

HEBREWS 11: “GROWING IN FAITH”

Series Outlines



The purpose of this series is to help us better understand true Biblical faith and to grow in our own personal faith as followers of Christ.

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You can access full text copies of all messages in the series at the following web address: <http://www.rayfowler.org/sermons/growing-in-faith/>

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“Faith: Being Certain of What You Do Not See”
Hebrews 11:1-2

Why study Hebrews 11?

- 1) Always profitable to study God’s word
- 2) Faith is foundational to the Christian life
- 3) Good overview of the Old Testament

I. Faith is being sure of what you hope for (1a)

- Habakkuk 2:4; Hebrews 10:38

A. Being sure = òa sure and strong foundationö

B. Hope = òto wait with confidence and assuranceö (Psalm 5:3)

II. Faith is being certain of what you do not see (1b)

- Hebrews 6:16, 10:1

A. If you can see it, then it’s not faith

- 2 Corinthians 5:7

B. If it’s not real, then it’s not faith

III. Faith is what Old Testament believers were commended for (2)

A. The ancients = òthe forefathers of faith in the Old Testamentö

- 1 Corinthians 10:6

B. Commended not for perfect character but for their faith

- Hebrews 11:3-40

“Faith is the foundation that gives strength to your hopes, and faith is a deep conviction in your heart concerning realities that you cannot see.”

“Creation: Understanding the Power of God’s Word”
Hebrews 11:3

“Faith is always based on the word of God.”

- example: saving faith (Romans 10:17)

I. Understand the power of God’s word in creation: God created the world out of nothing by the power of his word

A. The Bible confirms it

- Genesis 1; Psalm 33:6,9, 148:1-5

B. Nature confirms it

- Romans 1:20

C. Science confirms it

- evidence that the universe had a beginning

II. Understand the power of God’s word in your own life

A. Learn to trust God’s promises

- Numbers 23:19

B. Learn to trust God’s power

- Romans 4:17-21

Two applications:

1) You are accountable to God as your creator

- Romans 1:18-20; 2 Peter 3:3-5

2) You can trust God’s word even when you cannot see it

- Hebrews 11:1

“Abel: Giving God the First Portion”
Hebrews 11:4

I. Why did Abel offer God a better sacrifice than Cain did?

- Genesis 4:1-5

- A. Was it a difference in the type of offering? (no)
- B. Was it a difference in the attitude of the givers? (no)
- C. Was it because Abel offered God the first portion? (yes)

II. What does it mean to give God the first portion?

- Deuteronomy 12:6, 18:4

- A. It means giving God your first and your best, not the leftovers
- Exodus 23:19
- B. It means giving God the first tenth of your income
- 2 Chronicles 31:5-10

III. How does giving God the first portion demonstrate your faith?

- Proverbs 3:9-10; Matthew 6:21,24

- A. You recognize God as the source of all your blessings
- James 1:17
- B. You acknowledge God as the owner of all that you have
- Exodus 19:5; Psalm 24:1
- C. You trust God's promise to provide for all your needs
- Philippians 4:19

Note: It is your faith that pleases God, not the offering itself (Heb 11:4b)

Application: How do you practice giving God the first portion today?

- 1) Give God the first and best of all your life, not just your finances
- 2) Budget your life around your giving, not your giving around your life
- 3) Set aside God's portion first before you spend anything else

“Enoch: Believing God’s Goodness”
Hebrews 11:5-6

I. By faith Enoch went straight to heaven without dying (5a)

A. Enoch did not experience death

- Genesis 5:21-24; Romans 3:23, 5:12, 6:23

B. God took Enoch directly from this life into heaven

- 2 Kings 2:1-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:17

II. We know that Enoch had faith because he was commended as one who pleased God (5b-6a)

A. Enoch walked with God

- Amos 3:3

B. Without faith it is impossible to please God

- Isaiah 64:6

III. Faith means believing God’s goodness (6b)

A. Anyone who comes to God must believe that he exists

- Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 46:9

B. Anyone who comes to God must believe that he rewards those who earnestly seek him

- Philippians 1:21

“Noah: Heeding God’s Warnings”

Hebrews 11:7

I. Heeding God’s warnings begins with the right attitude towards God

A. Understand that God’s warnings are meant for your good

- 2 Timothy 3:16

B. Respond to God’s warnings in holy fear

1) Take God’s warnings seriously

2) Treat God with reverence, awe and respect

- Genesis 6:13; Psalm 115:3; Luke 12:4-5; Gal 6:7; Heb 4:13

II. Heeding God’s warnings means taking appropriate action

A. Follow God’s instructions exactly

- Genesis 6:22, 7:5

B. Noah built the ark; what action do you need to take today?

- Proverbs 10:19, 19:18; Hebrews 13:4

III. Heeding God’s warnings will make you stand out in the crowd

A. Your faith in God condemns the unbelieving world around you

- Genesis 6:9

B. The world will not treat you well when you stand for God

- John 15:18-19; 1 Peter 4:3-5; 2 Peter 2:5

IV. Heeding God’s warnings will bring you great benefit in this life and the next

A. Noah’s faith saved himself, his family and the future human race

B. Noah became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith

- Isaiah 64:6; Luke 17:26-27; Philippians 3:9

“Abraham (1): Following God’s Leading”
Hebrews 11:8-10

I. Set out in faith (8)

A. Follow God’s leading promptly

- Mark 1:18; Luke 9:59-62

B. Trust God to cover your losses

- Genesis 12:1; Mark 10:29-30

C. Don’t wait for full information

- Genesis 12:1; John 16:12

II. Continue to walk by faith (9)

A. Don’t expect instant results

- Genesis 12:7; Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8

B. Don’t get too comfortable in one place

- Genesis 23:4; Acts 7:5

C. Be ready to camp out on God’s promises

- Joshua 21:45

III. Look forward in faith to the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promise (10)

A. Remember God operates in eternity, not just in time

- Romans 8:18; Hebrews 13:14

B. Remember God’s plan is bigger than you

“Abraham (2): Believing God’s Promise”

Hebrews 11:11-12

“God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?” (Numbers 23:19)

I. Faith believes God’s promises against all odds (11)

A. Nothing is impossible for God

- Genesis 12:2,7, 15:5-6

1) Abraham was past age

- Genesis 17:16-21

2) Sarah was barren

- Romans 4:18-21

3) God sometimes õstacks the oddsö

- Judges 7:1-12; John 11:1-11

B. God is always faithful to keep his promises

- Romans 8:32

II. God works through your faith in his promises to bring great blessing (12)

A. God will bring great blessing to you

- Genesis 15:1-3

B. God will bring great blessing to others through you

- Genesis 15:5; Galatians 3:6-9

“The Patriarchs: Longing for Heaven”
Hebrews 11:13-16

Why should we long for heaven?

I. Heaven is where all God’s promises will ultimately be fulfilled (13a)

A. We do not receive all of God’s promises while here on earth
- John 11:25-26

B. We only glimpse the glories of heaven from a distance
- 1 Corinthians 2:9, 13:12

II. We are aliens and strangers here on earth (13b-16a)

A. We do not belong here
- Genesis 23:4; 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17

B. We can’t go back
- Genesis 24:1-4, 28:1-5

C. We can only look forward
- Mt 6:19-21; 1 Co 7:31; Phil 1:21; Col 3:2; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:4

III. Heaven is our true home (16b)

A. God is not ashamed to be called our God
- Exodus 3:6; Hebrews 2:11; Revelation 21:3

B. God has prepared a place for us
- John 14:1-3; Hebrews 11:10; Revelation 21:1-2

“Abraham (3): Unquestioning Obedience to God’s Commands”
Hebrews 11:17-19

I. Faith recognizes that God sometimes tests us (17a)

A. God never intended for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac
- Genesis 22:1-2

B. God tests us so that we may know what is in our heart
- 1 Peter 1:7

II. Faith obeys God even when we don’t understand (17b-18)

A. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his one and only son
- Hebrews 11:17

B. Isaac was the key to the fulfillment of God’s promises
- Hebrews 11:18

C. God calls us to obey even when we do not understand
- Proverbs 3:5; Isaiah 55:8-9

III. Faith trusts God to work out all the details (19)

A. Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead
- Genesis 22:5; Romans 4:17

B. Isaac is a figure or parable of Jesus
- Genesis 22:7-8; John 1:29, 3:16

“Isaac, Jacob, Joseph: Trusting God with the Future”
Hebrews 11:20-22

I. Isaac: Trusting God with your children’s future (20)

A. God chose Jacob over Esau before they were born
- Genesis 25:21-28

B. Isaac gives Esau’s blessing to Jacob
- Genesis 27:1-40

II. Jacob: Trusting God rather than trying to control people or events (21)

A. Jacob gives Manasse’s blessing to Ephraim
- Genesis 48:1-20

B. Jacob worshiped God as he leaned peacefully on his staff
- Genesis 47:28-31

III. Joseph: Trusting God to fulfill his larger purpose and plan for the world (22)

A. Joseph speaks about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt
- Genesis 15:13-16, 50:24

B. Joseph gives instructions concerning his bones
- Genesis 50:25

“Moses and His Parents: Fearing God Rather Than Man”
Hebrews 11:23,27-28

I. Do not obey commands that go against God (23)

- Exodus 1:17; Daniel 6:10; Acts 5:29

A. Moses' parents hid Moses because they saw that he was no ordinary child - Exodus 2:1-4

B. Moses' parents were not afraid of the king's edict

II. Do not fear the reaction of others when you seek God (27)

A. Moses left Egypt not fearing the king's anger
- Exodus 12:31-42

B. Moses persevered because he saw Him who is invisible

III. You will not suffer the same consequences as those who refuse God (28)

A. Moses kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood
- Exodus 12:21-28

B. Moses preserved the firstborn of Israel from the destroyer
- Exodus 12:29-30; Psalm 1:6

“The fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.” (Proverbs 29:25)

“Moses: Identifying with Christ and His People”
Hebrews 11:24-26

I. Faith refuses to identify with the world no matter what the world offers

- A. Faith refuses the temptation of worldly power and influence (24)
- Exodus 2:10; Acts 7:22

- B. Faith recognizes that the pleasures of sin are only for a season (25)
- Psalm 16:11; 1 Timothy 6:17

- C. Faith is not distracted by worldly riches or wealth (26)
- 1 Timothy 6:9-10

II. Faith chooses to identify with Christ and his people no matter what the consequences

- A. Faith willingly suffers persecution along with the people of God (25)
- John 15:19

- B. Faith regards disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than worldly riches (26)
- Matthew 5:11-12; Acts 9:4-5

Two primary ways to identify with Christ and his people:

- 1) Baptism = primary way you identify yourself with Christ

- 2) Church membership = primary way you identify yourself with Christ's people

“The Red Sea: Trusting in God’s Deliverance (1)”
Hebrews 11:29

God is our Deliverer: Psalm 3:8, 32:7, 34:7, 34:17-19, 91:15; Jeremiah 15:11; Matthew 6:13

I. The Red Sea: When you are trapped by circumstances, trust in God’s deliverance (29)

A. God can make a way where there is no way

- Exodus 14:13-21

B. The way God opens up for you will still require faith

- Exodus 14:22; Isaiah 43:2-3

C. Know the difference between faith and presumption

- Exodus 14:23-28

II. Jericho: When you face insurmountable obstacles, trust in God’s deliverance (30)

III. Rahab: When you have a sinful past, trust in God’s deliverance (31)

“Jericho and Rahab: Trusting in God’s Deliverance (2)”
Hebrews 11:30-31

I. The Red Sea: When you are trapped by circumstances, trust in God’s deliverance (29)

Note: 40-year gap: no examples of faith (Jude 5; Psalm 78:22)

II. Jericho: When you face insurmountable obstacles, trust in God’s deliverance (30)

- Joshua 6:1-21

A. God can remove any obstacle no matter how big

- Luke 18:27

B. Trust in God’s ways even when you do not understand them

- Joshua 6:20

C. Wait for God’s appointed time

- 1 Peter 4:19

III. Rahab: When you have a sinful past, trust in God’s deliverance (31)

- Joshua 2:1-21; 6:22-23

A. Don’t let a sinful past keep you from coming to God

- Luke 5:31-32

B. Know that God’s grace is greater than all your sin

- Matthew 1:5

“Old Testament Believers: Triumphant in Victory and in Suffering” Hebrews 11:32-38

“This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” (1 John 5:4)

I. Faith makes you triumphant in victory (32-35a)

A. Faith obtains the victory (32-33)

- Joshua 23:14; 2 Samuel 8:15; Hebrews 11:13, 39

B. Faith rescues from danger (33-34)

- Daniel 3:28, 6:21-22; 2 Peter 2:9

C. Faith turns weakness into strength (34-35)

- Judges 7:2; 1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37; 2 Cor 12:9

II. Faith makes you triumphant in suffering (35b-38)

A. Faith overcomes physical persecution (35-36)

- 1 Kings 22:24-28; Jeremiah 37:14-21; Hebrews 10:32-34

B. Faith overcomes execution and death (37)

- 2 Chron 24:20-22; Jer 26:20-23; Matthew 14:10, 23:37; Luke 11:50-51

C. Faith overcomes hardships of all kinds (37-38)

- Zechariah 13:4; Matthew 8:20

“New Testament Believers: Something Better for Us”
Hebrews 11:39-40

I. Old Testament believers were commended for their faith, yet they did not receive the promise (39)

- A. Old Testament believers were commended for their faith
- Hebrews 11:4-38

- B. Yet none of them lived to see the coming of Jesus the Messiah
- Hebrews 11:13,33,39

II. God planned something better for us in the New Testament (40a)

- A. Things are better now that Jesus has come
- Hebrews 1:4, 6:9, 7:19, 7:22, 8:6, 9:23, 10:34, 11:16, 11:35, 12:24

- B. The Old Testament believers longed for these better days
- 1 Peter 1:10-12

III. Old Testament believers are not complete without New Testament believers (40b)

- A. Old Testament faith looked forward to the time of Christ
- Hebrews 10:1

- B. New Testament faith rests on the finished work of Christ
- Romans 3:24, 4:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21

Applications:

- 1) We have a better revelation of God in Christ
- John 14:8-9; Hebrews 1:1-2

- 2) We have a better relationship with God through Christ
- John 14:23