

Hebrews 11:32-40

REVIEW...

- Having seen us Jesus is BETTER than EVERYONE and EVERYTHING...
 - The author declared – the JUST shall LIVE by FAITH – **Habakkuk 2:4**
 - The HALL of FAITH – EXAMPLES that PROVE to us what it means to WALK by FAITH!
- FAITH like...
 - FAITH like Abel - to offer a BETTER sacrifice to God out of a PURE heart...
 - FAITH like Enoch – to PLEASE God – by believing He rewards those who diligently seek Him...
 - FAITH like Noah – ENDURED mocking by the world – but did what God told him to!
 - FAITH like Abraham – who OBEYED when God called – and when he was TESTED...
 - FAITH like Sarah – who received STRENGTH – believing God could do the IMPOSSIBLE...
 - FAITH like Isaac – who PROPHESED – because he could see even when he was blind...
 - FAITH like Jacob – who BLESSED – knowing the WORD is the opposite of the WORLD...
 - FAITH like Joseph – who ENCOURAGED – pointing people back to the Word of God!
 - FAITH like Amram and Jochebed – who believed God had a PLAN for their baby boy...
 - FAITH like Moses – who rejected the pleasures of this world – looking for a BETTER reward...
 - FAITH like Israel – who did NOT fear – but walked through the midst of the Red Sea...
 - FAITH like Joshua – who believed God could BRING DOWN the walls of Jericho...
 - FAITH like Rahab – whose past was forgiven – and got a NEW start!

RESULT OF FAITH... (3 POINTS)

- 1ST – JUDGES – KINGS – AND PROPHETS... VS. 32
 - A LOT more FAITH...
 - What more shall I say - for the TIME would FAIL me...
 - The Author has given us THIRTEEN examples of walking by FAITH...
 - A history lesson that has taken us from the book of Genesis through Joshua...
 - And he desired to KEEP going – there were still a LOT more example of FAITH...
 - So MANY he would run out of TIME before he could get to the END of the list!
 - He does throw in SIX final names – without any description of their FAITH...
 - These men represent the HISTORY of Israel in in the Promised Land...
 - They are a SHORT list of the Judges – Kings – and Prophets of Israel...
 - The list is unexpected – because of WHO is in it – and who is NOT!
 - 1ST – By FAITH – Gideon LED an ARMY...
 - After Joshua - a new generation rose that did not know the Lord...
 - The children and grandchildren of those who had come in the Promised Land...
 - Their parents did not pass to them their relationship with God...
 - Instead they left them in a Land littered with temptations / godless people...
 - As a result they turned their back on God - and followed after the world...
 - So in His anger God turned on Israel - and their enemies defeated them!
 - God did not abandon Israel - instead He gave them JUDGES...
 - The JUDGES were not someone who sat in a courtroom - upholding the rules of MEN...
 - JUDGES were the rulers / leaders of Israel - raised up by God to uphold HIS Law!
 - Israel had no need of a King - because God was the one and only King of Israel!
 - Israel would sin - be conquered – and call out for help...
 - God would raise up a JUDGE to save them - and they would return to the Lord...
 - But it did not last - after a period of time - they would rebel again...
 - This CYCLE is repeated over and over – TWELVE times in the book of Judges!

- The FIFTH judge of Israel - **Judges 6-7**
 - **Judges 6:12** - “The angel appeared to [Gideon] and said - Mighty hero the LORD is with you!”
 - Gideon was NOT a mighty hero – he was HIDING in a pit!
 - When God said he was chosen – Gideon demanded PROOF – tested the Lord with a fleece!
 - But when he stepped out in FAITH – THIRTY thousand men came to fight with him...
 - God made him twiddle that number down to just THREE hundred...
 - Gideon took those THREE hundred - and defeated a foe numbering 135k!
 - We assume we are just ONE person - what can we do make a difference...
 - God does not need an army – He is just looking for ONE who is willing answer the call...
 - All it takes is ONE being willing to WALK by FAITH – to make a difference!
 - **Romans 8:31** – “If God is for us, who can be against us?”
- o 2nd – By FAITH – Barak asked for HELP...
 - The FOURTH judge of Israel - **Judges 4-5**
 - Barak was NOT a JUDGE – Deborah was the JUDGE of Israel – **Judges 4:4**
 - She commanded Barak to lead an army to defeat Sisera [general of King Jabin of Canaan]!
 - **Judges 4:8** – “Barak said to her - If you will go with me - then I will go; but if you will not go with me - I will not go!”
 - Deborah agreed to go along with him - but a woman would end up defeating Sisera...
 - This has often been seen as a rebuke - as if Barak were wrong for asking...
 - But Deborah was a PROPHET - Barak by FAITH he was willing to ask her for help!
 - I know a lot of husbands who make decisions WITHOUT consulting their wives...
 - Yet God has given great INSIGHT to women - and we would be SMART to ask for it...
 - Men tend to see very well down the road - but MISS what is right in front of them!
 - Wives miss NOTHING- and a wise husband has FAITH to know when to ask for HELP!
- o 3rd – By FAITH – Sampson was STRONG...
 - The TWELFTH judge of Israel – **Judges 13-16**
 - Sampson was chosen from God before birth to be a JUDGE of Israel...
 - He had to abide by THREE rules – no drinking / no touching death things / no cutting hair...
 - The result was he was exceptionally STRONG!
 - Do not think of Sampson as a muscle covered body builder...
 - The Philistines could NOT figure out the source of his strength – **Judges 16:5**
 - Sampson was likely a scrawny little Jewish kid – but EMPOWERED by the Spirit of God!
 - Sampson had limited effectiveness as a JUDGE...
 - He NEVER led Israel to any victories - NEVER once asked God how to use his STRENGTH...
 - Even in his death - he only thought of himself - desiring personal REVENGE...
 - He left behind NO children - and a nation STILL oppressed by the Philistines!
 - Which makes it all the more amazing to see him HERE...
 - God did not see what Sampson did - He saw his FAITH...
 - The greatest men in the Bible – were GREAT for what they DID - but what they believed!
 - God is not after what we can do for Him - He wants us to know Him...
 - Through faith in Jesus - like Sampson - we become the great men / women of God!
- o 4th – By FAITH – Jephthah made a VOW...
 - The EIGHTH judge of Israel...
 - Jephthah had a rough childhood - an illegitimate son of a prostitute...
 - His brother resented him - refused to share their inheritance - and drove him out!
 - By he was the ONLY one willing to step up and save Israel from the Ammonites...
 - By FAITH He made a vow to the Lord before he went into battle – **Judges 11:30-31**
 - If God gave him victory - the first thing out of his house - he would offer as a burnt offering!
 - When he returned home - his only daughter ran out dancing to greet him...

- Jephthah tore his clothes in sorrow - I made a VOW I cannot break - **Numbers 30:2**
- What happened to the daughter is NOT clear - there are two opinions...
- Jephthah never let her get married - so she was dedicated to the serve of the Lord!
- Jephthah offered her as a burnt sacrifice - though God certainly did NOT condone it!
- God openly condemned the pagan practice of child sacrifice - **Deuteronomy 18**
- If a FATHER hears a VOW and does not agree - HE can negate the vow - **Numbers 30:5**
- If we make a VOW contrary to the Word of God - He does not hold us to our VOW!
- Too often people speak - then take the time to think about what they said...
- Better to think first about what we are going to say - the consequence of our words...
- Then have to take back quick words - promises we are wish we had not made!
- **Proverbs 13:3** - "Those who speak rashly will come to ruin." [NIV]

o 5th - By FAITH – David KILLED a giant...

- The SECOND King of Israel...
 - David is mentioned in over ONE THOUSAND verses in TWENTY-EIGHT books of the Bible!
 - But if there is ONE story that emphasizes WALKING by FAITH – it is Goliath!
- Goliath – was THREE meters tall – a descendant of Anak [Nephilim] - **Numbers 13:33**
 - Nephilim – the result of the marriage of demons and women - **Genesis 6:4**
 - Goliath had bronze armor that weighed more than 57kg...
 - The armor covered his body – from head to toe he was protected from attack...
 - His spear was like a beam – the iron tip weighed almost 7kg...
 - All of Israel was TERRIFIED to face him – EXCEPT one young shepherd boy!
- When Goliath saw David – he MOCKED...
 - Goliath could only SEE David – but by FAITH – David could SEE the Lord!
 - David answered – you come with sword and spear - I come in the name of the Lord!
 - And this day the Lord will defeat you – and I will cut your head off...
 - Because the battle belongs to the Lord – and He gives the victory – **I Samuel 17:45-47**
 - Too often we get caught up in our problems - and we forget the power of our God!
 - NO circumstance is too difficult – NO Giant too powerful – NOTHING is impossible...
 - The creator of heaven and earth - God almighty - can handle ANY problem we have!
 - We may see a CHALLENGE - God sees the OPPORTUNITY to show His power!
 - As we remember who is with us – by FAITH we realize big Giants are no match for us!

o 6th – By FAITH – Samuel HEARD the Lord...

- Samuel and the PROPHETS...
 - Samuel here is lumped in with ALL of PROPHETS of Israel...
 - That list would include Elisha – Jeremiah – Daniel – Jonah – through to Malachi!
 - The purpose of the PROPHET was to PROCLAIM the Word of God to the people!
 - **I Samuel 3:1** – "The word of the LORD was rare in THOSE DAYS..."
- By FAITH – Samuel heard and shared the Word of God...
 - When he was still a young boy – sleeping in the Tabernacle – God called his name...
 - **I Samuel 3:10** – "Samuel! Samuel! And Samuel answered - Speak for Your servant hears."
 - The days of Samuel are just like TODAY – a Word from the Lord is RARE...
 - God still wants to SPEAK to His people – but the question is who is LISTENING...
 - From the moment we get up – to the moment we go to bed we are busy...
 - We tend to be so BUSY in life we RARELY have a moment to LISTEN to the Lord...
 - We wonder why God is SILENT - He is not SILENT – by FAITH we just need to LISTEN!

● 2ND – Two RESULTS... vs. 33-38

o 1st – VICTORY by FAITH... vs. 33-35

- The author now changes tactics – rather than giving people as EXAMPLE of FAITH...
 - He gives us STORIES that display what happens to those who WALK by FAITH...
 - TWO kinds of STORIES – one that end in VICTORY / the other that seem to end in DEFEAT!
- Through FAITH - [10 EXAMPLES]
 - Subdued kingdoms / Worked righteousness / Obtained promises!
 - The first three EXAMPLES are more generic – and could refer to any number of STORIES...
 - SUBDUED – to resist or stand up against – KINGDOMS – wicked government...
 - By doing so they brought back RIGHTEOUSNESS – and the PROMISES of God!
 - Stopped the mouths of lions – the prophet Daniel - **Daniel 6**
 - Quenched the violence of fire – Hananiah / Mishael / and Azariah – **Daniel 3**
 - Women received their dead raised to life again – the prophet Elisha – **I Kings 17:23**
 - Escaped the edge of the sword / Out of weakness were made strong...
 - Became valiant in battle / Turned to flight the armies of the [invaders]!
 - These four EXAMPLES are also generic – could refer to any number of STORIES...
 - But there is a PROGRESSION – FIRST - they FLED from the sword [they were defeated] ...
 - But in their DEFEAT [weakness] – they were made strong [turned to the Lord] ...
 - Then they became MIGHTY in the battle – and in turn their enemies FLED!
- This LIST makes you want to stand up and CHEER...
 - It is like the rising crescendo of powerful symphony – urging us to shout for Joy!
 - Walking by FAITH is AMAZING – we can topple wicked governments...
 - Stop the mouth of THE lion [satan] – rescue people from THE fire [hell] ...
 - By faith we can bring the DEAD back to LIFE – all through Jesus!
 - Not because of OUR power – we would turn and run if we ONLY had our strength...
 - But when we WALK by FAITH – and find TRUE power...
 - When we depend on the POWER of God – our ENEMIES are the ones who RUN!
 - **II Corinthians 12:9** – “My grace is sufficient... for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”
- o 2nd – DEFEAT by FAITH... vs. 35-39
 - Through FAITH...
 - Others were tortured - not accepting deliverance - they might obtain a better resurrection...
 - TORTURED – only here NT – [tympanum] wheel used to stretch and dismember victims...
 - REFUSING to be delivered – presumably by denying God...
 - Instead choosing to DIE by FAITH – hoping for the RESURRECTION!
 - As exciting as the FIRST list was – the SECOND is even more sobering!
 - Still others [heteros] had trial of mockings and scourgings – chains and imprisonment!
 - They were stoned – Zechariah [son of Jehoiada the priest] – **II Chronicles 24:20-21**
 - They were sawn in two [long ways] – tradition says Manasseh did this to the prophet Isaiah!
 - Were tempted / were slain with the sword!
 - During the reign of King Ahab – wicked Jezebel slaughtered the prophets – **I Kings 18:4**
 - To the point where Elisha claims to be the ONLY prophet of God left – **I Kings 19:4**
 - It would have been a REAL temptation – to deny God – and LIVE!
 - They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins - Elisha wore goatskin– **II Kings 1:8**
 - Being destitute / afflicted / tormented – all of these are in the PRESENT tense!
 - They wandered in deserts and mountains - in dens and caves of the earth!
 - After defeating the 450 prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel – Elisha RAN for his life!
 - **I Kings 19:2** – “Jezebel sent this message to Elijah - May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you...” [NLT]
 - A VERY different list...
 - We look at these TWO very DIFFERENT lists – one full of VICTORY and the other DEFEAT...
 - And it is natural to question if BOTH could be the result of WALKING by FAITH!

- But LIVING for Jesus is NOT a guarantee of VICTORY in THIS life – **John 16:33**
- WALKING by FAITH can just as easily COST us our life!
- We often FORGET that of the TWELVE apostles – only ONE did not die a violent death...
- John only lived to be an old man – because he did NOT die when they tried to BOIL him alive!
- Of whom the world was not [imperfect] worthy...
 - Do NOT miss this one comment – the world was NOT worthy of these men!
 - When Steven was stoned to death after confronting the Jews – **Acts 7:56**
 - They were CUT to the heart – and rushed at him to STONE him to death!
 - He looked up and saw Jesus – STANDING at the right hand of the Father in heaven...
 - Jesus does not STAND at the right hand – He sits – **Colossian 3:1 / Hebrews 8:1**
 - Here and here ONLY do we see Jesus standing in Heaven...
 - Jesus stood because He was PROUD of His son – He was cheering him as he came home!
 - WALKING by FAITH can have TWO very different results – VICTORY or DEFEAT [in this life]
 - But no matter the outcome – we NEVER lose – because the WORLD is not worthy...
 - Those who WALK by FAITH will one day get to hear – well done good and faithful servant...
 - Not because of what we did for the Lord – but because of what Jesus did for us...
 - And every hardship - sorrow in this life will have been worth it – because we are home!
- 3RD – CONCLUSION OF FAITH... vs. 39-40
 - o 1st – Good Testimony... vs. 39
 - All these [EXAMPLES] having obtained a good TESTIMONY [μαρτυρέω] through FAITH...
 - TESTIMONY [aorist / passive] – where we get the word MARTYR...
 - ALL of these men and women had a TESTIMONY – because they WALKED by FAITH...
 - They did not EARN their TESTIMONY – it was GIVEN [passive] to them...
 - And they got it at the end of their lives [aorist] – having finished their RACE!
 - What kind of TESTIMONY do we want our lives to have...
 - How much MONEY we made – how many THINGS we owned...
 - None of these things hold up in the light of ETERNITY!
 - Everything in this life will pass – only what we do for Christ will LAST!
 - We RECEIVE a good TESTIMONY – when we WALK by FAITH!
 - o 2nd – Perfection... vs. 40
 - [They] did not receive the promise [they looked forward to the CROSS] ...
 - God having provided something better for us [we look back at the CROSS] ...
 - That they should not be made perfect apart from us!
 - Because we ALL – OT believers – NT believers – and us today...
 - Are made PERFECT [complete] the same way - by FAITH in finished work of the CROSS!