

Living by Faith

According to Hebrews

July 2018

Recommended Resources:

- Thomas R. Schreiner. *Commentary on Hebrews*, Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2015.
- John Piper. *Faith to be Strong and Faith to be Weak (Hebrews 11:29-38)*. desiringgod.org, 1997

Week 4: Faith Through Suffering

Hebrews 12:1c-2a – “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith”

1. Hallmarks of Faith (Review)
 1. Jesus is the author and perfecter of biblical faith (12:2).
 2. Faith is the reality/evidence of unseen hoped for things (11:1).
 3. Faith believes God is who He says He is and rewards His seekers (11:6b).
 4. God commends those who please Him by faith (11:2, 6a).
 5. By faith people obey God, often in remarkably unusual ways (11:8).
 6. By faith people persistently obey God over long periods of time (11:9).
 7. Fear of God motivates and compliments faith in God (11:7)
2. Faith during the Exodus
 1. Moses’ parents (11:23) -> Ex 1:22-2:5
 - i. (11:23) “By faith Moses was hidden by his parents because they saw that the child was beautiful and they were not afraid.”
 - ii. (Ex 1:22)-Pharaoh’s edict. “Cast every Hebrew son in the Nile.”
 - iii. (Ex 1:15-21)-Note the faith of the Hebrew midwives, their fear of God and their reward (1:21).
 - iv. (Ex 2:2)-The parents recognized the beauty or “good” of their baby and hid him for 3 months.
 - v. (Ex 2:3-5)-When they finally “cast him in the Nile” they placed him in an “ark” and God rescued him in a remarkable way.

2. Moses chose God's people and left Egypt (11:24-27) -> Ex 2:11-22
 - i. (11:24, 25, 27) By faith he chose to identify with God's people.
 - ii. (Ex 2:11-12) He went out to his people, saw their burdens and chose to identify with them (by murdering an oppressor).
 - iii. (Ex 2:15-22) After fleeing for his life, he remained a sojourner for 40 years. (Ex 7:7, Acts 7:23-30)
 - iv. Ex 2:14 says Moses was afraid, but Heb 11:27 says he was not. How can both be true?
 1. In Ex 2, Moses fears the consequences of his sinful actions.
 2. In Heb 11, Moses does not fear the consequences of refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.
 - a. He chooses to suffer with God's people
 - b. He rejects the fleeting pleasures of sin.
 - c. He rejects his Egyptian inheritance and rewards.
 - d. Because he was looking to Christ's greater reward.
 - e. This is the "anger of the king" that he did not fear.
 - v. (11:27) Moses' faith in abandoning of Egypt "endured". He never went back over a forty year period; well after the wrath of that particular king had subsided.
 - vi. (11:27) Eventually Moses saw Him who is invisible at the burning bush (Ex 3:6) and many times thereafter.
3. Moses kept the Passover and sprinkled blood (11:28) -> Ex 12:1-13, 28
 - i. (11:28) "By faith he sprinkled the blood so that the destroyer might not touch them."
 - ii. (Ex 12:7, 13) God said the blood would be a sign to pass over their houses so that no plague befall or destroy them.
 - iii. (Ex 12:22-23) Moses added, "don't go outside your houses and the LORD will pass over and not allow the destroyer to enter".
 - iv. (Ex 4:25-26) Moses encountered the destroyer once before, and learned the importance of atoning blood.

4. The people crossed the Red Sea on dry ground (11:29) -> Ex 14
 - i. (11:29) “By faith the people” -> 1st mention of corporate faith, initiating the Exodus.
 - ii. (Ex 14:10-12) At first the people feared and cried to the LORD.
 - iii. (Ex 14:13-18) But the LORD told them through Moses what He was going to do and what they needed to do (“go forward”).
 - iv. (Ex 14:22, 29) The people obeyed the LORD and went into the Red Sea on dry ground (by faith).
 - v. (Ex 14:23-28) The Egyptians were judged when they attempted to do the same (not by faith).
 - vi. (Ex 14:31) Notice the result: the people feared the LORD, believed in the LORD (faith) and worshiped Him (Ex 15:1-21).

5. The walls of Jericho fell down (11:30) -> Joshua 6
 - i. (11:30) Final mention of corporate faith, closing out the Exodus.
 - ii. (Josh 6:2-5)-God told Joshua what He was going to do and what they needed to do (march around the city for seven days, etc).
 - iii. (Josh 6:6-16)-The people obey the LORD exactly.
 - iv. (Josh 6:20)-The walls fall down and the people captured the city.
 - v. Compare the maturity of Israel’s faith at Jericho to demonstrated at the Red Sea. Both are recorded as examples of faith.

6. Rahab did not perish (11:31) -> Josh 2 & 6
 - i. (11:31) By faith Rahab did not perish with those who were disobedient.
 - ii. (Josh 2) Who was Rahab?
 1. Resident of a city devoted to destruction (Josh 6:17).
 2. A prostitute (shameful profession) (2:1)
 3. Betrayed Jericho in order to avoid its fate. (2:2-8)
 - iii. Who are the disobedient ones of Hebrews 11:31? Context suggests the people of Jericho, who were “devoted to destruction”.

- iv. Why were the people of Jericho devoted to destruction? According to Deut 20:17-18, they were among those who had abominable practices that were devoted to other gods (idolatry).
- v. How did Rahab demonstrate faith?
 - 1. (Josh 2:9-11) She heard the reports of the LORD fighting for Israel and believed them (she feared God).
 - 2. She harbored the spies of Israel, choosing to associate with them rather than her own people (she did not fear man).
 - 3. (Josh 2:12-13) She asked for her family to be saved.
 - 4. (Josh 2:21) She obeyed their instruction->the scarlet cord
 - 5. (Josh 6:22-25). She persisted in her faith until salvation finally came (did not report the spies, gathered her family, displayed the scarlet cord and waited).
- vi. Comparison of Rahab to the disobedient ones of Israel whose bodies fell in the wilderness (Heb 3:18-19).
 - 1. They saw God's work; Rahab only heard about it.
 - 2. They failed to believe in the promises; Rahab did believe.
 - 3. They were among God's people; Rahab was not.
 - 4. Rahab became a forebear of Christ (Matt 1:5).

3. Faith Beyond

- 1. The Judges, the Kings and the Prophets (11:32)
 - i. Gideon –Judges 6-8
 - ii. Barak – Judges 4-5
 - iii. Samson – Judges 13-16 “made strong out of weakness” (16:28-30)
 - iv. Jephthah – Judges 11-12
 - v. David – 1 Samuel 16 – 2 Samuel 24
 - vi. Samuel – 1 Samuel 1-3, 7-12
- 2. Some received blessings (11:33-35a) like Enoch
 - i. Conquered kingdoms-the judges and David
 - ii. Enforced justice- the judges and David
 - iii. Obtained promises – throughout the OT
 - iv. Stopped the mouths of lions – Samson, David, Daniel 6
 - v. Quenched the power of fire – Daniel 3
 - vi. Escaped the edge of the sword – Prophets throughout
 - vii. Made strong out of weakness – Gideon, Samson, among others
 - viii. Became mighty in war - throughout the OT
 - ix. Put foreign armies to flight - throughout the OT
 - x. Women received back their dead by resurrection – 1 Ki 17, 2 Ki 4

3. Some experienced great suffering (11:35b-38) like Abel
 - i. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release so that they might rise again to a better life – Eleazar (2 Macc 6 & 7)
 - ii. Others suffered mocking and flogging and even imprisonment – Jeremiah 20:2, Hananai (2 Chr 16:7-10), Micaiah (1 Kgs 22:26-27)
 - iii. They were stoned – Zechariah (2 Chr 24:20-21)
 - iv. They were sawn in two – Isaiah, as per tradition
 - v. They were killed with the sword. Elijah speaking of others (1 Kgs 19:10, Uriah (Jer 26:23)
 - vi. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, being destitute, afflicted, tormented –of whom the world was not worthy-wandering in deserts, and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth - Elijah (1 Kgs 17-2 Kgs 2), David (1 Sam 22:1)

4. But none received the ultimate promise (11:39-40)
 - i. (11:39a) Though they were commended ->recalls 11:2
 - ii. (11:39b) None received what was promised (the city which has foundations, whose builder and architect is God, 11:10)
 - iii. (11:40a) Because God has provided something **better** for us. “Better” is what Hebrews calls Jesus throughout.
 - iv. (11:40b) So that apart from us they should not be made whole. Because all will inherit the promises in Christ together.

5. Therefore run the race set before us (12:1-2)
 - i. The main command of 12:1-2 is “Let us run”
 - ii. We do not run alone.
 1. The command is 1st person plural (us).
 2. A great cloud of witnesses surrounds us (Heb 11).
 - iii. We do so by fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith.
 - iv. We lay aside every weight and sin that can slow us down.
 1. Weight = good things that hold us back.
 2. Sin = bad things that hold us back.
 - v. We do so expecting to suffer (like our Savior).
 - vi. We persevere/endure to the end
 - vii. But we do so with joy, knowing our great reward awaits!