

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 12TH–13TH, 2025 // HEBREWS

## THE NATURE OF FAITH (HEBREWS 11:1–3)

### “FAITH IS THE REALITY...”

Faith (pistis): Not merely intellectual belief, but trust, reliance, loyalty, allegiance, and confidence in God and His promises.

- Reality/ Assurance/Substance (hypostasis): In classical Greek, it meant “that which stands under”—like a foundation. It carries the sense of something solid, concrete, or substantive. It is used elsewhere to describe the nature of being.

### “...OF WHAT IS HOPED FOR...”

Of what is hoped for (*elpizomenōn*): this is present tense, showing ongoing expectation. These are future realities not yet realized but confidently awaited.

- Faith is the confidence that gives real substance and reality to what we are waiting for—faith doesn't create reality; it grasps it. Faith is trust in the character and promises of God.

### “...THE PROOF OF WHAT IS NOT SEEN.”

Proof/evidence/conviction: refers to persuasive truth that brings clarity. It is an evidence that convinces and produces a verdict.

- Of things not being seen: things that are currently invisible; not imaginary things, but things that are not visible to us right now.

- Faith is the God-given ability to be persuaded of the reality of the unseen promises of God.

Many have twisted Hebrews 11:1 to make it say something like, “Faith is creating the reality of what YOU hope for and speaking into existence what YOU want to see.”

- Faith isn't creating (“naming and claiming”) what we hope for but trusting that what God has promised is already real in His perfect plan.

- It's not forcing the unseen to appear; it is trusting in the invisible truths already declared by God.

### “...BY [FAITH] OUR ANCESTORS WERE APPROVED...”

Faith is what enabled the heroes of the Old Testament to receive good standing with God and gain His approval.

- These characters were sinful, imperfect, and flawed, but their obedient trust, reliance, loyalty, and allegiance [FAITH] to God and His promises, despite their shortcomings, pleased God.

### “...THE UNIVERSE WAS CREATED BY THE WORD OF GOD.”

Faith is what enables us to understand a truth we cannot fully perceive through observation or science alone.

- Science and observation eventually lead us to an event that no human witnessed (the origin of the universe) but it takes faith to make sense of what caused all that we see to come into existence.

### “...WHAT IS SEEN WAS MADE FROM [THE INVISIBLE].”

Our observable universe has been intricately woven together, ordered, and masterfully formed.

- Faith is what enables us to understand that all that we can see must have been made by the One whom we cannot see.

- Creation came into being not through chance but by divine command—God's word.

Faith is not wishful thinking—it is confident trust in God's promises and power.

- God's promises and power, in some ways, might be unseen to us now in our physical world, but faith enables us to see them as reality.

- Faith is how we understand the observable world in its entirety, it is how we please God, and it is how every great life that has ever mattered began.

## HEROES OF THE FAITH (HEBREWS 11:4–31)

### FAITH WORSHIPS GOD RIGHTLY—ABEL (V. 4)

Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel, who offered sacrifices to God.

- Cain's was rejected, and Abel's was received. Abel was murdered because of this.
- What was the difference between the two sacrifices? One was offered in faith, the other wasn't. Faith empowers worship and sacrifice, and faith is not always rewarded on Earth.

### FAITH WALKS WITH GOD—ENOCH (V. 5)

Enoch is a mysterious figure in Gen. 5 who “walked with God; then he was not there because God took him.”

- Enoch lived in a way that pleased God. He had a close, intimate, relational, and obedient relationship with the unseen God.
- Enoch's faith so pleased God that Enoch did not experience death.

### FAITH PLEASES GOD (V. 6)

Real fellowship and friendship with God cannot exist apart from faith.

- To please God through faith, we must:
  - Have the deep conviction that God is real, even though we cannot see Him.
  - Believe that God rewards and will reveal Himself to anyone who is earnestly seeking Him.

### FAITH OBEYS GOD'S WARNINGS—NOAH (V. 7)

God warned Noah about something that had never happened before, and Noah responded in obedience out of godly fear.

- Real faith does something—Noah didn't just nod his head in agreement that the flood was going to come, he got busy and built an ark!
- Noah's example of obedience “condemned the world” that scoffed and mocked God.

### FAITH GOES TO THE UNKNOWN—ABRAHAM (VS. 8–12)

Abraham and his wife Sarah obeyed God's call to leave their home, trusting in God's promises of a land and descendants.

- Sarah was barren and Abraham was old, and yet they believed in God's promise to make them into a mighty nation! Even though Abe never saw complete fulfillment of this promise in his lifetime, he still followed and obeyed.
- Abraham's faith was passed down to his son Isaac and grandson Jacob.
- They left what was comfortable and familiar in the hope of something better from God.
- Abraham's faith in a “promised land” was really the promise of a heavenly home. Somehow, he knew that his real inheritance lay beyond this earthly realm (vs. 13–16).

### FAITH SEEKS A BETTER COUNTRY (VS. 13–16)

The promise of the Messiah was made to Abraham and Sarah, and they believed it, yet they died without ever having seen it.

- Still, they saw these promises from a distance and embraced them through faith.
- Their life on Earth was temporary, but they understood this world was not their home. They had a better place waiting for them.

### FAITH TRUSTS DESPITE UNCERTAINTY (VS. 17–22)

Abraham's obedience to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, Isaac's blessing to pass on God's promises to his sons, Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons and worship of God, and Joseph's prophesying of the Exodus all share something in common.

- They all show faith and trust in God's promises even when the fulfillment of them may seem uncertain or distant.

### FAITH EMBRACES SUFFERING—MOSES (VS. 24–27)

By faith, Moses' parents perceived that Moses was chosen by God and took measures to save his life.

- By faith, Moses chose to identify with the people of God, rejecting Egypt's wealth and power. Moses embraced suffering for the sake of a greater reward from God.
- By faith, Moses feared God more than Pharaoh.

### FAITH OBEYS GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS (VS. 28–30)

Moses showed his faith by obeying God's instruction to put the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorpost of each house.

- It took faith for Israel to believe that God was going to split the Red Sea for them. It was their faith that saved them, not their courage.
- Israel showed faith in obeying God's instructions for how to take the city of Jericho.

### FAITH ACTS COURAGEOUSLY—RAHAB (V. 31)

“Rahab the prostitute” is an unusual character in the hall of faith yet she demonstrated her faith in God by her courage to identify with Yahweh as part of His covenant people (Joshua 2:11).

- When you feel unworthy, dirty, and like you have failed one too many times for God to ever want you or want to receive you into His people, remember the faith of Rahab.

## OVERCOMING AND ENDURING (HEBREWS 11:32–40)

### FAITH OVERCOMES OBSTACLES (VS. 32–35A)

Throughout the times of the judges (Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah), the prophets (Samuel), and the kings of Israel (David), the heroes of God's people were those who lived by faith.

- By their trust in God, some were victorious over extraordinary circumstances (vs. 33–35a)!
- Nothing is impossible for God.

### FAITH ENDURES SUFFERING (VS. 35B–38)

While some heroes overcame their circumstances by their faith, others were able to endure their circumstances by their faith.

- Faith enabled some of God's people to endure torture, mockery, scourging, imprisonment, stoning, being sawed in two, death by the sword, poverty, obscurity, and exile.
- Faith in God's promises gave them endurance.

Sometimes God gives us victory over our circumstances and changes our situation when it looks hopeless and impossible.

- Other times, God gives us strength, peace, and endurance to keep going during trials that seem unbearable.
- Faith is what is needed for both! In our lives, God knows what He's doing, and His plan for us can always be trusted.

### SOMETHING BETTER IN CHRIST (VS. 39–40)

These heroes of the Jewish people were approved by God for their faith, but they all died without having received the promise of the Messiah and the new covenant.

- God has provided something better for us. We have seen and can now experience the benefit of the new covenant because of the work of Jesus on our behalf!
- The Old Testament saints needed the finishing and perfecting work of Christ's sacrifice. Their faith looked forward to the Messiah's work.
- Our faith looks back to the work of Jesus on the cross. We were not there when it happened, but by faith, we see it and take hold of all that God has promised for us because of it.

### FAITH IS NOT PASSIVE—IT IS A LIFESTYLE.

- Faith worships and empowers sacrifice (v. 4)
- Faith walks with God and seeks Him (vs. 5–6)
- Faith listens to God and His warnings (v. 7)
- Faith follows into the unknown (vs. 8–12)
- Faith seeks a better country (vs. 13–16)
- Faith trusts despite uncertainty (vs. 17–22)
- Faith embraces suffering (vs. 24–27)
- Faith obeys God's instructions (vs. 29–31)

## TRUST, RELIANCE, LOYALTY, ALLEGIANCE, CONFIDENCE

- It is impossible to please God and live for Him without trusting Him and His promises.

### GOD'S PROMISES FOR HIS PEOPLE:

- Salvation, Eternal Life, and the Kingdom of Heaven
- Provision, Guidance, and Providence
- Love and Faithfulness
- Peace, Comfort, and Strength
- Blessings and Reward for Obedience

## THE OBJECT OF OUR FAITH MATTERS

- It is not the size of our faith that matters (Matt. 17:20). It is the size and power of the object of our faith that is important.
- Do you trust God? Is that trust visible through the life you are living?
- Do you believe that His promises and plans are trustworthy? God knows what He is doing, and His plan for us can always be trusted.