

# Faith: Learning to Trust God Like Our Heroes (Hebrews 11)

## Sermon Notes for Message #8: The Confidence & Choices of Faith (11:20-26) – Pastor Jeff

- Faith is a confident trust that is fueled by whatever God says is true and acting on it regardless of the circumstances or consequences. The Hebrews writer is describing a faith that not only gets us inside the kingdom, but it is a faith that keeps us enjoying and experiencing the fullness of kingdom living for the Lord
- The Hebrews writer introduces us to six more examples of the faith life: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Amram, Jochebed (Moses's parents) and Moses. They all exhibit a worthy faith that God gifted them, and we learn two more features of our great walk of faith in God.

### ① Faith has the right confidence in the face of death (11:20-22)

- Death is one of the inevitabilities of this life, but one we all would love to bypass (could happen if Jesus comes in our lifetime). Death is described in many ways:
  - It is a departure (Lk 2:29; Phil 1:23; 2 Tim. 4:6), a homegoing (Jn 14:1-6); a rest (Rev. 14:13); putting off a tent (2 Pet. 1:14); but one that is prominent is called a “*sleep*”. It is a temporary rest for our dead bodies that will be resurrected and united with our spirit when Christ returns.
  - It is an appointment we have with God (Heb. 9:27; Job 14:15; Ecc. 3:1-2; Psa. 31:15)
  - It is an “*enemy*” (1 Cor. 15:26) that separates the spirit from the body (Jas. 2:26), but it is viewed as a “*gain*” for believers (Phil. 1:21) we instantly become “*absent from the body and at home with the Lord*” (2 Cor. 5:8)
- We are introduced to three men who share the same genetic heritage, are very different men, yet they all are men who died in faith. The Hebrews writer wants his audience to avoid reverting to Judaism, but to follow the faith of their spiritual forefathers. The words, not the action of each forefather is the focus of their faith.
  - **Isaac** had forward-looking faith as he “*blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come*” (v. 20). As he looked ahead, his faith in God reaffirmed God's covenant promise to multiply Abraham's descendants which led to the Messiah (Gen. 27:27-29)
  - **Jacob** had forward-looking faith as he verbally blessed “*each of the sons of Joseph and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff*” (v. 21). While Jacob blessed all his sons, only the two sons of Joseph (Ephraim & Manasseh) are mentioned here as examples of how God's sovereign plan bypasses the normal human blessings that go to the first born, but here the younger (Ephraim) is given the special blessing (Gen. 48:13-19). And Jacob affirms this and worships God (Gen. 47:31).
  - **Joseph** had forward-looking faith as he “*made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel and gave orders concerning his bones*” (v. 22). Joseph knew God had a promise of land for His people and he even wanted his “*bones*” to preach a sermon about God's promise that would be kept as those bones were later carried by Moses from Egypt to be buried by Joshua in Shechem (Josh. 24:32)
- Faith has its greatest work to do at the very end. Faith in death is better than faith in life. “*O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?*” (1 Cor. 15:54)

### ② Faith makes the right choices in the face of difficulty (11:23-26)

- Living the life of faith is not easy (“*fight the good fight*”; “*run the race with endurance*”; “*through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of heaven*”) and we all fail in different ways and times. God doesn't hide the sins of his heroes of faith (Noah got drunk, Abraham lied twice, Isaac lied, etc.)

- God wants His people to not only stand confident in their faith in God, but to choose God’s way in the face of opposition, unrighteousness, and the lure of temptation. In our fallenness, we are lured toward the easy way, the short-cut, the quick fix. We like the short-term gains that tend to lead to long-term pains.
- God uses three people (Amram, Jochebed, Moses) to teach us that short-term pains will always lead to long-term gains.
  - Amram and Jochebed’s faith helped them address the lesser fears of life (v. 23). When God provided a new baby boy, they *“were not afraid of the king’s edict”* that demanded that all baby Hebrew boys be killed. Their greater faith in God displaced the natural and lesser fear of losing their son because trusting a greater God brings promised care, provision, love, and protection whether by life or death.
  - Moses’ faith helped him see the greater future rewards of life (v. 24-26). Look at Moses’ choices:
    - ≈ **He chose to refuse.** He set aside his earthly honor, privilege, training in Egypt and identity and security as *“the son of Pharaoh’s daughter”* (v. 24)
    - ≈ **He chose to endure** (v. 25-26a). He chose to be identified as chosen Hebrew instead of a national Egyptian and that meant suffering with God’s people rather than enjoying the passing pleasures of sin that defiles, dishonors and destroys. It also meant he considered *“the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt”* (Moses knew the Messiah was coming – Deut. 18:15)
    - ≈ **He chose the best view** (v. 26b: *“for he was looking to the reward”*). This is a major point of our faith (v. 13-16, 26b). Moses knew the spiritual treasures of God are worth so much more. His cross is costly, but His reward is priceless. You can gain now and give up forever or you can give up now and gain forever.
- Trusting God is not just a door to be entered, but a pathway to be pursued and it is confident in God’s promises and a choice to follow His ways that always lead to the greatest gain.