A Greater Faith

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[0:00] We belong to that group of people that exercises faith. And in chapter 11, he's going to introduce us to those people. The author is confident that his audience's endurance and perseverance are proof of their faith, or evidence of their faith.

And that takes us right to the heart of chapter 11, where faith is shown through obedience and endurance. Faith.
There's a sense in which we all exercise a degree of human faith every single day. That food you eat in the restaurants, you're not asking who cooked it.
You're not ordering at the Bronx counter and saying, like, hey, I want that guy cooking my food, because that's weird. You just trust that whoever made it has washed their hands at some point in the last 24 hours, hopefully.
When you go to the doctor, you're trusting that he's examining you well, or she, and giving you sound advice and good medicine. Anytime you drive down the road, you're trusting that everyone else on the road will also follow the same set of rules.
[1:08] So those are some examples of human faith, an example of human trust that we have every day, but the faith discussed here in chapter 11 is different.

It's a supernatural faith that comes from God. It's a supernatural faith that's based on God's word alone. And in this chapter, the word faith is used 26 times.
26 times. 26 times. This chapter is about faith. And we'll break this chapter up into two very uneven sections. The first one is verses 1 through 3, and we see a definition of faith.
A definition of faith. And verse 1 through 3, And verse 1, the author says, Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
Here is a biblical definition of what faith is. Faith is not wishful thinking. Faith is not hoping. Faith is a conviction of the soul.
[2:16] Faith is an absolute confidence that what God has said will come to pass, even if we can't prove it. Even if we can't see it with our eyes or feel it with our hands.

This is not a wishful thought. It's the assurance of things hoped for, conviction of things not seen. And verse 2 goes on to explain that by it, by faith, the people of old received their commendation. They received their approval. They received their praise by faith.
So what is this commendation? Well, I kind of define it as approval or praise from God. But really, I think it's helpful to think about it as the opposite of condemnation.
Condemnation is God sentencing you to hell. Condemnation is being told that you're in violation of the law. Whereas commendation is God praising you, God approving you as if you were righteous.
[3:23] These people of old received their approval from God because they exercised faith.
Another Bible word for this word commendation is justification. Justification means God is counting you as righteous by faith.

We are justified before God by faith alone. Not through works. Not through anything we do, but through faith alone. And so in Genesis 15, 6, it says, Abraham believed God and it was counted to him or credited to him as righteousness.
He was approved because of his faith. And the things they hoped for, the things they trusted in, the things they were convinced of were things that were unseen.
Things that had not yet become a reality. And ultimately what they were hoping for was a deliverer sent by God to save them from their sins.
To die in their place and atone for their sins. But that deliverer had not yet arrived. They could not have told you what his name would be, but they trusted in God who promised.

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[4:30] Even though they didn't have all their questions answered. In verse 3, he gives us a tangible example of what this faith is like in something that is unseen.

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.
We were not eyewitnesses to creation. No one was there to tell us what happened except for God. God is the one who spoke things into existence from nothing.
God tells us what he did in the beginning. And we can't see that. We can't prove that. We can't discover that. We can't repeat that.
That is a miracle done by God that we receive by faith. Again, there were no eyewitnesses. No one was there to see it. So why do we believe it?
[5:31] Because God said it. Because God has told us that that's what happened. And you guys are teenagers, so I'm sure your parents have said something before when you asked why.

And they said, because I said so. Ah, man. I was hated when my parents said that. And I've said it to my kids, too. But that's a valid, biblical answer.
Why do we believe that God created the universe from nothing? Because that's what he has said. That's what he told us has happened. And so everything around us, everything that can be currently seen, was not made out of anything that's visible.
It was created from nothing by the word of God. God uttered his word, and the universe sprang into existence. The most brilliant scientists in the world could not discover this or prove this.
This is not repeatable in a lab. It's only received by faith in the word of God. Now, there are evidences for it, but ultimately we receive it by faith in God's word.
[6:33] We believe what God has said. We believe that God's word, we believe God's word when it tells us that God created everything by his word and for his glory.

The fact that we believe this, we believe God created the universe in six actual days, six 24-hour days, tells us that we are not accidents. This world, this universe, is not an accident that resulted from an explosion.
This world has purpose. This world is going somewhere. This world exists for a reason. You were created to fulfill a purpose. And so this world isn't just accidental.
It's very purposeful. And John Calvin has said that creation is the theater of God's glory in the drama of redemption.
Creation is the theater of God's glory in the drama of redemption. Creation is the stage on which God unrolls the story of redemption.
[7:38] Creation is the realm in which the story of redemption takes place. And so this is going somewhere. It is purposeful. And we receive that by faith. Does faith mean that we have all of our questions answered?

No. It means we trust God when he tells us what is true. So that's a brief definition of faith.
Secondly, we see examples of faith.
Examples of faith. And this will take us the rest of the chapter, verses 4 through 40. And the author now turns us to specific examples of faith in Old Testament people.
This does not mean that everything these people did was perfect. They were sinners. And so when you read about David committing adultery, don't think like, well, David is a righteous guy, so I guess this is okay.
Like, they did wrong things. They committed sins. They rebelled against the Lord. But they trusted God. And as we read these short accounts given to us in Hebrews 11, let's remember that these people aren't just the forefathers of the Jews.
[8:45] He's calling in these examples because these Hebrews now converted to Christ, these were their people. But we as Gentile Christians belong to this group as well.

Who we will read about tonight are our people. We have been grafted into the promises they were hoping in by faith in Christ. And so we are reading about examples of our spiritual forefathers as we work through this passage tonight.
We've been brought into the promises that they believed, and they are our people. And the theme of verses 4 through 40 is by faith. That phrase is repeated over and over again.
It's the theme of this section, but it's also a structural marker that the author draws on to introduce us to a new person or a new group of people. And this word by faith also helps us not to moralize the stories of the Old Testament.

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And what do I mean by that? I'm sure you've heard people try to moralize these stories. They say, you know, David picked up his five smooth stones and killed Goliath.
[9:54] Be like David. What are your five stones that you're going to slay the giants in your life with? That's moralizing the story. That's directly coming from the story to our lives today.

But this phrase, by faith, helps us understand what was motivating the main actors in all of these stories. By faith, we can see that they were motivated by trust in God.
Now, these people are held up as examples. We should be like them, but that's not the ultimate point. We should be inspired by their faith in God and what they believe. Some of the examples listed here are quite striking and surprising, but some of them we would expect.
And one thing that is interesting is all the information he supplies that doesn't come to us directly from the Old Testament. So the Old Testament, in these stories that it talks about, very rarely mentions the faith of the main character.
Whereas here, that's the author's main point. What he's saying is that faith is seen through obedience.
[11:03] When we see Old Testament saints obeying the word of the Lord, that is a demonstration of their faith. So wherever there's obedience, that is coming from faith directly.

And so even in these Old Testament stories, if faith isn't mentioned explicitly in the book of Genesis, when we see someone obeying, that is a sign, that is the proof that they have faith in God.
So let's work through these examples. The first one is Abel in verse 4. By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous.
There's that word commended again. God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.
This is starting in Genesis 4, and we will work sequentially through the Old Testament with these examples that he gives. But if you remember the story of Abel, he had a brother named Cain.
[12:04] And they offered sacrifices to the Lord. The Lord accepted Abel's sacrifice and rejected Cain's sacrifice. And so, as some of you know, when your sibling does something right, it kind of just irks you a little bit.

And so he went out and murdered Abel, just like brothers tend to do, you know. And so he kills Abel. Because Abel was righteous and Cain was wicked.
Now, why exactly did the Lord accept Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's? It's not spelled out for us in Genesis. But ultimately, what it comes down to, Abel believed the word of the Lord, and Cain did not.
And so Abel offered a sacrifice that was pleasing to the Lord, and that the Lord accepted and commended or justified Abel as righteous. He says, through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.
And there will actually be another reference to this in Hebrews chapter 12. But back in Genesis 4 and Genesis 5, God describes the blood of Abel as crying out from the ground for justice and vengeance.
[13:16] But here the author is saying that his faith is still speaking. His faith is still testifying to us. His life speaks beyond the boundaries of his time here on earth.

And this is really true for all of us. Your impact on this world outlasts your lifespan. I remember when I got in some trouble in kind of late middle school, early high school, my dad showed me a family picture from some family that had posted on Facebook or something.
But there's an older guy and an older lady that were attending our church at the time. And there was a family picture with them and all their kids and all their grandkids and some of their great-grandkids.
There were like 40 people in this picture. And my dad was talking about this guy, and he said, this is one of the reasons why you live a righteous life, because you impact more people than just yourself.
If you throw your life away, this is the amount of people you impact just in your family. And so for all of us, our lives have an impact greater than just ourselves.
[14:22] Our impact will last for generations beyond our life on earth because of how we live today. And Abel is an example of this, that his faith, his faithfulness to God, testifies to us down to this day.

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Abel's faith led to obedience of God's word, and so his faith speaks beyond the grave. And what we'll see is that faith always leads to obedience.
We cannot claim to love the Lord and consistently fail to obey him. You cannot claim to love the Lord and disregard what his word says. That is not true saving faith.
James 2.26 says, Faith without works is dead. It is worthless. But saving faith acts obediently. So are you obeying the Lord?
Is there any area of your life or of his word that you're ignoring or neglecting in your life? Because true saving faith always leads to obedience. Verse 5, we're introduced to a guy named Enoch.
[15:27] By faith, Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death. And he was not found because God had taken him. Now before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God.

We don't know a lot about Enoch. Enoch, from the account in Genesis, he lived just over 300 years, was pleasing to the Lord, fellowship with the Lord, walked with God, and the Lord took him.
The Lord basically raptured him, took him from seeing death. And so Enoch never died. He was just translated directly from life on earth into the presence of God.
And there are several people in this list that we're surprised to see. And for me, Enoch is one of them because we know so little information. But he is an example of faith.
He says he was commended as having pleased God. And so God took him. And Al Mohler, in his commentary, says that faith honors God, and God honors faith.
[16:30] Faith honors God, and God honors faith. And in verse 6, it says, Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. It is impossible to be commended apart from faith.
It is impossible to be justified apart from faith. It is impossible to have a relationship with God apart from faith. There is no one who pleases God without faith.
And in Romans 14, 23, the Apostle Paul says that whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. So apart from faith in God, we commit sin constantly.
The only way to be pleasing to the Lord, the only way to be related rightly to him is through faith. Faith isn't simply a way to please God. It is the only way to please him.
[17:33] And he gives us two things we need to believe. Two things we must believe if we want to draw near to God. Must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

And both of these things we accept by faith. We accept the existence of God by faith and we accept the promises of God by faith. And so we firstly believe that he exists.
Why do we believe that God exists? He has revealed himself to us through the world that he has made and through the word that he has written.
He has revealed himself to us through his spoken word. That is where we know God. And if you remember, that is exactly where the book of Hebrews began. Long ago at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers through the prophets.
But now in these last days, he has spoken to us through his son. We believe because God has spoken to us and revealed himself to us.
[18:34] And this belief in the existence of God isn't just an admission that there is a higher power that exists. It's not just saying, you know, I'm sure God's out there, but, you know, I don't really know him.

This faith, this belief in the existence of God is a conviction and assurance in the true God of the Bible. Not just a figment of your imagination.
And not only that the true God exists, but that he rewards those who seek him. This is confidence in what God has promised to those who draw near to him.
He has promised that those who draw near to him in Christ will be saved. In Luke 11, 9, it says, Ask, and it will be given to you.
Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. And in John 6, 37, Jesus says, Whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. God is a rewarder of those who seek him.
[19:39] And so faith necessarily believes that God exists and that he will make good on his promises. And now the author moves to a group of people who did just that. They sought the Lord, believing that he exists, and that he rewards those who seek him.

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Abel and Enoch were faithful examples of what faith in God looks like. But the thing is, we're never told of God speaking to them directly. These next examples, God has spoken to these men directly, and we have a record of it in Genesis.
First one being Noah in verse 7. By faith, Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, unseen is there again, and 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. Why did Noah survive the flood ultimately?
Was it because he built a big boat? No. Ultimately, he survived the flood because he believed God's word. Belief in God's threat that a global flood was coming compelled him to action, compelled him to build.
[20:56] His actions revealed faith that was in his heart. If he did not believe, he would not have built the ark. And it says that it's concerning events as yet unseen.

And the flood was completely unparalleled. Nothing like it had ever happened before. And if you read Genesis, it's not entirely clear that it had even rained yet.
Clouds aren't mentioned until after the flood. A rainbow is not mentioned until after the flood. The only mention we get of a hydrological cycle is in Genesis 1 and 2, which says God watered Eden by some springs and mists that were rising from the earth.
But there definitely hadn't been a flood of this proportion before. God promised to submerge the entire world in water. And Noah had nothing to compare this to.
He had nothing to go on except what God had said. So he builds this massive ark that's measured really in football fields. It's huge. And can you imagine how foolish he would have looked to those in his neighborhood?
[22:04] Like, Noah, what are you doing? Oh, just building an ark? What's that? Well, it's like a cruise ship. It hasn't been invented yet, but it'll be cool. Why?

There's a global flood coming that's going to kill everyone. Okay, how do you know that? Well, God told me. So, like, he would have seemed crazy. But for 120 years, he is building this ark every single day and preaching to these people of why they need to repent and that the flood of God is coming to judge them in their sin.
And to many of us, this would have been embarrassing. We would think of a thousand excuses to not do it. But for over 100 years, Noah built this ark. He was building this ark longer than we will be alive on earth.
And Noah had just a fraction of the truth that we do. Noah had just a fraction of the light that we do. But he did not argue. Did not ask questions.
Did not complain. Did not procrastinate. He obeyed. And his faith was built on God's word, not on what he could see. And for us today, God has asked us, commanded us to do some things that may seem foolish or embarrassing in the world's eyes.
[23:25] It can be embarrassing if an evangelism conversation goes wrong. It can seem weird that we go to church weekly in the world's eyes.

But will we be faithful to the word of God? And this is by this. By constructing this ark out of the fear of God, he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.
Noah also was justified by faith. And he was one who inherited this righteousness. This righteousness was not his own, but he was grafted into it by faith.
In verses 8 through 10, we see Abraham. And Abraham being on this list is no shock to anyone. Abraham is the source. He's the foundation of the entire nation of Israel.
He is the forefather. Every Jew can trace their lineage back to this man, Abraham. In verse 8, it says, by faith.
[24:29] Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive. As an inheritance. And he went out not knowing where he was going.

Abraham just up and left his hometown not even knowing where he was going. He was from Ur of the Chaldeans, which was roughly in Mesopotamia. And was called to go to the promised land.
He didn't know where that was, but he was going to follow God. And again, we can't imagine these conversations. He is leaving behind his family. He is leaving behind his people.
The land that he is familiar with. He said, where are you going, Abraham? I don't know. And he just left his past and his people and trusted God.

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And he went. And we see here that faith doesn't see the end from the beginning. Abraham did not have all of his questions answered.
[25:29] Abraham was walking in faith, trusting that God would provide for him in the end and make good on his promises.

And marriage is a fitting example of this. Lacey and I got married before we finished college. And I remember I went back to campus being married.
And there were a couple guys that didn't know I had gotten married. And they were like, oh, you got married? And they were like shocked. I was like, yeah. And they said, aren't you scared? I said, why? And they're like, well, aren't you worried that she'll, like, change?
I was like, I mean, not really. Like, I don't know why I'd be scared. But I didn't have all the answers. I couldn't tell them what Lacey and I's life would look like five years down the road or 50 years down the road, Lord willing.
We didn't have all of our questions answered. But this marriage is a commitment to be faithful to each other along the way. And that's what faith is.
[26:31] That's a fitting picture of faith. Because Abraham could not have told you what Jesus' name would be. Abraham could not have told you in which city Jesus would be born in. But he trusted that God would keep his promises.

He trusted in God even beyond what he could see. In verse 9 it says, By faith he went to live in the land of promise as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.
The Lord had granted him this land, but he only ever lived in tents on it. He didn't own anything in it besides a cave in which he buried his wife. He never actually possessed this land of promise.
But he trusted God. Why? Verse 10, For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.
Abraham wasn't just looking toward the promised land. He was looking beyond it to what that land symbolized. Abraham banked his life on God being true to his word and keeping his promises.
[27:39] And friends, we cannot place our ultimate hope in this life. This life will disappoint you. This world will hurt you.

Here we have no lasting city. For we must be like Abraham and seek the city that is to come. There is a better world coming.
A more permanent one with better pleasures and greater joys than we could possibly know in this world. In this life, joy is so temporary. Our fun is so limited.
But the joy of heaven is eternal. And as Psalm 16 says, In your presence there is fullness of joy. And at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
And we as Christians are like Abraham. We are just pilgrims passing through this broken and fallen world. This is not our eternal home. But we know there is a city where Christ is king.
[28:37] And we long for it. We wait for it. We trust in God's promises while we're on our way there. And it's not that we're opposed to joy in this life. It's not that we're opposed to enjoying life or enjoying entertainment.

But we are just living for what truly gives joy. What truly and ultimately gives peace. Even if it leads to suffering in the short term. We're after true joy.
Which can only be found in Christ. And as John Piper has said in this famous word, God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.
God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him. The author moves on to Abraham's wife named Sarah.
And she believed in God despite all odds. Against all hope. And it says in verse 11, By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive even when she was past the age.
[29:38] Since she considered him faithful who had promise. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, Were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven, And as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

When Sarah gave birth to Isaac, she was 90 years old. Abraham was 100 years old. She was past the age of childbearing.
And yet, the text says she believed in God. She considered him who promised to be faithful. And she received this gift of a child from the Lord. God is the giver of life.

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God is the one who opens and closes the womb. And in this chapter, the author is wanting to give us little snapshots of what faith looks like. And here he shows us a 100 year old man and a 90 year old woman having a baby together because they believed God's promise.
Faith is the assurance of things hoped for. The conviction of things not seen. In verse 13 through 16, we get kind of a recap of these characters so far.
[30:50] Verse 13 says, These all died in faith. That's where Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah. They all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

They greeted them from afar. As Abraham was walking the face of this earth, trusting in God, he could see the glow of the promises of God in the distance, knowing that he would not get there in his lifetime, but God would stay faithful to his work.
And in John 8, verse 56, Jesus says, Abraham saw my day and rejoiced. He was glad. They saw these promises from afar.
They didn't obtain them, but they greeted them from afar and rejoiced. Verse 14, For people who speak thus, speak in this way, make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.
And if they had been thinking of the land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. Therefore, as it is, they desire a better country that is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.
[32:06] The people of God do not look back. If Abraham had wanted to return to his homeland, he would have had opportunity to. But he was seeking a city whose builder is God.

He was seeking something from God. He was seeking heaven, ultimately. And God's people do not look back. And what was it that kept Abraham going that God had promised to send a deliverer through his line?
And what is it these Hebrews are about to do? They're tempted to turn their backs on Christ. They're tempted to go backwards. And the author of Hebrews is saying, We are not those who shrink back.
We come from Abraham, who pursued God in faith, despite of the odds and despite of the difficult circumstances. And the most difficult test he faced, we read about, starting in verse 17.
By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. And he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said through Isaac, shall your offspring be named.
[33:11] He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. And in Genesis 22, we find this story where Abraham has waited for 25 years for God to give him a son.

And he gives him Isaac. And the Lord tells Abraham that it is through Isaac that your offspring will be named. Not another son. Not someone else connected to you. Through Isaac, this blessing will go down.
And then God says, I want you to sacrifice him as a burnt offer. It's a shocking command. And for burnt offerings, they were killed and their blood was drained.
And then their carcasses were burned on the altar. And this is what God was asking Abraham to do. And Abraham was so confident in God's promises.
He was so confident knowing that Isaac is the son of the promise that will inherit some of these promises. That if God is asking me to kill him, then he's going to raise him from the dead.
[34:14] He's going to bring him back to life because that's how seriously Abraham trusted in the promises of God. Again, I can't imagine the conversation when they got back.

They come back to Sarah. Sarah's like, what did you guys do today? And Isaac's like, dad was going to kill me. But then an angel stopped him and he didn't. She's like, what? He's like, God told me to.
That is crazy. But Abraham was willing to take that step of obedience. Because he was so confident that God would keep his promises. He was willing to kill his only son on the altar because he was that convinced that God was faithful to his word.
And it says that, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. And so Isaac became a type of resurrection because Abraham was so willing and so close to taking his son's life that he was as good as dead.

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And so figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. And incidentally, the place where that happened was centuries later the place where the temple was built. And that location, centuries after that, was the place where Jesus was crucified and was the ultimate sacrifice for sins.
[35:27] The ultimate fulfillment of the promise of God. And so Genesis 22 is significant in the grand story of the Bible. In verses 20 through 22, we get a glimpse of dying in faith.

There are some significant men mentioned here in these verses. Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. And of everything that the author could have mentioned about them, of all the things they did, of all the faithfulness they displayed in their lifetime, the author focuses on what they said right before they died.
And a man's last words are a test of who he actually is. In those moments, there's no more pretending. There's no more hypocrisy. Everything is exposed.
And even in our court system, deathbed confessions are valid evidence in the courtroom. And even as these men lay dying, they did not give up their faith in God.
None of them received the promises they were hoping for. They saw them from a distance, but they continued to pass down their faith to the next generation. Verse 20, by faith, Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau.
[36:39] Verse 21, by faith, Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. By faith, Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

Joseph was saying, God is going to take us out of this place back to the promised land someday. And when he does, I want you to take my bones with you and bury me there. Joseph was saying, if I can't inherit the promised land, at least the land will inherit me.
At least there, I will be raised back to life. In verse 23, we shift to Moses. By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents.
Because they saw that the child was beautiful. And they were not afraid of the king's edict. If you read in Exodus 2, they made a little waterproof basket to set him in the water to save him.
Because according to the king's decree, they should have killed their newborn son. And do you know how the Hebrew Old Testament describes that little basket? It calls it an ark.
[37:48] And so this ark was meant to save Moses from the judgment of Pharaoh. But once Moses grew up, he inherited the faith from his parents. And verse 24, by faith, Moses, when he was growing up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt.
For he was looking to the reward. Moses rose to prominence in Egypt. He was in the house of Pharaoh's daughter. Nothing was off limits for him.
He had access to anything he wanted. And so the choice for him was this. Comfort and pleasure in Pharaoh's house were suffering and persecution with Israel.
And he chose the reproach of Christ, it says in verse 26. Because he was looking to the deliverer. He was looking to the Messiah who would come and say, I am on his team.
[38:51] Whatever suffering I face, whatever persecution I bear, it is worth it. I would rather suffer for this Messiah who is going to come than pass my days in the fleeting pleasures of sin.

And from the world's eyes, he gave up everything for the sake of nothing. But according to the Bible, he gave up nothing.
He lost nothing and gained everything. And Jim Elliot, who gave his life on the mission field, being killed for his faith in Christ, said that he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose.
Moses is incredibly wise because he lost nothing. But he gained everything. And the Bible doesn't deny that sin often brings joy or pleasure or is enticing.
But it does so temporarily. It does so in the short term. But ultimately it disappoints and leads to death. Verse 27, By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible, that is God.
[40:13] By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. And by faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land.

But the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. Verse 30 shifts to the era of Joshua. And we would expect Joshua to be mentioned by name, but he's not.

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We've got Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses. Who's next? Joshua. But he doesn't appear here by name. It says, By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they'd been encircled for seven days.
And the Lord told them that in order to conquer this city, I want you to march around it for seven days and the walls are going to fall down. And I can't imagine how almost silly that would have seemed.
That's not a good military strategy. They trusted God. They obeyed the Lord. They had faith in his word and received the victory over Jericho. And instead of Joshua being named, who is named, in verse 31, when by faith Rahab, the prostitute, did not perish with those who were disobedient because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.
[41:30] Rahab. Rahab is definitely not a name we would have expected to see on this list of faithful Israelites. She wasn't even an Israelite.

She was a Gentile. And even worse, she was a Canaanite. The Canaanites were incredibly immoral and disgusting. And she was a prostitute here.
She sold herself. And a prostitute is typically not referred to as being faithful to God or as an example we want to follow. But she was motivated by faith.
She had heard of God. She had heard about who he was. And she believed what she heard. She didn't have more information than other people who lived in Jericho. But she believed what she heard.
And ultimately we see that she is in the line of Jesus. In Matthew 1. She's an ancestor of our Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 32, starting there, we get the rest.
[42:29] He says, And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of. And basically he's saying, We could go on and on with these examples, But we'd run out of time before we ran out of people.

Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel, and the prophets. Who through faith conquered kingdoms.
Enforced justice. Obtained promises. Stopped the medals of lions. You think of Daniel in the lion's den. Quenched the power of fire. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Escaped the edge of the sword. Werenped strong out of weakness.
Became mighty in war. Put foreign armies to flight. And the men listed here in verse 32 are not men that were flawless. They had a lot of flaws.
And yet they had faith in a perfect God. And through faith they were able to accomplish these things. Verse 35. Women received back their dead by resurrection.
[43:27] Elijah and Elisha raised two young boys back to life. Some were tortured. Refusing to accept release. So they might rise again to a better life.

Or literally a better resurrection. What does it mean by better resurrection? Well those boys that were raised back to life. They would have died again. They didn't receive glorified bodies. But these prophets.
These men were willing to die. They were willing to die for their faith. Because they were looking for a better resurrection. One that was permanent. One that was eternal. One that would fit them to see the Lord himself.
They were willing to be tortured. And refused to accept release. There's a pastor in the early church. His name is Justin Martyr.
And from his last name is why we call people martyrs. Because he died for his faith. And not just him. But his entire church with him. They were preaching and believing Christ.
[44:25] And the Roman Empire marched all of them out. To be killed. And they showed them the spot. Where they would all lose their life that day. And Justin Martyr is recorded as saying.

Remember brothers and sisters. They can kill us. But they cannot hurt us. They were willing to be put to death. For their faith in Christ. Because they were looking for a better life.
They were looking for a better resurrection. Verse 36. Others suffered mocking and flogging. And even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned. Jeremiah and Zechariah were told.
They were stoned to death. They were sawn in two. The Jews believed Isaiah the prophet was sawn in two. They were killed with a sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats. Destitute. Afflicted. Mistreated. Of whom the world was not worthy. Wandering about in deserts and mountains. And in dens and caves of the earth. God's people have always been a persecuted and

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hated minority.
[45:28] And the author of Hebrews is wanting to encourage this church. That what's happening to you is not strange. You are in good company when you're suffering for the faith. All of these people before you refused to give up their faith in God.

Even when suffering came. So do not turn back. Verse 39. All these. Though commended through their faith. They were justified through their faith.
Did not receive what was promised. They did not see Christ appearing. They did not see his death on the cross or his resurrection. Since God had provided something better for us.
That apart from us. They should not be made perfect. They caught glimpses of these promises. They did not see the realities of them.
They did not see Christ coming to the earth. Apart from the blood of Jesus in the new covenant. No one is made perfect. There is no hope of perfection. The death and resurrection of Jesus is what pays for our sins.
[46:31] Such that apart from us. They should not be made perfect. And though their salvation was not accomplished in their lifetimes.

Meaning they did not see the fulfillment of these promises. They believed everything that God told them. These men and women only had God's word to go off of.
And they were willing to risk it all. They were willing to lay down their life for what God had told them. And what ultimately were they looking toward? They were looking to Jesus.
And it's this Jesus that these Hebrew Christians are struggling to hold on to. And he's saying the people of God do not look back. They march forward in faith.
So the question for us, just like the question for them, is do we share their faith? Do we have this confidence in God's word? Do we have this hope even in the midst of suffering?
[47:31] Do we trust God's promises regardless of what circumstance we're in? Do we believe that God exists and that he rewards those who seek him?

Do we truly believe his promises like John 3.16? That whoever would believe in his son will not perish, will have eternal life. It is by faith that we lay hold of all of God's promises.
Faith itself is not a work. It's not something we do. It is a gift. Faith is an empty hand that receives the blessing of Christ and holds on until the end.
So we want to imitate these great saints, these men and women of old in Hebrews 11, who were faithful to the end, even if it meant suffering, even though they were believing in things that they never saw with their eyes.
We want to follow their example and look to Jesus, which is where we'll pick up next week in chapter 12. Father, we thank you for our night. We're able to sing songs of praise to you for what you have done.
[48:36] I pray that you would make us like these men and women. I pray that you would help us see the light of your promises, even through the darkness of this world.

And I pray that we would be those of faith who do not shrink back and are destroyed, but believe and so live by our faith. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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