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 PROPHESIED – 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 to 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**
  - 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!
  - 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!