

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

Sermon Notes for Message #9: The Overcoming Power of Faith (11:27-29) – Pastor Jeff

- The blessing of God's gift of supernatural faith cannot be overstated. It is able (*with the right focus on the right Person*) to enjoy the eternal blessing of salvation, to endure the troubles of pain & sorrow, to embrace the unbroken promises of God and to experience a fulfilling life that glorifies God.
- The power of faith is not about a "*what*", but about the "*Who*" we put our trust in. In our text, we are again reminded that faith is able to see what is most important with its special set of spiritual eyes, "*seeing Him who is unseen*" (v 27).
- With our confident trust in God, we learn from Moses and God's people three more ways our faith is able to overcome:

① Faith is able to conquer fear (11:27)

- Fear is a very common experience in life and a faith-debilitator. It is helpful to understand the three categories of fear:
 - **Healthy fear** is what God provided by common grace for self-preservation (fear dangerous, injurious things)
 - **Holy fear** ("*fear of God*" – 96x) is what God expects us as we worship and serve Him (Prov. 1:7; 12:27; Luke 12:5). It is a reverential awareness and awe that every thought, word and deed is laid bare before God who has authority over all and is able to evaluate our life and enforce a corresponding result, whether good or bad.
 - **Hazardous fears** that overinflate natural fears, undermine holy fears and lead to irrational, fruitless, and sinful fears (God repeatedly tells us "*do not fear*" 109x)
- By faith, Moses left Egypt (the second time with God's people in the exodus) "*not fearing the wrath of the king*". Pharaoh had threatened Moses with death (Ex. 10:28-29) Moses feared Pharaoh's threats so little because He feared God so much (1 Tim. 6:15-16).
- What can we learn from Moses about faith?
 - Faith will be tested (for Moses, it was "*the wrath of the king*") and this should be expected as we have cast our lot with God and became an enemy of Satan.
 - Faith will be energized to honor God (Moses stood before Pharaoh and boldly said, "*Thus say the Lord God of Israel, 'Let My people go...'*" (Ex. 5:1)
 - Faith is fueled by "*seeing Him who is unseen*". Keeping your eyes on the Lord is the key (v. 1: faith "*is the conviction of things not seen*")

② Faith is able to cancel God's judgment (Heb. 11:28)

- After the 10 plagues of Egypt, God gave Moses directives on how He wanted His people to observe the Passover (Ex. 12). The focus of the Passover was on the sacrifice of unblemished male lamb and putting its blood on the doorposts and lintels of each house to avoid the judgment of God by killing the firstborn male of each household. The Passover lamb points to Jesus Christ "*our Passover Lamb*" (1 Cor. 5:7) and He transformed the Passover meal into a commemoration of His sacrificial death for us (Lord's Supper).
- The Passover teaches us at least three things:

- God's eternal judgment threatens everyone as guilty sinners (Rom. 3:10, 23; Titus 3:3). God owes no one salvation because everyone (Egyptians, Israelites, all others) deserves hell (Jn 3:36)
- God provided a deliverance from sin and judgment through the blood of a substitute (Jesus Christ). The sacrifice of the Passover lamb covers our sin and averts God's judgment (Ex. 12:13; 1 John 2:2)
- God requires that His deliverance from sin be applied by faith (John 5:24). This is the only way to avert God's judgment and enjoy His gift of eternal life.

③ Faith is able to cope with overwhelming troubles (11:29)

- Now the focus is on the faith of God's people (Israel) as they were miraculously delivered through the parting of the Red Sea, yet there seems to be an inconsistent report about the reality of their faith (Heb. 3:8-12: evil & unbelieving; 1 Cor. 10:2, 5: *"with most of them God was not well-pleased"*).
- Not everyone who claims to believe has true faith (Jesus said will be wheat and tares in the kingdom)
 - The remnant of Israel always had true faith and this faith is generalized to cover the entire nation in the same way a shipload of unbelievers was delivered to safety by Paul's faith during a shipwreck (Acts 27)
 - The Red Sea deliverance was only a temporal earthly deliverance for the unbelievers, but a heavenly deliverance for those who believed which is also true of the wheat and tares (true and false believers in the church).
- What can we learn from this *"Red Sea"* deliverance?
 - Faith doesn't release us from all overwhelming troubles (God led His people into trials like hardening Pharaoh's heart which them to be chased by a mighty army and into a difficult wilderness)
 - Faith does connect us to God's incredible deliverances (paring of the Red Sea; daily provision of food and drink in the wilderness). God reminds us *"nothing is too difficult for Me"* (Jer. 32:17)