

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Hebrews 11

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through the book Hebrews

A letter that was written to a group of Jewish believers that were struggling in their walk

–

They were seriously contemplating going back to Judaism.

So the writer of Hebrews has made the biblical argument why they should go back to Judaism – because Jesus is greater than anything they were thinking about going back to.

In fact everything they were thinking about going back to – pointed to Him in the first place.

And after making his argument – he tells them how they are going to be able to persevere -how to endure.

And they were to do it – by faith.

And he even gives the reader a description of faith -

[Heb 11:1 NKJV] 1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

And then, he gave us examples -

The writer of Hebrews has been taking the reader through a mini walk in the Old Testament.

However, he is not interest in simply giving the reader a history lesson about the people of Israel.

Rather, he is calling the Hebrews believers to not only understand what faith means but, to persevere in that faith.

He is calling in them to remain disciplined and convinced in what God says concerning Jesus is true.

So these examples that he has provided for us here in chapter 11 – are examples of men and women who did just that.

They were able to endure by faith.

Now – on Sunday, I announced that I was planning on finishing Ch 11 – tonight.

However, as I was working on the study last night – there was just so much – that I didn't want to skim through the last portion of the chapter.

So in our study tonight, we are going to be looking at the faith of Joshua and the Children of Israel that resulted in them being victorious as well as the faith of Rahab the harlot.

Let's pray...

[Heb 11:30-31 NKJV] 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

It has been said that a life of faith is a progressive one.

We have definitely seen evidence of this the last few weeks – with the examples that the writer of Hebrews has given to us.

We saw it in the life of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Moses.

And the same thing can be said about our own personal walk with the Lord.

We live from faith to faith.

We go from one episode of faith to the next one.

This is how He builds our character.

This is how He molds us and shapes us into the image of Christ – by these episodes that exercise our faith.

These episodes that reveal to us where we stand in our faith.

Whether or not we truly trust in what He said He would do.

Such is the case with the Children of Israel –

You might remember, last week – we looked at the faith of the Children of Israel as they passed through the Red Sea –

Unfortunately for them – that once they got to the other side of the Red Sea –

They stopped walking by faith, they complained the entire time, they refused to go into the Promised Land – they refused to put their trust in what God had said –

So because of their unbelief, they wandered through the wilderness for 40 years until that entire generation perished (except Joshua and Caleb)

So – by the time we get here to verse 30, we have a new generation – they are no longer led by Moses – but they are now being led by Joshua.

Unlike the previous generation – this generation trusted God and they crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land –

God held back the waters from the Jordan River to allow them to cross on dry land while the Jordan River was at flood stage.

So we see an episode of faith -

But it didn't stop there –

Because as soon as they get into the Promised Land – there is another episode of faith.

God tells Joshua (ch - 5), “Joshua, I want you to circumcise all the men”

Remember – they are in the Promised Land – the Canaanites are up the road – they are going to be sitting ducks –

But God was teaching them something – before they enter in – they need to learn obedience – they needed to learn to trust in Him – they needed to catch up on all the things they had stopped doing – what they had neglected for 40 years.

So – Joshua circumcised all the men – couple of hundred thousand men.

Another clear episode of faith.

And then we come to Jericho –

Turn your bibles with me to Joshua 6 –

As the men are recovering from their procedure –

Joshua goes out by Jericho and he has an encounter with the Commander of the Lord's Army – who is a manifestation of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

(Theophany)

And He tells Joshua the battle plan on how they were going to conquer Jericho and its mighty walls.

[Jos 6:1-5 NKJV] 1 Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. 2 And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, [and] the mighty men of valor.

So right away, we see the Lord is guaranteeing victory for them –

I had you make a note of “I have given Jericho”

This is a promise from God

It's a done deal –

I will be the One that gives you Jericho –

It is not up to you Joshua –

Trust Me.

Church - Victory always comes by faith.

So here is the plan -

3 "You shall march around the city, all [you] men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. 4 "And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5 "It shall come to pass, when they make a long [blast] with the ram's horn, [and] when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout;

then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him."

To review - This is the strategic plan of God.

- Gather the troops and walk around Jericho one time for 6 days
- Get the priest involved and make sure they blow the horns
- By the way – they were supposed to also keep quiet the entire time.
- On the 7th day – walk around Jericho 7 times and tell everyone to yell and the walls will come tumbling down.

Makes sense, right?

Of course not –

[Isa 55:8-9 NKJV] 8 "For My thoughts [are] not your thoughts, Nor [are] your ways My ways," says the LORD. 9 "For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Not only does God want us to trust Him in the victory –

He wants us to trust Him in the process as well.

And sometimes the process will not make sense to us but by faith, we trust Him with each step.

Why did God make the Children of Israel march around Jericho?

Because as they walked around Jericho – each step they took – it was a step of faith.

And as they looked at the impenetrable walls that surrounded Jericho – they would come to the conclusion that their conquest of Jericho was absolutely hopeless.

They began to realize that Jericho was not going to be conquered by their own might.

The same goes for the believer today –

There may be strongholds in our lives that we are struggling with –

Anxiety

Anger

Addictions

Brokenness

And we try to address them using our own might –

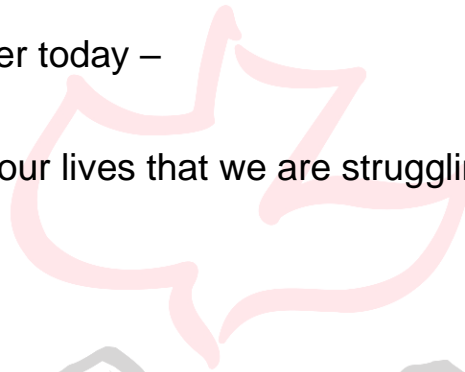
We try to address them using our own understanding.

And the truth is that we cannot defeat the Jerichos in our lives.

It is not going to happen

We can't do it.

But faith says – we have to trust the Lord.



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Because God already said – that He is going to give it to us.

We have to look to the Lord

Faith means asking, “What is God’s strategy – not my strategy”

Faith means seeking out – likeminded men and women who I can pray with and I can encourage them and they can encourage me.

Faith means opening up His Word, seeking Him in prayer

Having fellowship

Does doing these things make a difference?

Of course – because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

[Jos 6:12-16 NKJV] 12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13 Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while [the priests] continued blowing the trumpets. 14 And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days. 15 But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. 16

And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: “Shout, for the LORD has given you the city!

Go down to verse 20 -

[Jos 6:20-21 NKJV] 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.

Why did the wall fall down flat when the Children of Israel screamed?

Because God said He was giving them the city -

They trusted the process!!!

Promise made – promise kept.

In order for the Children of Israel to live the life that God had called them to – they would have to live their life by faith – much in the same way as the believer.

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

Rahab's story takes place a few chapters before the fall of Jericho (Go ahead and turn to Joshua. 2).

Who perished?

The people of Jericho

Why did they perish?

They did not believe –

I had you make a note of the word believe – because a different word is used here.

Usually the Greek word that is used for believe is the word for “trust/faith” –

The word that is used here means – “to disobey” / not to allow one's self to be persuaded; to refuse or withhold belief; to refuse belief and obedience;

So there is a great contrast between Rahab (by faith) and those that didn't believe

It was her faith that saved her life and her families life as well as her soul.

[Jos 2:1-3 NKJV] 1 Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. 2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country." 3 So the king of Jericho sent to

Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country."

So this takes place before the Children of Israel cross the Jordan –

Spies are sent into Jericho and word gets out that the spies are in Rahab's house.

The king wants her to turn them over and if you continue reading – she leads them on a wild goose chase.

She tells them that they left already – that if they hurry up, they might catch them.

[Jos 2:8-13 NKJV] 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."

Rahab said – “I know that the Lord has given you the land”

Question – how did she know that???

“I know that the Lord has given you the land”

What did the writer of Hebrews say in verse 31 –

By faith, Rahab did not perish when she had received the spies with peace.

Notice how Rahab admits that everyone in Jericho heard the same thing – I had you make a note of that.

We have heard –

Our hearts are melted – we have no will to fight

But notice – the inhabitants of Jericho didn't want to change – they enjoyed the status quo – that led to their disbelief.

Rahab's faith led to works – as she risked her life to save the spies.

[Jas 2:25-26 NKJV] 25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent [them] out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

James is saying here – that it wasn't good enough to simply believe in something –
Rahab was willing to act on it.

Church – Rahab becomes a picture of you and me.

Think about this -

Was Rahab a sinner?

What was her occupation?

Harlot – a prostitute.

Sexual immorality

Every human being is a sinner in need of a savior.

Rahab was under condemnation – had God pronounced judgment on Jericho? Yes.

(Gen 15:16)

In the same way that God has pronounced judgment on the world.

[Jhn 3:16-18 NKJV] 16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 "He who believes in

Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Did you catch that –

Verse 17

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, - why not?

Because it was already condemned.

For 400 years the people of Jericho knew judgment was coming –

They heard the news how God delivered the people out of Egypt – they heard that judgment was coming and they still chose not to believe.

Think about when the Children of Israel were marching around Jericho –

Everyday they marched around the city – it was a reminder.

Judgment is coming,

judgment is coming

judgment is coming

And their response – we don't believe you.

Church – that is grace.

They rejected grace – but Rahab embraced it.

She heard the word of the Lord

She heard a message of deliverance

She heard a message of miracles

She heard a message of judgment concerning the true God and the people of God

And she believed, by faith

And God preserves her and her family in judgment.

She was given a scarlet cord to put on her window – and judgment passed her over.

Very similar to the Children of Israel putting the blood of the lamb on the doorpost on
Passover

And the believer who has the blood of Jesus on them

The bad news – we are all sinners

The bad news – were condemned

The bad news – we deserve to go to hell

The good news – by faith, God has made a promise to deliver us in Christ.

Why did God save Rahab that day?

Rahab ends up marrying a man by the name of Salmon.

She becomes a part of the nation of Israel

And they had a son – Boaz

And he had a son - Obed

And he had a son Jesse

And he had a son, David

And fast forward many generations – we come to Jesus Christ

Nobody is beyond the reach of God

God's plans for people are greater than our minds can imagine –

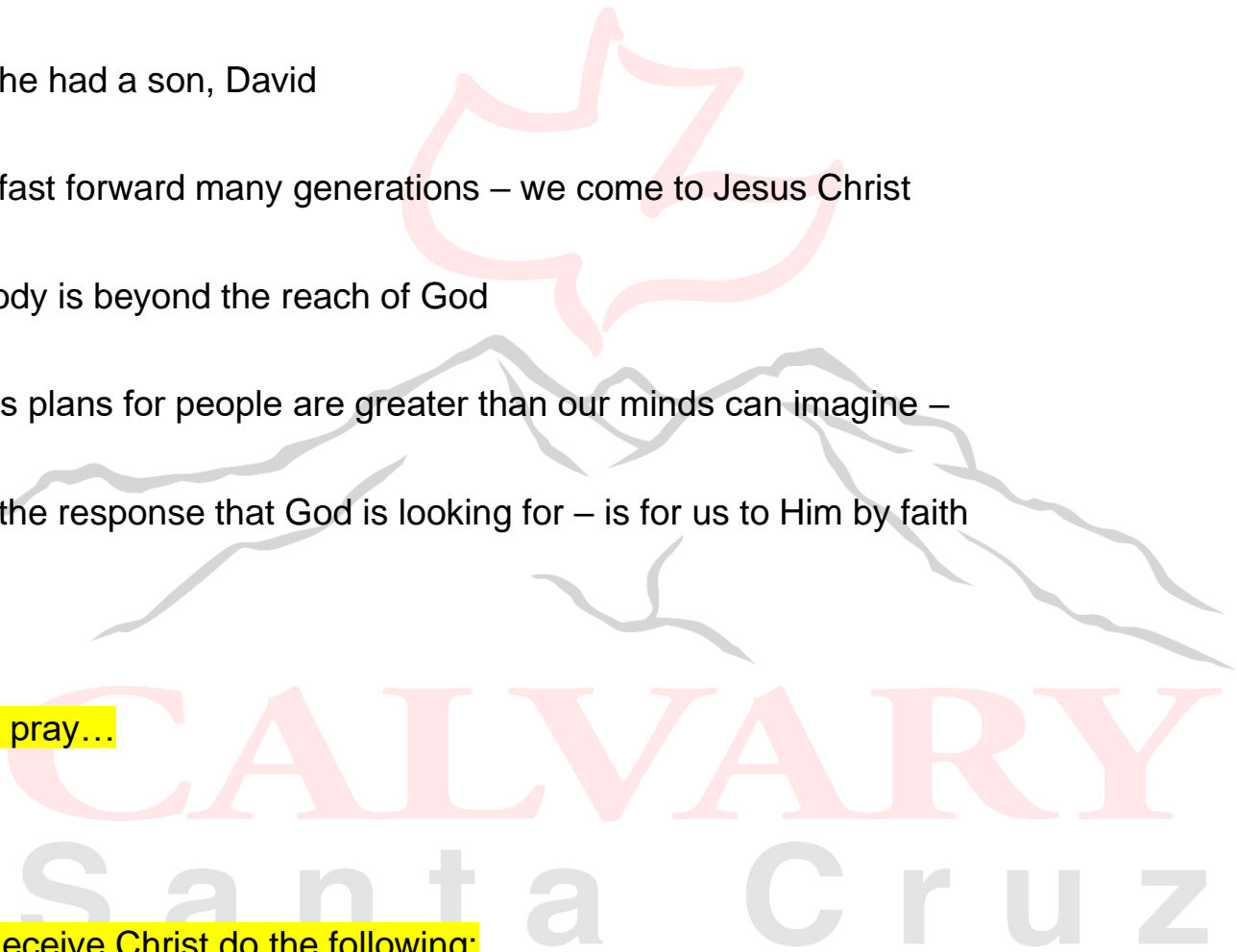
And the response that God is looking for – is for us to Him by faith

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.



Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

