

Without Faith You Cannot Please God - Hebrews Pt 11

Writing to those tempted to turn away → he makes a strong case for **FAITH** and **ENDURANCE**

1) Reminds them of the past they endured → don't **THROW AWAY CONFIDENCE** (=with trust)

- Heb 10:32-35 But **recall** the former days.....you endured a hard struggle exposed to reproach and affliction..... you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since **YOU KNEW** you had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your **CONFIDENCE**, which has a great reward.

2) The current need → **ENDURANCE** and **OBEDIENCE** → all based on a **PROMISE**

- Heb 10:36-37 For you have **need of endurance**, so that when you have **done the will of God** you may **receive what is promised**. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay;

3) **LIVING BY FAITH** stands in contrast to **SHRINKING BACK** → (**NO PLEASURE** vs **PLEASE**)

- Heb 10:38-39 but my **righteous one shall live by faith**, and if he shrinks back, my **soul has no pleasure in him**." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.
- The way to **deal with pressure** is not to pull in the sails and shrink back, **it is to live by faith**...
- The christian life is lived between the promise and the fulfilment (Faith is the Key)

What does faith look like? **ENDURANCE** and **OBEDIENCE** because of a **PROMISE** (Heb 11)

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the **assurance** (*substance*) of things hoped for, the **conviction** (*evidence*) of things not seen.

- Faith makes our unseen AND future hope so real that **it shapes how we live, obey, and suffer**.

Heb 11:2 For by it the people of old received their commendation.

- **God commended OT people because of this kind of faith** (not strength, wisdom, nor talents)

Heb 11:3 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.

- **The basis for faith:** (a) **God exists** and (b) **He has spoken**...(c) He created from things **not visible** --
- *belief in creation from nothing, can easily lead to belief in promises of things you can't see*

Heb 11:4 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. And through his **faith**, though he died, he still speaks.

- **Abel believed what God said - and it moved him to obedience**

Heb 11:5-6 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. 6 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.

- Enoch lived a life pleasing to God - this is faith → he endured and obeyed
- Faith shaped how he lived, and oriented his life in ways that pleased the LORD -
- Faith believes He exists, and He rewards those who seek him

5) Now He gives a long list of people who pleased God and were commended by God: Their faith oriented their lives around obedience, decisions in life and enduring suffering. Each one heard/knew something God said (command, promise, or revelation of His character) and their faith was their response to that word.

First group

- **Noah** - God warned him about the flood; he built the ark
- **Abraham** - God said "Go"; he left without knowing
- **Abraham** - God said "Offer Isaac"; he obeyed even though it contradicted the promise

- **Moses' parents** - They defied Pharaoh's edict (implied divine leading)
- **Moses** - He chose God's people over Egypt based on God's promises and future reward

Second group

- **Abel**: Understood the sacrifice that pleased God.
- **Enoch**: Believed God exists and rewards those who seek Him.
- **Abraham & Sarah**: Believed God's impossible promise.
- **Abraham**: Went not knowing, lived as a stranger, awaiting the city God would build.
- **Isaac, Jacob, Joseph**: Blessed their children based on God's future promises for Israel.
- **Joseph**: Believed God's promise about the exodus from Egypt.

Third group

- **Moses** - Saw the invisible God and believed in His power over Pharaoh
- **Israelites** - Trusted God would part the Red Sea and collapse Jericho's walls
- **Rahab** - Heard what God did and believed He would give Israel the land
- **Judges & David** - Believed God would give them victory over enemies
- **The suffering saints** - Believed God's promise of resurrection and "a better resurrection"

5) He wraps it up with an action item

Heb 12:1-4 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a **cloud of witnesses**, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (2) looking to Jesus, the **founder and perfecter of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

- Witnesses -- root word is that used for commended - all people commended by God for their faith
- Heb 11 is not so much a hall of fame as it is a **hall of evidence (they were witnesses, commended by God)**. Every one of them heard God speak about an unseen promise They treated that promise as reality That reality **reoriented** how they lived, obeyed, chose, and suffered
- **Don't just look at Abraham or Moses** - LOOK TO JESUS -- he also understood the promise, endured suffering and shame because He saw something that was invisible -- the Joy set before him.
- Founder and Perfecter - (not creator and improver) rather the **Captain who goes first**, and the **one who Finishes the journey**
 - Many died not having received the promise...Jesus is the first one who did - he knows the journey and the way - LOOK TO HIM
 - He is telling these who want to turn away -- Jesus is the only way to get where you want to go don't turn away from him

What about you?

Do you feel like shrinking back?

Was faith simply a way for you to think of doing great works, or can you see that it is simply a response to God's word that teaches us to LIVE, OBEY and SUFFER without turning back.

There IS a great cloud of witnesses...perhaps you will join them...you will be commended by your faith.