

DON'T FORSAKE JESUS

WITHOUT HIM THERE IS NO HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

➤ **READ HEBREWS 11:1-7**

SUMMARY: Faith is being sure of what we do not see. Such faith shaped the lives of God's saints.

Look

- “*By faith we understand the universe was formed...*” (3) –The “by faith” pattern that follows isn’t followed in this verse. Instead, it sets the tone for everything else.

Discuss

1. How does the writer’s definition of faith fit in with the context of the book?
2. Why did Abel’s faith...
 - a. ...make his sacrifice acceptable?
 - b. ...bring God’s commendation?
 - c. ...enable him to continue speaking?
3. How does the writer describe Enoch’s faith? (*hint: see the end of verse 6*)
4. What was the unseen thing Noah saw by faith? How did it shape his life?

Look

- “*By his faith he condemned the world*” (7) – Noah believed God’s Word about the flood. He put his faith into practice and was no doubt ridiculed by the people of the world. Yet their mockery of his faith only served to condemn them.

➤ **READ HEBREWS 11:8-16**

SUMMARY: Abraham was content to live in tents because by faith he saw his eternal, permanent home.

Discuss

5. When God commanded Abraham to move his household and live in Canaan, he obeyed. Why did his faith make it possible for him to be content to live in tents?

Look

- *“Enabled to become a father” (11)* – By faith, Abraham did not reject God’s promises but considered him to be faithful
- *“All these people were still living by faith when they died” (13)* – None of the people mentioned here “saw” any of the promises God had made.

Discuss

6. As Christians, in what country is our citizenship?
7. What have you left behind in order to be a citizen of heaven? Do you ever long to go back to those things?
8. How does verse 16 help you when you are tempted to return to the spiritual country you left?
9. It has been said of Christians that “they are so heavenly minded that they are worthless for anything important on this earth.” How would you answer such a charge against the Christian faith?

➤ **READ HEBREWS 11:17-19**

SUMMARY: By faith Abraham sacrificed Isaac.

Discuss

10. We often focus on Abraham’s love for Isaac as the main thing with which he had to struggle when God commanded him to sacrifice his son. But according to these verses, what greater problem did Abraham have to wrestle with?

11. How did Abraham resolve the dilemma?

Look

- “*Only son*” (17) – We can understand the “only” in the sense of one-of-a-kind
- **READ HEBREWS 11:20-28**

SUMMARY: These heroes of faith give examples of people who looked ahead to something they could not see and let that unseen thing dictate their decisions in life.

Discuss

12. Why was what Joseph wanted done with his bones and act of faith?
13. Moses was a man who had it all, yet he was willing to give up his wealth and status. Why did he choose to be mistreated along with God’s people?

Look

- “*They saw he was no ordinary child*” (23) – We are not told what his parents saw in him that prompted him to save him

- **READ HEBREWS 11:29-40**

SUMMARY: Many other examples...and we have it even better. The writer describes the lives of these people, not to praise them but to encourage us.

Look

- “*A better resurrection*” (35) – The author is picturing release from prison or torture as a “resurrection.” The “better resurrection” is the resurrection to eternal life.
- “*The world was not worthy of them*” (38) – The world is not worthy because they lived by faith, not by sight
- “*All*” (39) – We don’t divide Christians into groups of “super-saints” and “mediocre saints.” The named and unnamed alike belong in the “Hall of Faith.”

Discuss

14. What invisible thing did the Israelites see that kept them marching around Jericho?
15. The writer says that the faith of these people would be made perfect only together with us? What does this mean? Someday our faith will be made perfect. When?

Endure

16. What invisible things has God promised for you? Pick one of those things, and tell how it has shaped your life and guided your decisions.
17. We do not want to have a childish faith, but a childlike faith. What qualities of a childlike faith do we want to see in our lives?

“Can [we] read this section without being both rebuked and encouraged? ‘I’m but a stranger here; heav’n is my home’ we love to sing, but in life’s reality it’s often so different. Eyes that should be raised heavenward are riveted on earth. Feet that should be tramping toward Canaan’s shores are mired in earth’s swamps. Hands that should be reaching for eternal treasures are wrapped around gaudy baubles (extravagant trinkets). Backs that should be straining in kingdom effort are bent over in valueless pursuit. What a rebuke [these] portraits of faith speak to us. But also what encouragement. ‘Press on,’ [these] portraits tell us, ‘it’s worth it. The God you trust is absolutely reliable. He means what he says and does what he promises. He said that heaven is your home, and there you shall surely stand, with us, at his right hand.’” (Hebrews People’s Bible)

SUMMARY

Many people in the Old Testament lived by faith in God’s promises. They shaped their lives around the unseen things they know existed simply because God said they did. That is how the Lord wants us to live. Sometimes it seems as if there is no glory in living as a follower of the cross. But our true rest is waiting for us. We don’t see it, but we shape our lives around it nevertheless.

Responsive Closing Prayer

L: Father in heaven, thank you for the gift of faith which you have graciously given us through your Holy Spirit.

G: Give us the strength to exercise our faith regularly.

L: We do not know what each day will bring,

G: but we can enter each day with faith in you, knowing that the day will come when Christ calls us to himself in heaven.

L: Until that time give us faith to believe your promises no matter what we may be going through in life.

G: Amen.