

~Hebrews~

Lesson 31 – The Courage of Faith (part 1)

Anyone who has a relationship with Jesus has that relationship based on faith

- Faith is the avenue, the connecting point to God and His Grace

In chapter 11, we started all the way back in Genesis with Abel, Enoch, Noah, the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and last week we finished discussing the faith of Moses.

- This study so far has taken us through the Pentateuch
 - And now today this brings us into Joshua

It is critically important to Paul, the writer of Hebrews, to convey to these Hebrew Christians, to whom this epistle was written to, that:

- Eternal Salvation, namely righteousness, or like we have said previously, the Promise of the Resurrection unto Eternal Life, is apprehended by faith alone
 - not by the works of the Law.
- The Jews in the first century were being persuaded to fall back under the Law and reject Jesus as the Christ
 - Judaism, especially in the first century, had developed into an earning of your salvation by the works of the Law, and ceremony and ritual, and not by faith
- The New Covenant in Jesus is a fulfillment of the Old Covenant and is a **better covenant**, Heb 7:22, **a better hope**, Heb 7:19, **established on better promises**, Heb 8:6.

Ephesians 2:8-9 ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Romans 3:20 ...by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified...

- Because of Jesus, we have a New Covenant in Him
 - But the concept of righteousness by faith is not new
 - God established this connecting agent to righteousness and grace from the foundation of the world

We now come to the next section in chapter 11 that demonstrates the courage of faith.

- I believe Paul ends this discourse on faith with the courage of faith to give the Hebrew Christians hope for a future with Jesus.
 - The Hebrew Christians were suffering tremendous persecution in which Paul gives them these encouraging examples of faith to persevere.
 - The courage of faith will endure to the end, even if that end is death
 - The next six verses give us some outstanding feats of faith of those who were victorious in this life.
 - The final verses in chapter 11 show the courage of faith in the face of persecution being victorious in death.
 - Whether death or life, we have the victory in Christ,
 - and these martyrs not relenting their faith, are victorious into everlasting life.
- This section, spanning 10 verses over two weeks, will take us to the end of the chapter.
- Today we will focus on the next three verses, namely Hebrews 11:30-32

Hebrews 11:30-32

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

³¹ By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

After Moses and the children of Israel pass through the Red Sea, God gives Moses the Law and begins establishing His chosen people.

- One year later, Num 10:11, Moses sends 12 spies to Jericho to spy out the land of Promise, Num 13, because they are getting ready to enter in.
 - Only two men, Joshua and Caleb, come back in faith saying, “*He will bring us into this land and give it to us*”, Num 14:6-9.
 - The other ten come back afraid saying there was giants in the land, Num 13:31-33
 - Remember, Joshua and Caleb were the only men from the original Exodus generation that were allowed to enter into the Promised Land.
- Notice that there is a 40 year gap between v. 29 and v. 30.
 - v.29 ends with the parting of the Red Sea and v.30 begins with entering into the Promise Land
- Why is there a gap? Because of unbelief

Hebrews 3:16-19

¹⁶ ...Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? ¹⁷ Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Our text in Hebrews picks up after Moses death with Joshua leading the children of Israel into the Promised Land and the battle of Jericho.

Jericho and Rahab

Hebrews 11:30-31

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

³¹ By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

Moses dies at the age of 120, and Joshua takes over as leader of the Israelites, Josh 1:1-9

Joshua 1:8-9

⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

- Joshua sends two spies into Jericho, Josh 2:1
 - These spies are really more like witnesses, because all we see them do is go to Rahab’s house, agree to save her from the coming destruction and then head back.
- It is here that we see Rahab’s faith.

- Jericho is on lock down because they are terrified of the children of Israel, Josh 6:1
 - Rehab, because of her occupation as being a harlot, is out of her house.
- God brings the spies to Rehab
- Word gets out to the king of Jericho that the spies from Israel have infiltrated the country
- Rahab hides the spies and sends the soldiers another direction
- Rehab believes God is the One True God and asks for her and her household to be saved

Joshua 2:8-13

⁸ Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, ⁹ and said to the men:

“I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.

¹⁰ For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.

¹¹ And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

¹² Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father’s house, and give me a true token, ¹³ and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.”

- This is the saving faith of Rahab and we see the courage of her faith
 - She was willing to risk it all, forsake all she had and choose God, even if it meant getting caught by the king of Jericho.

Joshua 6:25 And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

- This is such a beautiful example of the grace of God.
 - Even though Rahab was a pagan, Canaanite, prostitute, she believed God and God saved her.
 - And not only did he save her, but she also became the mother of Boaz, the great-great grandmother of king David and was named in the Messianic line, Matt 1:5-6
- After meeting Rahab, the spies return from Jericho with a good report, unlike the original spies sent by Moses 40 years ago, Num 13.

Joshua 2:24 And they said to Joshua, “Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.”

- On the 10th of Nisan, Josh 4:19, the children of Israel cross the Jordan on dry ground, Josh 3:17, and Joshua is exalted in the sight of all Israel, Josh 4:14
 - Type of Jesus’ triumphal entry
- The kings of the Amorites and the kings of the Canaanites heard of Israel crossing the Jordan and “*their hearts melted, and there was no spirit in them any longer*”, Josh 5:1.
- On the 14th of Nisan Israel keeps the Passover and camps in Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, Josh 5:10^{map 2}

- It is at this point that the manna from heaven stops because they had entered the promised land, Josh 5:12
- Jesus visits Joshua as the commander of the army of the Lord, Josh 5:13-15
 - Jesus gives him battle instructions to defeat Jericho, Josh 6:1-5
 - Circle the city once per day for six days in complete silence except for the seven priests blowing ram's horns going before the ark of the Lord.
 - The armed men of war would go before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard coming up after the ark, while the priests continue blowing the trumpets, Josh 6:3-11
 - Do this for six days and on the seventh day circle the city seven times and after the seventh lap around the city, shout with a great shout and the walls of the city will fall flat, Josh 6:3-22

Joshua 6:20-25

20 So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat.

Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.
21 And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

23 And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel.

24 But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

25 And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

The examples of Joshua and the harlot Rahab are displays courageous faith in times of distress.

- Having faith in the One True God and in His promise

Hebrews 11:32

³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets;

Paul is coming to a close with his discussion on the exploits of faith with the Old Testament heroes and he wraps up by listing six names; Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel and the prophets.

- This list is encompassing three categories; the Judges, the Kings, and the Prophets.
 - Within these six people, four are Judges, David represents the Kings, and Samuel represents the Prophets.
- The commonality that all six men have is they all trust God and have outstanding courageous faith in times of distress and war.
- God uses every one of these men to provide for the coming Messiah, the Promise of the Seed leading ultimately unto Resurrection and Eternal Life.
 - God's focus in this redemption plan is on Jesus and He used these men to fulfill His plan
 - This is Paul's main reason for listing these six men and the prophets.
- All these men were sent to deliver Israel out of the hand of the enemy with courageous faith with the purpose of protecting the seed of the Messiah.

- The Old Testament ushered in the Messiah physically into this earth and foretold of His everlasting kingdom
 - He made a covenant promise that through the Seed all nations would be blessed
 - This was the physical lineage of Abraham and the “the Seed” who is Jesus
 - God had to send deliverers to Israel and redeem them from their enemies to keep them on track to the Messiah.
 - But He only did this after the children of Israel would cry out to him, 1 Sam 12:10
 - Proving there is still free will among men, but God’s Providential hand had to be in place to bring the promise of the Messiah into fruition.
- These six were men with humble beginnings, and even outcasts in some cases.
 - Gideon was from the weakest clan and he was the least in his house, Judges 6:15
 - Barak is hardly known except for two chapters in Judges 4 and 5
 - Jephthah was the son of a harlot and rejected by his brothers, Judges 11:1-2.
 - David was the least in his family of the sons of Jesse, 1 Samuel 16:6-13
 - But this shouldn’t be a surprise
 - God glories in weakness to show His might

1 Corinthians 1:27

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

It is interesting to note that Paul chooses four of these men from the same list as 1 Samuel 12:11

1 Samuel 12:11

And the LORD sent Jerubbaal (Gideon), Bedan (Barak LXX), Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you dwelt in safety.

Let’s quickly go through these six men with this thought in mind.

- We have the same problem as Paul- “for time would fail us to talk about all these in depth”

Gideon

Gideon’s story is found in Judges 6:11 – 8:35

- Even though Gideon was of low esteem in the world’s eyes, God called him a “*mighty man of valor*”, Judges 6:12.
 - The children of Israel were living in dens and caves in the mountains being oppressed by the Midianites and the Amorites, Judges 6:1-6
- God called Gideon to fight the Midianites saying, “*You shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites*”, Judges 6:14
 - This is the Word of God that the courage of faith rose out of

By faith Gideon tore down the alter of Baal and built an alter to the Lord, Judges 6:25-26

- Gideon rallied 32,000 men to fight with him against the Midianites, but God said that was too much and paired it down several times until there were only 300 men remaining, Judges 7:1-7
 - These 300 were chosen, not by their might or strength, but by how they drank water, Judges 7:5-6
 - God wanted it to be clear that it was by His hand they won the battle, Judges 7:2
 - Gideon divided the 300 into three companies of 100 and armed them with a trumpet, empty pitchers, and a torches inside the pitchers, Judges 7:16

- They encircled the camp of the Midianites who were like the sand by the seashore, Judges 7:12, 120,000 men, Judges 8:10
 - Gideon's army of 300 blew their trumpets and smashed the pitchers and shouted, and ran after the enemy, Judges 7:21
 - The Midianites turned on another and started to kill themselves, Judges 7:22
 - Gideon captured and killed the kings of Midian, Judges 8:21
 - Afterward, Israel had peace for 40 years in the time of Gideon, Judges 8:28

Barak

The story of Barak is found in Judges chapters 4 and 5

- We don't know much about Barak other than these two chapters in Judges and one verse in 1 Sam 12:11 that we mentioned earlier.

Barak is called into action by Deborah, the prophetess, Judges 4:6-7.

- He is called to serve God and be the leader of 10,000 men against Jabin, king of Canaan, and Sisera, the commander of the army of Canaan.
- Barak wasn't too proud to be led by a woman.
 - In fact, he wouldn't even go into battle unless Deborah went with him
 - He was willing to humble himself and give the glory to God and Deborah, Judges 4:9

Judges 4:14

Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.

- Deborah and Barak defeat the army of Sisera, Judges 4:16
- Sisera runs away on foot and is lured into a tent by Jael, Judges 4:18
 - When Sisera lies down, Jael drives a tent peg into his temple on into the ground, Judges 4:21
- And the land had peace for 40 years, Judges 5:31

Samson

There is much to say about Samson. His story spans chapters 13 through 16 of Judges.

- Samson was a Judge of Israel for 20 years, Judges 15:20, sent to begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines, Judges 13:5
- He was a Nazarite given extraordinary strength by the power of God.
- Samson never wavered in courageous faith, even in the face of death, and more importantly he had faith to his death, Judges 16:30.
 - He always trusted God that God would give him strength.
- Many people think it was against God's will that he married a Philistine woman, but we find it was of the Lord, a plan to infiltrate the Philistines, Judges 14:4.
 - However, Samson gets caught up too far with other women and Delilah especially and his flesh overtakes him.
- Some of his exploits of faith were:
 - Killed a lion with his bare hands, Judges 14:6
 - Killed 30 Philistines and took their clothes to settle a debt, Judges 14:19
 - Caught 300 foxes and tied them together with a torch in between and set the fields of the Philistines on fire, Judges 15:3-5
 - Attacked the Philistines with a great slaughter, Judges 15:8

- Killed 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey, Judges 15:15
- God split the hollow place of a rock and gave him water, Judges 15:19
- He carried the city gates and door posts up to the top of the mountain, Judges 16:1-3
- Samson's final exploit was after being captured at the hand of Delilah and his head shaved, losing his strength and having his eyes plucked out, Judges 16:19-21, he is brought out as entertainment to Dagon, their god, Judges 16:23
 - The Philistines ridicule Samson in front of the crowd, Judges 16:25
 - They positioned him between two pillars that held up the temple.
 - Samson cries out to God to strengthen him one more time and Samson pushes down the pillars and collapses the temple. Killing more Philistines at one time than he had killed in his entire 20 years, Judges 16:25-31

Jephthah

Jephthah was an interesting man and quite frankly this is not one of my favorite stories in the Bible namely because of his vow he gives to God and the impending result.

- Jephthah's story is found in Judges 11:1 – 12:7
- Jephthah trusts in God and overcomes extraordinary odds.
 - He was the son of a harlot, was thrown out of his house and banded together with worthless men, Judges 11:1-3
 - Then the land of Gilead becomes oppressed by the Ammonites and the elders of Gilead ask Jephthah to fight for them again because he was a mighty man of valor, Judges 11:1, 4-6
 - Jephthah agrees and becomes their leader, Judges 11:9, judging Israel for six years, Judges 12:7
 - The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah and he won the battle over the Ammonites, over 20 cities, with a “*very great slaughter*”, Judges 11:29-33
- Jephthah makes a stupid vow to God, and as John Calvin states, “*becoming stubborn enough to perform it, cruelly spoiled a splendid victory.*”
 - However, Jephthah had courageous faith in God that lead to a tremendous victory

David

David, *a man after God's own heart*, 1 Sam 13:14, has too many exploits to mention in this brief account.

- David was the least of his brothers, but the chosen man of God to be king, 1 Sam 16:1-13
- David was king over Israel for 40 years, 1 Kings 2:11
- A mighty man of valor who conquered by faith, 1 Sam 16:18
- A prophet of God foretelling of the Messiah, Ps 22, 88, 16:10, 2:7, 89:26-27, 45:6-7, 102:25-27, 110
- Out of anyone in the Old Testament, David had the best grasp of the New Covenant to come and a personal love and trust of God, Ps 1, 4, 25, 91...
 - He understood what it means to have a relationship with God, putting his entire hope in Him
- David had a heart for God.
 - When Samuel anointed David as king, the Lord said to Samuel, “*...For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*”, 1 Sam 16:7

David had many, many exploits of faith and David's victory over Goliath is an excellent display of his courageous faith.

1 Samuel 17:45-46 ⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine, ... ⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you ... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

It was in this courageous faith of David that God is signifying the reign of Christ

Isaiah 55:3-4

³ Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David. ⁴ Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, A leader and commander for the people.

David was chosen by God, that in him the Messiah would come forth

2 Samuel 7:12-14

¹² “... I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his Father, and he shall be My son...

Samuel and the Prophets

Samuel's story can be found from 1 Samuel chapters 1 through 25

- Samuel was the last of the Judges and the first Prophet, not counting Moses, 1 Sam 7:6, 15-17, 3:20
- Samuel wrote several books of the Old Testament- Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, and parts of 2 Samuel
- Samuel was dedicated to God at birth and grew to be a courageous leader of Israel.
- He had courageous faith to honor God's word and confront king Saul by keeping him in line 1 Sam 13:11-14
 - Samuel put Saul in his place when Saul didn't kill king Agag, 1 Sam 15:10-33

The Prophets were God's mouthpiece to usher in the Messiah and His eternal Kingdom

The Prophets as a whole had courageous faith to proclaim the Word of the Lord in which many of them were killed and hated.

Matthew 23:29-37

²⁹ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ... ³⁰ and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’ ³¹ “Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets...

³⁴ Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, ³⁵ that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

... ³⁷ “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! ...

Just as these courageous men and women, Joshua, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the Prophets, followed God's word, so we must be courageous looking to the hope of Jesus, the Messiah.

We now can be the light to the world and become victorious in life and death.