

Bibles???

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

Turn your bibles with me to the book of Hebrews 11 and also if you have a bookmark – you might want to place it in Genesis 48

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

A letter that was written to a group of Jewish believers that were contemplating returning back to Judaism.

And by the time we get to ch 11 –

The writer of Hebrews has already provided these individuals with the theology for his argument.

He has already demonstrated the supremacy of Jesus Christ – using the Old Testament to show them that Jesus is greater than anything they were going back to.

Those things that they were returning to – were only shadows or pictures that pointed to Jesus Christ

And therefore, here in ch 11 – the writer has been giving them example after example of men and women who knew less than they did, and experienced less than they did, yet these men and women endured.

They continued to move forward without giving up.

They didn't quit or go back.

They were able to endure, by faith

This evening, we are going to look at two more patriarchs – we are going to be looking at Jacob and Joseph

And the faith that they demonstrated to included in this hall of faith.

Let's pray...

Before we begin –

I think it is important that we be reminded that God is not only the object of our faith.

God is also the origin of our faith.

Faith is not something that we can manufacture on our own – if we just try a little harder our faith will grow. That is not how it works

God gives us faith.

And the good news about faith is that when the bible declares that God desires something from us or even demands something from us –

God supplies us with the faith to do it.

[Rom 12:3 NKJV] 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

God is the one who supplies the faith

And it is so encouraging to know that God has given each and everyone of us a measure of faith.

And it is through abiding, reading His word, obeying His word that are faith is exercised.

A few weeks ago, we looked at the life of Abraham.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that by faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out –

He obeyed God's word. That was in Gen 12 – get out of this country

By the time we get to Genesis 22 – where God tests Abraham

Abraham did not hesitate because, by faith, he believed the promise that God had made him –

That Isaac was the son of the promise.

Let's look at our text this evening -

[Heb 11:21-22 NKJV] 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, [leaning] on the top of his staff.

We talked a little about Jacob last week – not only in our study but in our q/a afterwards.

Jacob, his name means heel catcher, schemer, conniver.

And his name is fitting because that is the way Jacob lived his life.

Not by faith – but by doing his own thing.

He was always trying to help out God – and we saw what happened last week with Isaac and Rebekah.

And the result of his scheming would always catch up with him

It would bring great pain to his life –

But here in verse 21, Jacob is not remembered for his failures – he is remembered for his faith as he was dying.

He blessed each of the sons of Joseph and worshipped. Leaning on his staff.

[Gen 48:1-6, 13-16 NKJV] 1 Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father [is] sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed.

Again, Jacob means schemer –

And here we find the name that God gave Jacob after they wrestled – Israel, which means governed by God.

3 Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, 4 "and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you [as] an everlasting possession.' 5 "And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, [are] mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. 6 "Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. ...

Go to verse 13

13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought [them] near him. 14 Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid [it] on Ephraim's head, who [was] the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh [was] the firstborn. 15 And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, 16 The Angel who

has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

There are several important points I want us to look at

This all takes place when Jacob is dying.

He is 147 years old

He has been living there in Egypt for 17 years enjoying the company of the son that he thought that he lost forever. (Joseph)

And even though his eyesight is bad and very weak.

His memory is still sharp because he remembers the promises of God.

Jacob blesses both sons of Joseph – reminding them that their place in the Promised Land and their portion in the promised Seed must be fulfilled.

Notice the link -

Abraham believes in a promised land and a promised seed

Isaac believes in a promised land and a promised seed

Jacob believes in a promised land and a promised seed

This is a land that the Children of Israel are not going to be able to see for over 400 years. They are going to spend many painful years in Egypt – until God lifts up Moses to deliver them

And because of their faithlessness they wandered the wilderness for forty years – and God then uses Joshua to lead a new generation and he takes them into the Promised Land and they begin to conquer the land and it is then, that each tribe begins to receive their allotment of land.

It took Jacob 147 years to be truly governed by God

Trusting in the promises that God made to him and his father and his grandfather and now, he blesses Joseph's sons.

Keep in mind that Ephraim and Manasseh – these guys are the sons of the second most powerful man in Egypt.

They had wealth

They had access to the palace

And here Jacob – a lowly shepherd – adopts these two grandchildren as his own and gives them a double blessing of a land that he doesn't even own – all Jacob owns is the burial cave.

He gives them a double portion of a land that they left because there is no food there

But what was Jacob really giving his grandsons? By faith in God's yet unfulfilled promises, he was giving the boys the spiritual blessings of Abraham, which were far better than the worldly blessings of Egypt.

Even though there was not a shred of tangible evidence that God would give the land to Jacob's descendants, Jacob believed God's promises and handed this off to his grandsons.

Back to Hebrews -

22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

Joseph believed God's promises

He knew that there was going to come a time when the leaders of Egypt would forget him.

So by faith, he knew that there was going to come a time when his family would leave Egypt and go back to the Promised Land.

Joseph, despite the fact that he has spent most of his life in Egypt – he understood by faith that Egypt was never intended to be his final resting place.

So by faith, he gives instructions concerning his corpse and he gives instructions to his descendants, reminding them that he doesn't belong in Egypt – he belongs in the place that God has promised to him and his children.

[Gen 50:22-26 NKJV] 22 So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. 23 Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third [generation]. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph's knees. 24 And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." 25 Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." 26 So Joseph died, [being] one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

This is what Joseph is remembered for in this chapter of faith

Think about this –

Isaac – who we saw last week, lived an imperfect life and had an imperfect faith

Jacob who we just looked at – lived a very imperfect life and had an imperfect faith

However, Joseph was an individual who truly walked by faith

Other than Daniel and Enoch – we really don't see anything negative spoken about him.

Yet, in the life of Joseph – we find someone who experienced some of the most severe circumstances we find in the scriptures.

I have people that have said to me, "I thought about being a Christian but then something terrible happened to me and I quit"

Someone in the church hurt me

Someone took advantage of me

Joseph will remain faithful even when most certainly would have abandoned their faith.

If anyone could make a case for abandoning the faith of their fathers – it would be Joseph.

Joseph was just a kid – highly favored by his dad (Jacob) – he was the oldest son to his favored wife, Rachel

This was not Joseph's fault – it was Jacob's fault

And because Joseph was highly favored by his dad – his brothers hated him (three times in a span of five verse, we are told in the scriptures that the brothers hated him)

Gen 37:4-8

Remember, the whole family was dysfunctional – they took after Jacob

And because of their hatred toward Joseph, they plotted to kill him

And then, they threw him in a pit to die

And then they proceeded to sell him, as a slave

It is in Egypt, that he gets sold again to a man named Potiphar

God shows favor to Joseph and things are looking good there in Potiphar's house and then Mrs. Potiphar tries to have sexual relations with Joseph and he refuses – and she becomes upset because Joseph turns her down – so she accuses Joseph of rape.

So Joseph goes to prison – and God shows him favor again

Keep in mind – that all these hardships were as a result of the dysfunction in his family

All these hardships prepared Joseph for what God was equipping him for

And God raises Joseph to a place of authority in Egypt

And when his family finally shows up and when Joseph finally reveals himself to them – he promises to nourish them and protect them, he weeps over them and he kisses them and he sends for his father.

And the sad part is that even after Jacob dies – Joseph's brothers still think that he has got it out for them –

They think that Joseph is going to repay them for everything that they did to him –

[Gen 50:16-20 NKJV] 16 So they sent [messengers] to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, 17 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you." ' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. 18 Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we [are] your servants." 19 Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for [am] I in the place of God? 20 "But as for you, you meant evil against me; [but] God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as [it is] this day, to save many people alive.

Did Joseph want to hurt his brothers? No

Did he really mean it when he said, "But as for you, you meant evil against me; [but] God meant it for good" - yes

You see, in their blindness – the brothers wanted to earn Joseph's forgiveness

The problem is that we can never earn real forgiveness – it has to be freely given

We cannot earn God's forgiveness

Getting back to Hebrews 11:22

"By faith Joseph,"

Looking at the life of Joseph, the writer of Hebrews could have easily said,

- By faith Joseph believed the dreams that God gave him
- By faith, Joseph held onto his integrity in a foreign land when no one watched his life.
- By faith, Joseph loved God even when imprisoned.
- By faith, Joseph told Pharaoh the interpretation of the dreams that a famine was coming to the land and how to prepare for it
- By faith, Joseph saw how God had coordinated the events of his life, the evils done to him, for good.

But, though Joseph did have faith through all those events, the writer of Hebrews doesn't mention them.

Instead, he says, "By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones."

At the time of Joseph's death, at the moment he commissioned his family to bring his bones to the Promised Land, Israel was not a nation, but a family.

And they were in a good place, for Pharaoh favored them.

In Egypt, they'd been given good and peaceful land in which to prosper.

And that they did -

Eventually, 400 years later, they had to depart Egypt, despised because God had grown them into a nation of people.

Joseph believed that day would come.

He saw how good they had it, but believed a better day would come.

And future generations, when they had it rough, would also need to believe a better day would come.

And Joseph's bones preached that message.

For 400 years, his coffin was a reminder to them all: "with God, The Best Is Yet to Come.

The Jewish reader would have recognized that God dealing with Isaac, Jacob and Joseph were all part of a divine plan.

And that their predictions on their death bed would have been fulfilled

So what do Isaac, Jacob and Joseph all have in common?

They had knowledge of God passed down unto them from Abraham

They each received a prophetic vision

They each had a clear choice

Each of them, believed God

Believed His promise

Believed in the seed (Savior) and in the land where they belong

You see church – as we go through these examples – they become a picture of what we really believe about our future.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

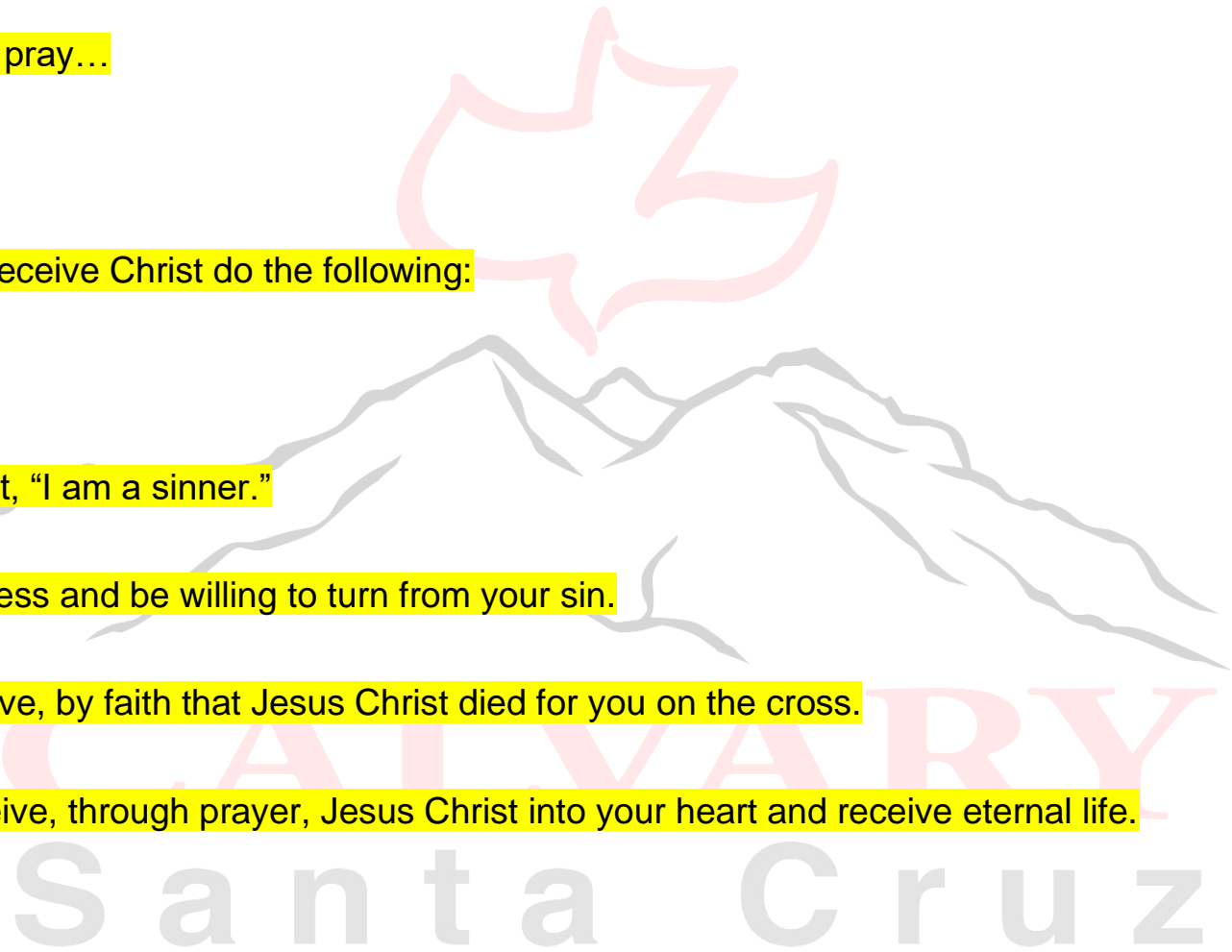
Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

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.'

