

What is Biblical Faith?

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- [0 : 0 0] Hebrews chapter 10, and we will read verses 32 through chapter 11, verse 7. This is the Word of God.
- Remember those earlier days, after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution, at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated.
- You sympathized with those in prison, and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.
- So do not throw away your confidence. It will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere, so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.
- For in just a very little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.
- [1 : 1 6] But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved. 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. By faith, Enoch was taken from this life so that he did not experience death.
- He could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith, it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.
- [2 : 2 6] By faith, Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith, he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.
- Let's hear the word preached. Good evening. It is good to be with you all.
- Thank you for having me and my family. We're very excited to be here and grateful to be able to be among you and to open up the word and to look at what God has to say to us tonight.
- So you should already be there, but if you're not, be in Hebrews chapter 11. Well, as hopefully some of you know, March Madness started this week.
- I love March Madness. I love basketball. I don't watch basketball nearly as frequently as I should or want to if I think that I'm going to fill out a bracket and do very well.
- [3 : 3 0] And it shows. This time of year, it shows. I make my picks. Much of those picks are based on blind faith. And I don't do well. My bracket is already busted.

But that's okay. I'm okay with that. I have more important things I should spend my time doing than watching a lot of college basketball. But that is blind faith firsthand at work in my own life when I'm filling out my bracket.

Now, biblical faith. Biblical faith is not blind faith. Biblical faith is entirely different from blind faith.

And so tonight, we want to see something of what does God have to say to us from His Word about not blind faith, but biblical faith. So as we consider that, let's take a moment to come before the Lord in prayer and we will open His Word and see what He has to say.

Father God, we do thank You for this evening. We thank You, Lord, that You have brought us together to be able to sing Your praises, to remember that You indeed are the Ancient of Days and You are worthy of our praise.

[4 : 40] So we pray, Father, now as we do turn to the preaching of Your Word that You would give us all clarity of mind. Help me as I preach. Help us all as we listen.

Help us to be engaged. Help me to think as I speak that my words might be pleasing to You, that they might be from and faithful to what Your Word has said.

And Father, we do pray that You would work in our hearts. If there are those here this evening that do not know You, we pray, Lord, that by Your Spirit, You would draw them to Yourself. And we pray for those of us who are in Christ that You would sanctify us tonight, that You would grow us in Your grace.

As has already been prayed, Lord, we do ask that You would make us more and more into the image of Your Son, the Son of Man, who was sent from the Ancient of Days to die on the cross for our sins.

What a glorious gospel. And we do pray, Lord, that we rejoice as we look at Your Word tonight. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. So biblical faith.

[5 : 43] Biblical faith is not just believing something to be true because you want it to be true. When I fill out my bracket for March Madness and then watch those games, I cheer for those teams like I think that I can influence the course of the game.

I can't. That's not true. And as much as I want this team to beat this team, I can't influence the course of that game. Simply believing that one team would win doesn't mean they will.

Biblical faith is not just a feeling that we have. It's not just wishful thinking. Biblical faith is not arbitrary or unreasonable or vague.

So hopefully you are asking, please tell us, what does God's Word say biblical faith is? Well, Hebrews 11 is of great help to us because Hebrews 11 is going to define faith for us and Hebrews 11 is going to display faith for us.

And that is our sermon. It is faith defined and faith displayed. Now this chapter here, Hebrews 11 is very famous for its definition of faith.

[6 : 51] Look again with me at verse 1. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. So the biblical author here in Hebrews gives us a very clear, concise definition of faith here in Hebrews.

Biblical faith is grounded in confidence. I believe the NIV translates it in Hebrews 11, 1 is confidence. It gives us assurance. We are sure of what we hope for and we have good reason to be sure.

Now we may not see it. We just sang of that in the ancient of days. We just sang of, we may not know what the future brings, but we will watch and wait for our Savior King. So we may not see it, but we have a confidence in what we don't see.

We hope with conviction in what we don't see. The author of Hebrews gives us a really obvious example here in verse 3. He says, you want to know what this faith looks like?

Well, you possess faith. Think about it like this. Look at verse 3. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

[8 : 05] And so if you're a Christian tonight, we believe that God created the universe and He did it by His very Word. That requires faith.

How all things came into existence, we believe by faith. Now general revelation shows us there is a Creator. He made these things. They speak of His creative power.

And God's Word sharpens our understanding of who God is and how He created all things. Now we weren't there to witness it.

We didn't see it happen. We hope in what we do not see. That's what we do as Christians. Now let me be clear. Hope is not unique only to Christians.

Lots of people hope in things they do not see. People hope for all kinds of things in life. People hope for nice weather. Especially living up here perhaps where you're getting some of that lake effect.

[9 : 05] You hope for nice weather. Kids, you hope for gifts at Christmas. Right? You hope for gifts. I have a certain child in our home who has expressly stated he hopes for Legos.

Only Legos. That is all that he wants for Christmas. Christmas. Now right now kids, you're probably thinking of gifts you might like for Christmas. And you hope that your parents get those gifts for you.

Now can you be sure, kids, that your parents will get you those gifts? Can you be sure? When we say that we hope for something like a gift, we usually aren't all that sure.

We say hope a lot. And when we say hope, we usually mean kids like, it would be nice if we could get that for Christmas. That would be nice. But we're really not sure. We're not that confident.

But kids, what if your parents told you, we're going to get you that gift for Christmas. Then would your hope be stronger? It would, wouldn't it?

[10 : 11] It would be stronger. Because mom and dad said, they're going to get me that gift. Now I'll be the first to say as a dad that I have failed to keep my word to my kids.

I have failed to do what I said I was going to do. I have failed to not do what I said that I was not going to do. I get lazy. I get busy.

I just forget. In my weak flesh, I have failed at times to keep my word. But kids, God can be trusted.

God says that if you parents know how to give good gifts, how much more does he know how to give good gifts to his children, to those that he has saved. So God can be trusted.

We can put our trust in him because he's proven himself to be dependable. He has shown himself faithful. There are lots of ways that we fail to keep our word, but not so with God.

[11 : 14] He will never fail us. And that is why the Christian hope is unique to us. Our hope is tied to what God has said. It's not a flimsy hope that we just kind of wish something would happen.

No, our hope is tied, it's grounded in what God has said, in what God has promised. Our hope is in a trustworthy God.

We hope for nice weather, but that hope is pretty flimsy, and we all know it. We chuckled already. No hate to anybody who might be a meteorologist in here, but meteorologists are imperfect.

They can't 100% predict the weather. They don't get it right every time. We don't take them at their word and bank our lives on it if we can avoid it. But we can with God.

We can take him at his word. What God has said, he has proven true. We can trust. Now that doesn't mean, that doesn't mean that our faith in God won't be put to the test.

[12 : 17] There are all kinds of ways that we're tempted to fall away. It's what the book of Hebrews is addressing, this temptation to turn back. We want to be a people who have faith that endures.

That was why we read from not just Hebrews 11, 1 to 7, but a little ways back in Hebrews 10. My translation says, but we are not, this is the last verse of Hebrews 10, but we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

So we don't want to fall away. We don't want to shrink back at Christ's return. The coming one is coming, and he's going to be here soon, says the author of Hebrews. We want to have a persevering faith.

So what does that kind of faith look like? What is the faith that has been defined? What does that look like? A faith that first believed in the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

And that faith, let me remind you, that faith is a gift itself. God graciously gives us faith. Ephesians chapter 2 teaches us that. It's not a faith that we can muster up.

[13 : 31] It's not a faith that we can take credit for. This faith is a gift that God graciously gives us. So a faith that first believed in the finished work of Jesus Christ, and a faith that continues day by day to believe and to hold to and to cling to the finished work of Christ.

What you first believed, you keep believing. We want that kind of enduring faith, don't we? So what does that faith look like? Well, we've seen faith defined in Hebrews 11. Now we want to see faith displayed.

So three examples in our verses this morning. Three examples of enduring faith on display. And the Old Testament saints here in Hebrews 11, they are models for us.

Their lives were characterized by a persevering faith, a faith that endured, a faith that continued to hope in what they did not see. So just to give you a little context here, because I am just kind of dropping into Hebrews with you tonight.

Hebrews was written to believers who predominantly came from Jewish background. And so they were being pressured. They were being tempted to return to their Jewish roots, to turn back on Christ, and to go back to what they had once held to in the Old Covenant ways.

[14 : 47] And so the writer of Hebrews is time and time again saying, Jesus is better. Jesus is better. Don't turn back. And they were being tempted to even go back to considering Moses to be really their great model as opposed to Christ himself.

And so the writer of Hebrews in coming to this chapter on faith and using these examples is saying, well, if you go back to Moses, Moses was looking forward to Christ. So why would you go back to him when he's looking to Christ?

Don't turn from Christ. That's who all of these Old Testament saints were looking to themselves. They were waiting for the promises of God. They were hoping in what they did not see.

And so we want to look to them. We want to see their example. Because in the same way that the original audience needed endurance, so do we.

We need endurance too. We don't want to shrink back. We want a faith that lasts. So Hebrews 11 helps us. The author of Hebrews says, look to those who went before you, and he gives us these examples.

[15 : 55] Look again with me at verse 2. Verse 2. For by it, that is faith. For by it, the people of old received their commendation.

So here are Old Testament examples who lived by faith. And because they lived by faith, they were commended by God, or they were shown to be approved by God.

And so we're being told, look to these examples. They will instruct you. They will teach you. This is what enduring faith looks like. And so each example, each portrait of faith, begins with the same words, purposefully crafted by the author of Hebrews, by faith.

By faith. Each lived by faith. So three portraits of enduring faith. We're going to look at each of them to see how they serve as examples to us as well.

So this is faith displayed. Portrait number one. The enduring faith of Abel. Verse 4. We'll read it again. By faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts.

[17 : 09] And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. So the writer of Hebrews puts Abel forward, and he says, consider him. Look to him.

Abel offered up to God a good gift. It was a gift that Scripture tells us God accepted. Now, the writer of Hebrews is, in many ways, drawing off of Old Testament Scriptures to inform us of who these Old Testament saints are.

And so the writer of Hebrews is looking back to Genesis 4. And Genesis 4 tells us that this gift that Abel offered was the firstborn of his flock and along with their fat portions.

So Abel gave his first. You see that pretty clearly. He gave the firstborn of his flock. And he gave his best. He gave the fat portions.

So Abel didn't wait to make his offering from the runts of his flock. He didn't bring the blemished of the flock to God. He didn't hold back anything for himself and said, you know what? I'm going to wait until I know that I'm settled and secure and that I'm doing well before I give God my offering.

[18 : 17] He gave the first and the best. That absolutely required faith. Abel hoped in what he didn't see. Now to the natural man, that doesn't make any sense.

You don't give your first and your best. You take care of yourself. You take care of your family before you give to your God. You need to keep that for yourself. But Abel had faith in God.

Abel believed in God. Abel entrusted himself to God. He believed God would provide for him. So he gave his first and his best. Now Cain is a different story. Cain didn't give a gift that was acceptable to the Lord.

We don't know all of the details, but this much is clear. Cain didn't offer his sacrifice by faith. It seems that Cain likely didn't bring his first and his best.

Genesis simply tells us that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground. It doesn't say anything about the first fruits, which would have been a term that would have made sense in the context.

[19 : 20] Abel brought the firstborn, and so it would seem that Cain probably wouldn't want to bring the first fruits, but he didn't. And so perhaps he brought God the leftovers. He kept for himself the best and gave God what he had left.

And so we see Cain was trusting in himself. Abel hoped in what he could not see. Cain hoped in what he could.

And the faith of Abel is recorded here for our benefit. Though Abel died, he still speaks. And so as we open his word tonight and as we read it and hear it preached, Abel speaks.

Look at his faith. Look at how he was commended by God. The enduring faith of Abel speaks to us here in God's word. He hoped in what he could not see.

Let's look at portrait number two, the enduring faith of Enoch. Very creative titles, I know. The enduring faith of Enoch. By faith, verse five, by faith Enoch was taken up so that he could not see death and he was not found because God had taken him.

[20 : 29] Now before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith, it is impossible to please him for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Now Enoch, we don't know much about. We don't know a lot about Enoch. A small passage about him in Genesis five, a couple mentions of him in some genealogies where it's basically just his name that's given to us.

These verses here in Hebrews 11 in a single verse in Jude. That's it. Just a handful of verses. But Enoch is pretty well known as a person from scripture.

He's pretty well known because he didn't die. Very few people can claim that. We know of Enoch. We know of Elijah who was taken up into heaven. Even though Kizadek, there's a little uncertainty because of how he's talked about in Hebrews seven as one who had neither beginning of days nor end of life.

So that's a short list of people that didn't die that I could think of. That's a pretty remarkable reason then to be remembered, isn't it? Enoch never died. The writer of Hebrews makes mention of that surprising reality.

[21 : 39] We just read that by faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death. That's so interesting. By faith. How did Enoch's faith have anything to do with the way he departed this life?

Well, the next line helps us. The very next line says, Now, before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God. So Enoch may be best known for the way that he departed this life.

But the writer of Hebrews draws our attention to see the way Enoch displayed his faith in this life. Nowhere in Genesis 5 do we read about Enoch's faith.

Enoch's faith is not mentioned in Genesis 5. So how does the writer of Hebrews know that Enoch lived by faith? Because he pleased God.

He walked with God, Genesis 5 says. He lived a righteous life and the righteous lived by faith. We know he had enduring faith because he lived a life that pleased God.

[22 : 46] In fact, none of the three portraits of faith that we'll look at this evening. Abel, Enoch, and soon we'll see Noah. None of them is their faith, are they described in Genesis as having great faith?

Which is really interesting. But, they are all described in Genesis as having pleased the Lord. God, it says in Genesis 4, God had regard for Abel and his offering.

That's like another way of saying God showed favor toward Abel and his offering. God was pleased with Abel and his offering. Enoch, Genesis says, walked with God.

He had fellowship with God. He pleased God. Noah found favor in the eyes of God. Another way of saying Noah pleased God.

So, all three portraits of enduring faith, they pleased the Lord. So, there's this tight connection that's being made for us. This relationship between faith and obedience.

[23 : 54] True obedience always flows from a genuine relationship, a genuine faith in the Lord. That's literally what verse 6 says.

And without faith, it is impossible to please God. If you don't believe that God exists, if you don't take him at his word, you don't believe his promise that he gives good gifts to those who come to him drawn by his grace, you don't believe that, then of course you don't please him because you're not a Christian.

You are still darkened in your understanding. You are still hostile towards God. Scripture is clear. Those who are in the flesh, cannot please God.

So, if you are not in Christ this evening, if you are not in Christ, but you are in the flesh, turn from your life of sin to Christ.

He warmly welcomes all those who come to him. Believe the good news of the gospel. This is my plea. Turn from your life of sin. Turn from pleasing yourself at the risk of sounding like I really like Star Wars.

[25 : 06] It's a trap. It's a trap. Sin will ensnare you. You think it will lead to life. Sin will never lead to life. Sin will always lead to death and destruction.

It's a trap. Don't believe it. Look to Christ and live. Repent and believe the good news that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of his people and he rose again and he ever lives to intercede for his people.

Believe the good news today and live to please God. Enoch lived a life that pleased God. He walked in obedience with the unseen God and one day he was seen no more himself.

God took him up to heaven. In a world that Enoch lived in a world growing more and more wicked, a world that would soon face the wrath of God in the flood, Enoch sacrificed the fleeting pleasure of sin for a life of righteousness.

He walked with God. He put his hope in the unseen. Portrait number three. Portrait number three. You can probably already guess it because it's not very creative.

[26 : 13] The enduring faith of Noah. Verse seven. By faith Noah being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household.

By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. So in Noah's day life seemed normal to the naked eye.

There were no alarm bells going off. People were living their everyday routine. Jesus said it well in Matthew 24. For in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark.

So life was just carrying on as normal. No one was on high alert. And yet, Noah built this massive ark. He undertook this incredibly extensive building project.

The text doesn't tell us this but it would make sense if that created a bit of a stir. It would make sense if people were like, what are you doing Noah? Why are you building that? Like, what is going on here?

[27 : 21] This man must be crazy. But Noah didn't build the ark because of what he could see. Noah didn't build the ark because he saw the storm clouds coming.

Noah didn't build the ark because he was a good meteorologist. Noah built the ark because he put his hope in what he could not see. He built the ark because he believed God's word.

He was warned by God, the text says. And what was his response? God's reverent fear. That's faith on display. All through the Old Testament, God issued warnings to people, oftentimes his chosen people, saying, turn from your sin and repent of your sin because if you do not, my judgment is coming.

He would often say that through the prophets. How did people respond to that? Often, ignored it, scoffed, mocked, even at times, killed.

Those who brought that message. All of those outward responses were evidence of an inward heart attitude. Unbelief. The absence of faith.

[28 : 33] They did not hope in the unseen, but not so with Noah. God warned him and Noah obeyed. He constructed the ark in reverent fear. He demonstrated the genuineness of his faith.

He was an example of enduring faith to us. And by his life of faith, the world was put to shame. Noah obeyed God and was saved.

He and his whole household. The world scoffed at God and was condemned. So three Old Testament examples given to us. Three portraits of enduring faith.

Abel, Enoch, and Noah all lived by faith. They hoped in what they could not see. And so in the time that remains, I want to spend just a few moments, a few minutes looking at four takeaways that we could have from this passage.

Four ways that we could think practically from this passage. So takeaway number one, imitate those who have gone before you. Imitate those who have gone before you.

[29 : 41] We can learn from these portraits of faith. We can live with endurance. We can live with perseverance. Hebrews 11 gives us so many examples beyond just even these first three, obviously.

So many more examples of those who lived by faith, of believers whose lives are worthy of imitation. This is absolutely the best place to start with the inspired word of God.

You can also look to Christians who have gone before you. You can look to men and women of the faith who have lived lives that are worthy of imitation. And let me just say, start with those who have already passed away, those who have gone to be with the Lord.

Why start there? Because they ran the race with endurance and they cross the finish line. They made it. And we saw their life of faith to the very end and we saw how they lived before the Lord and we recognize they are worthy of imitation.

Look to those who have gone before you. Look to those believers who have lived a life of substance, of perseverance, and learn from them.

[30 : 52] So read biographies of Christians through history. reflect on the lives of Christians that you have personally known. In what ways can you walk in their footsteps? Start with the examples in Hebrews 11, but don't stop there.

Look to the lives of others and see how God worked in their lives and seek to model yours after them. Takeaway number two, practice ordinary faithfulness.

Practice ordinary faithfulness. It is a common desire to want to do something for God. This desire to do something great.

We look at Noah and we say, wow, look at his faith. Look at how he lived out his faith. Wow. But then, you look at Abel.

He doesn't make you say wow. He offered a sacrifice. It was acceptable to God. He probably had offered other sacrifices. That doesn't make me say wow.

[32 : 01] That doesn't diminish his faith on display. That doesn't take away from the faithfulness of Abel. So practice ordinary faithfulness.

Do what God says when no one else is looking, when it isn't going to draw the praise of others, nobody was following Abel around saying, can we post a picture of this on Instagram and can we get a bunch of likes on social media and we didn't have the paparazzi trying to take pictures.

It was probably kind of just an ordinary kind of thing for people. Oh, he's going off to offer a sacrifice. So do what God says. Spend time in his word.

Spend time in prayer. Be faithful to your spouse. Be a faithful friend. Love your kids. Work hard at your job. None of this is like, whoa! But it's the everyday ordinary faithfulness that crafts a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

So be like Abel. Offer, offering his sacrifice. Practice ordinary faithfulness. Takeaway number three. Have a reasoned faith.

[33 : 11] Have a reasoned faith. Faith. So faith is not necessarily a popular idea today. Oftentimes, faith gets pitted against science. And it's like, you're a fool if you have faith.

You need to be able to empirically prove whatever it is that you believe in order for that belief to be justified. Otherwise, why do you believe that? Why would you believe that?

You're a fool to believe in what can't be seen. Now we've said many times, we as Christians live by faith. But not a blind faith.

Not an uninformed faith. So there is this trend in the greater universal church. There is a trend, especially among younger people. So like, my age and younger.

where young people are abandoning their faith. And they're calling it this very fancy-sounding term to try to make it sound justified. They're calling it the deconstruction of their faith.

[34 : 14] And so what I mean by that is when we say that we're deconstructing our faith, the idea is that they are unpacking their faith, they are examining it with a critical eye, and they are saying, they are concluding flimsy.

That was my parents' faith, not mine. I just believed it because it was convenient. It's a sham. It doesn't hold up. It's a crutch that I leaned on.

I don't really believe that, and I'm out. And so they walk away from Christ. Now there are a million reasons that people walk away from Christ that are more than just intellectual knowledge.

Our faith is, it is a volitional act. But there is also the understanding that comes with it. And so we've considered biblical faith this morning, and we can address one reason why Christians, those who profess faith, I should say, would walk away.

One reason for young people to abandon is because they don't have a faith that is reasoned. A faith that produces, as we've seen here in Hebrews 11, actual real assurance and confidence.

[35 : 22] And so it's a flimsy faith, they say, but it's a flimsy faith, not because biblical faith is flimsy, but because their understanding of it is flimsy. And so now I'm talking to young people, like my age and younger.

We can all listen in, but especially my age and younger. Listen. You have questions. You have questions that you don't have answers to about the Christian faith.

And you're wrestling with those questions. Don't just hold that into yourself. Turn to the Word. And you don't know where to go in the Word? Talk to Pastor John.

Talk to your parents. Talk to other believers in the church. Ask those questions. Don't just say, I don't know, it doesn't really matter. Please hear me. The questions of eternal significance, God gives us good, reasoned answers from His Word.

That's why the author of Hebrews calls faith the assurance of things hoped for. I think the NIV translates that the confidence of things hoped for. So young people, you can be confident.

[36 : 32] You can be confident. You can have good reason to believe what you believe. So our faith should be a reasoned faith. What does Peter, what does Peter encourage us toward in 1 Peter 3, verse 15?

He encourages us toward being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that you have. He said, be prepared.

Blind faith can't be prepared. He said, make a defense. Blind faith cannot make a defense. He said, have a reason for the hope that you have. Blind faith can't have a reason. But biblical faith can.

It's a reasonable faith. So do you know why, brothers and sisters, do you know why you believe what you believe? Do you have a defense? We should cultivate a reasoned faith because what God has said in His Word is reasonable.

So our fourth and last takeaway. Count the cost of the Christian life. Count the cost of the Christian life. When we hope in what we can't see, when we hope in the promises of God, we sacrifice what this world has to offer.

[37 : 48] So do you believe that you have a better possession that awaits you? Do you believe this world and all that it has to offer is fleeting and unable to satisfy? Abel, Enoch, Noah, by God's grace, they put their hope in Him and they believed His Word.

They believed like David said in Psalm 16, You make known to me the path of life. In Your presence there is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

And so if we are going to endure, if we are going to persevere to the end, we have to continually remember the world is passing away along with its desires.

The world is passing away along with its desires. But whoever does the will of God abides forever. So consider the cost. You may suffer.

You may suffer for your faith. Romans 8 teaches that suffering should be expected in the Christian life. And what is the encouragement given to us to endure suffering?

[38 : 53] Listen to Romans 8 verse 24. It is eerily similar to Hebrews which makes you wonder, hmm, was the Bible written by one author? Yes! God! Romans 8 beginning in verse 24.

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

So God says what is unseen is worth it. A great reward awaits us. Those who have faith believe that God exists and he rewards those who seek him, says Hebrews 11.6.

And get this, God himself is the greatest of rewards. Isaiah 28.5, God is speaking to his people in the Old Testament, speaking to Israel.

And this is our hope as well. He says in Isaiah 28.5 that he is a crown of glory. He says that he is a diadem of beauty to us.

[40 : 00] God is our great reward. And so one day when we are in the new heavens and the new earth, God has come to dwell with us and we live in his presence forever, he will be our reward.

It will be worth it when we see him face to face. And until that day, we hope in what we do not see. Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, we are eager for that day when we will delight ourselves and enjoy you forever, seeing you face to face.

Father, we recognize that until that day, we are to run the race with endurance. And we thank you, Father, that you have given us examples in your word of those who did just that.

By faith, they ran with endurance. They demonstrated the trustworthiness of their faith and that they lived lives that were pleasing to you. Thank you, Father, that you indeed are a God who brings about and preserves our faith.

[41 : 11] We pray you would do that good work and that you would give us strength to run the race with perseverance, that we, like those who have gone before us, would hope in what is not seen, that we would remember that you are trustworthy and that we can bank our lives on what you have said in your word.

And we thank you for your son, Jesus Christ, that indeed we can bank on what you have said in your word because he has died for our sins, he has risen again, and he is ever interceding on our behalf.

We thank you for him, and we thank you for the good news of the gospel, his death and his resurrection. That is where we place our hope in life and death. We pray all of these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[42 : 24] Amen. Amen.