tells us about things that we have never seen. we've never seen you.

We've never seen Christ. We've never seen the Holy Spirit. We've never seen grace. We've never seen the perfect life of Jesus, his death on a cross, his resurrection, and ascension to heaven.

Thank you for the gospel that tells us that whoever believes on him will not perish but have everlasting life, a life we've not yet seen, a heavenly home we've not yet seen.

Thank you for the gift of faith to believe that it's all true. Lord, would you strengthen our faith today that we might obey even in those things that we do not understand about what's going on in our lives.

Would you strengthen our faith today that we might be enabled to contentedly wait for the fulfillment of all your promises and so work faith in us that we would long after our heavenly home.

[47:08] Thank you for the things that you have prepared for those who trust you. We praise you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.