

# Lost Confidence

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala's sermon 'Lost Confidence' encourages believers to maintain their faith and confidence in God amidst challenges and reminders of past experiences.*

**Duration:** 36:24

**Scripture:** Hebrews 3:1-6, Hebrews 3:12-14, Hebrews 10:25, Hebrews 11:1, Hebrews 11:6, Hebrews 12:1-2, Hebrews 13:8

**Topics:** "Insecurity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher warns the audience not to drift or wander away from their faith in Jesus. He reminds them of their initial strong faith and confidence in Jesus and urges them not to throw away that confidence. The preacher emphasizes the importance of not forsaking the assembly of believers and spending time in prayer and worship. He also encourages the audience to remember their past experiences of faith and to stand firm in their beliefs, even in the face of worldly influences.

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## Transcript

We're reading through the book of Hebrews on our schedule of reading through the Bible according to a unique sequence, which is different than it's found in the regular Bible. And for those of you visiting, there's a lot of you, instead of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, this New Testament, which doesn't add anything or take anything away, it's ingenious because it starts with Luke and then goes to Acts and then all the epistles of Paul, which makes sequentially a lot more sense so you can follow kind of what went on and then the letters that were written by the apostle. And then it goes back to the book of Matthew, which was written for Jewish people to prove that Jesus was the Messiah.

What follows in this New Testament after Matthew is the book of Hebrews. And the letter of Hebrews, couple things. We don't know who wrote it.

It's the only New Testament letter where the authorship is unknown. Number two, it was written to Jewish people to show them that they shouldn't back away from their faith in Christ. These were believers in Jesus who were Jewish for the most part because all the argument is made and the references are made, it assumes you understood about the Jewish religion.

You understood about a high priest. You understood about a temple, the holy of holies. You understood about blood sacrifices.

You understood about the lambs that were killed. This is an argument made by the writer to encourage them and saying what you gave up in that Jewish religion, you've gained a million times more when you went from Old Testament to New Testament. Moses was great for his time, but now Jesus has come and he's greater than Moses, greater than Aaron, so on and so forth.

Now one of the problems that was happening to these people we get to as we read this past week is some of them were not only maybe rethinking their faith and saying wow, there's no temple, fancy temple to go to. We meet in hiding. We meet in houses.

There's no fancy temple to gaze at. There's no priest with all those garments. Everything is invisible.

Jesus is invisible. God is invisible. The promises of God are invisible.

No one's seen heaven yet and so on and so forth. So they began as we all have had challenges to our faith and our confidence in the Lord. And this is the walk of faith, the battle of faith.

So now the writer wants to remind them because some of them are starting to drift. Always remember this. In spiritual life like in anything else, the natural tendency, you don't have to teach anyone to do this, is to drift.

Just like things naturally go down because of gravity, the rule in spiritual living is that no one has to teach you how to drift or wander or get lukewarm or get cold. It just happens naturally. And unless God comes with reminders and special meetings and Bible studies and prayer times together, you have to maintain your faith that way.

Otherwise, if you just kinda let it go and percolate by itself, it goes downward. It's like if you don't take care of your body, watch what you eat. If you don't exercise with purpose, what happens? You get out of shape and you get unhealthy.

You don't have to tell your body to do that. It just naturally happens. So now the warning here is don't drift.

Don't wander. Don't get soft. Keep your faith to the end.

This is the battle of faith. So he's reminding them now, when you first heard about Jesus and you put your faith in him, he's reminding them, which is a good thing to do. You have to look back at your best days in Jesus because sometimes they inspire us to get back where we need to be and then to grow from there, but not to recede.

He's reminding them of that and then he goes into maybe one of the most important parts of the whole New Testament. Let's look at it, starting in Hebrews 10. Remember those earlier days, verse 32, after you had received the light, the gospel, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering.

Notice, when they first found Christ, they automatically started to endure persecution, something most of us don't know about, except in some maybe personal way. Family and friends give you a little aggravation because you're a Christian. That maybe happens, but certainly not put in jail and beat up and all that.

Sometimes, look what happened to them, you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution as a Christian. At other times, you stood side by side with those who were so treated. In other words, you weren't ashamed of them.

You stood by those who were really getting it for being a Christian. You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. That's amazing.

You suffered along with those in prison, maybe Christians who were arrested, preachers, apostles who were arrested. You suffered with them and you joyfully accepted the confiscation of your own property. In other words, because they were Christians, they were getting stuff taken from them, cast out of their house maybe.

Something went down where they were losing things only because they were Christians, and instead of grumbling or getting afraid or turning their backs on Jesus, they joyfully accepted. They said, is that what you're gonna take? Then take it from me, but I'm not gonna deny Jesus. No, take it from me.

You joyfully accepted it. That's how strong their faith was and their confidence. Why? Because you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

You were so sure of an eternal reward that you said, no, I'm not gonna throw Jesus under the bus. No, I'm hanging on to my faith. You have to take it, take it.

I have something you could never take away. How many are happy we have something nobody can take away? No government, no anybody can take it away from us. So now, let's go.

Next verse. Know the warning now. So do not throw away your confidence.

It will be richly rewarded. See, some of them he had heard were fluctuating. You need to persevere.

Persevere is a great virtue, but it's not sensational. You know what persevere is? Keep on keeping on. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised for, quoting now, in just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.

And, another quote, but my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in one, God says, who shrinks back. But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.

So do you get the argument here? He's warning them now. You can't go back. You can't shrink.

You can't lose your confidence. When do we lose our confidence? When we lose our faith. Faith produces confidence.

Remember when you were just, and you had your first love, and you just got saved. You put up with anything. You even had stuff taken from you, and you said, take it.

I'm not gonna deny. I'm not gonna deny Christ. I'm living for Christ.

I got something better than anything you all have, and it's waiting for me when Christ returns or I die. That's where my reward is. I'm not living here for your acceptance.

I'm not living here for what this world can offer. I'm living for, I got my heart set on heaven. I got heaven on my mind.

I got Jesus on my mind. So their faith was strong, and their confidence was strong. And now, maybe some of them were getting like, I don't know.

So notice that happens, and that's why reminders and sermons and prayer meetings and Bible studies are needed. By the way, this is, in this letter is that famous verse that's found no place else in the New Testament. In fact, it's found in this chapter, verse, chapter 10.

Don't forsake the assembling of yourselves as is the habit of some. Whenever someone goes to church, very little or hardly at all, there's always problems in their faith. The more faith you have, the more you want to be in God's house.

That's just a fact. Show me anyone full of faith that God answers prayer. They'll be in a prayer meeting.

Well, of course they would, because God answers prayer, and they want that encouragement, and they want to bring things to the throne of grace. They want to see CityFest get blessed. They know that people getting saved in Central Park is more important than a new car.

How could you compare a new car with a soul? But when people only acknowledge that mentally and don't have it in su corazon, in your heart, then their value system and their priorities are affected. And then this comes before that, because yeah, I believe in that, but it's really not real. Because whatever someone really believes in, that's what they do.

You know what a person does by the way they live. That's what they value. He's warning them now, remember when you were just on fire, en fuego, for the Lord.

Your faith was strong, you had strong confidence. Now remember that, remember what you went through for Jesus. Now you're gonna throw away that confidence? You're gonna fall back? So notice that's the warning for all of us, and that's why it's so important, don't forsake the assembling of yourselves.

Think of all the hours in the week, and what do we have here? On Sunday we have three services, all about two hours long. And then we have a Tuesday night prayer meeting that goes from seven, or some people come early, to 8.30, to nine. And then the rest of the week, this building is basically empty, except for all the other ministries that are meeting.

But think of the hours people spend texting, watching television, watching movies. Will that increase their faith? No, a lot of it will weaken their faith. Because the world will become so real that the invisible things of God will become unreal.

Because whatever you feed yourself with, that's what you build up. You feed yourself with the visible world, thoughts of money, thoughts of this and that, then that's what builds up in your heart. You think of invisible things, you spend time in the Word of God, you spend time praying, that's what builds up your faith.

This is an encouragement to all of us. Don't forsake the assembling of yourselves. I have found it as an irrefutable fact in my life that whenever people drop out of going to church, it's always a bad sign, always.

Never, no, I'm just tired, there's cliques in the church and all of that. Come to the church even with the cliques. It's better than staying home.

And there's no perfect church. And if there was, me and you going to it would make it not perfect anymore anyway, right? That's a good reminder because reminders are what we need. Reminders are what we need.

How many remember growing up and your parents would say, brush your teeth before you go to bed? Okay, why? Because we forget that. So these are reminders now, be careful now. You gotta keep believing to the end.

Some people shrink back and are destroyed. That's what the writer says. But we're not like that, he says.

I have better thoughts of that than you. We're gonna believe right to the salvation of our souls. It's not the one who starts the race, it's the one who, what, finishes the race.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith, the Apostle Paul, one of the great Christians in the New Testament says. So we're learning here something, that the battle is the battle of faith and keeping your confidence. And now we're gonna understand more about that.

We need reminders, we need preachers, we need pastors, we need fellow believers who can say to someone, I missed you in church, how come you're not there? How come you're not there? I said your business. No, it is my business, I love you. It is my business.

How come you're not there? We miss you. You need it, I need it, we all need it. No, I go to church at home by myself.

Who's the pastor? Me. That's not good. Remember, don't forsake the assembling of yourselves.

You miss out on what God might do. I invite you to join with me on Tuesday because with the events happening in this country in this last week, oh, do we need to pray. I got a heavier feeling than after 9-11 for myself.

Just horrific. What are you gonna do, circle the wagons and be afraid or get angry? Or are we gonna be better Christians? Come on, better Christians. Come on, can we put our hands together, better Christians.

Sharing more of the gospel, drawing nearer to the Lord. Now, he jumps to this place. Let's look, verse one of chapter 11.

Now, faith, that word confidence, now, faith is confidence in what we hope for and the assurance about we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. Just look at that.

Now, faith, this discusses how faith operates. Faith is the confidence in what we hope for, future tense, things that we haven't experienced. You don't hope for something you experience.

I don't hope for yesterday's dinner. I already ate yesterday's dinner. You only look forward to things that haven't happened.

Now, it says here faith is the confidence of things that haven't happened yet. And it's the evidence or the assurance or being certain and sure of what we do not see. In other words, faith, when you put your faith in God, you receive as reality, even though the senses don't pick it up.

My senses, right now, eyes, I heard the sound, I touched it. See, my senses know that that thing is there. But faith perceives as more real than that pulpit things that you can't see, like God, like the value of a soul.

People who have faith, according to this, live with a certainty about future things even though they can't prove it. And they are absolutely certain of the reality of things even though the senses cannot pick it up. Now, it says that this is what the ancients were commended for.

Who were the ancients? These are the Old Testament saints. Abraham, Moses, Noah, Enoch, the prophets. Why did God commend them? Because of their faith.

Not because of their perfect lives. Very important to get this. God doesn't commend people for their perfect lives because there are no perfect lives.

So he can't commend anybody. But what does he accept? Almost, shall we say, in place of that is this, what's called evangelical faith. Faith in God.

The just shall live by what? Faith. We're gonna read in verse six now of chapter 11. Without faith, it's impossible to please God.

Hebrews 11, and without faith, look, it's impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists even though you can't see him and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. When will he reward them? In the future. How do you know? Faith tells me he will reward them.

How do I know he exists? Faith tells me that he is more real than this carpet. How many believe God is more real than this carpet? Even though I'm standing on the carpet. And faith also says, no, that day is gonna come.

And now it shapes our lives. So let's gather this up. What were the Old Testament people commended for by God? And when holy, perfect God commends somebody, that's a heavy sentence.

How would God commend anybody? He's God. No. What he treasures and what he commends is people who have faith.

Faith. What is it that we all need if we're gonna please God? Faith. Without faith, it's what? No, but I'll try to live a good life.

Won't cut it. No, but I'll make a sacrifice. Won't cut it.

Faith. But wait a minute, what kind of faith? Not intellectual assent to certain facts. Oh, pastor, I believe there's a God.

Hi, Liz Pastor, what do you think, I'm a pagan? I believe in God. It's not that kind of faith because the devil has that faith. The devil believes intellectually that God exists.

Are you kidding? Lucifer was in heaven before he became Satan. I believe in the resurrection. You don't think the devil believes in the resurrection? He was there when it happened.

I believe Christ died on the cross for the sins of the world. The demons do that. What is this faith that commends ourselves to God? It's the faith that was just described.

The faith that so trusts God and receives his word and relies on God that the life is changed because future things are so certain that it changes the way you live. Changes your value system. Changes the way you spend your time.

Changes the way you spend your money. Changes about what sacrifices you make. Why? Because I know that's coming and to be ready for that to be coming, I'm gonna live differently because that's coming.

Prove to me that's coming. I can't prove it's coming, but I know it's coming. Faith tells me he's gonna return and he's prepared a place for me and I'm gonna be in that place.

Come on, let's say amen to that. So the faith that changes the way we live because we see things that are invisible. You know, some people just see, oh, there's a crowd up there, you know? No, there's not just a crowd.

That's Allah. Allah's father, grandfather served time in prison for Jesus Christ in Russia in the communist regime. You see? So God's hand is on her.

How do you know God's hand is on her? Faith has shown me God's hand is on her. I walked up to her once and told her God's hand is on you to do something special for the Lord. I can't prove that, but faith lets me know she's not just a person, she's a special person to God.

But you can't prove that to an unbeliever. Faith just knows these things. Faith sees the invisible as more real than the visible and it alters their life.

Faith is so sure of certain things happening in the future that everything in your life is turned around. You make sacrifices. You go on trips, you do.

I mean, my goodness. I believe Alon and Marilyn Idefonso are here. They could've lived in New York comfortably.

They went to a poorer part of the Philippines and they're pouring out their lives there, helping poor people and children, spreading the gospel. Please tell me why they would do that if money is everything. If comfort and pleasure and money and watching television and movies is everything, then how in the world are they there? No, they saw something else.

If you're not full of faith, you don't get what they saw. But that's how faith operates. That's what God commends people for.

People whose lives are altered because they just know. They don't believe just here. They believe here.

The word, the truth goes from here to here and it changes everything. And that brings us, as we get ready to close, to an important question. How many of us here have that kind of faith? Or is it just intellectual faith? How many of us have faith? This is looking from the human standpoint that has radically changed our lives.

We make sacrifices. We change things about our lives. We pray about things that other unbelievers are saying.

What are you wasting your time? What are you gathering on Tuesday night to pray for something at Central Park? It's either gonna happen or it's not gonna happen. No, no, we're gonna pray because God

answers prayer. He says, call upon me in the day of trouble and I will answer you.

How do you know that? Oh, hush, I know it's true because God said it's true. What God? I don't see him. No, faith, listen, he's more real than you are, my friend.

How many of us have that kind of faith? Or are we drifted away to just an intellectual ascent where we go to church on Sunday? That's the curse of American religion, having a form of godliness but strangers to its power. Go to church on Sunday, stop in for an hour and then go my merry way, make my money, do my thing. No time for God, no time for the word.

You know who reads the Bible? Those who believe it's really God's word. If this is God talking, wouldn't you wanna hear what he has to say every day? Oh no, you're all saying yes but only the people that read it and meditate on it are the people who have that other kind of faith in it. Otherwise, people are texting.

I heard the other day that a lot of young people are texting, a person really given to that, texts more than 100 texts a day, 100. Some are up to 200, 200 texts a day. Think of the time that takes to just be texting and the shallowness of that whole world.

Hi, how you doing? I'm good, yeah. Little picture, face, hi, ooh, yeah. Well, this is really, this is just a wonderful life and that world can capture us and this becomes strange and everything else becomes real.

Don't say it's not true, it is true. That's the battle we're all in because the visible world wants to squeeze us into its mold. That's the way the world lives.

The world lives by the visible. Christians live by the invisible. We're sure of things that we can't prove.

The world laughs at that. So, that's the question. We many times say to God, God, increase my money so I can pay the bills.

Sometimes we're more spiritual and we say, God, increase our love so we can be more like Jesus. But very rarely do we pray maybe the most essential prayer, Lord, increase our faith. Make it real to us.

And here's the final example who really applies to the day that we live in, specifically this Sunday, following this week in this country. Let's look, verse seven of Hebrews 11. By faith, Noah, when warned about things not yet seen.

What things was he warned about? The flood. God said, I'm gonna judge this world. It's become so wicked, I'm gonna bring judgment on it.

How was he warned about it? Did he read it in a Bible? No, there was no Bible yet. This is important. Notice how this kind of faith that changes you comes about.

You know the verse, faith comes by and hearing by. Many people think that's merely this verse, this book. It's not.

This verse has to be made alive by the Holy Spirit and get into your heart or it'll affect nothing. Noah got it by revelation. God somehow in some communion, dream, vision, who knows, still small voice, it doesn't tell us.

Noah got warned, there's a flood coming. He didn't read about it. But it changed his life because he received it and rested on it.

He embraced that word. I've read the Bible many times. It hasn't helped me because I didn't read it with an open heart.

I didn't pray. I didn't say, God, speak to me. I didn't take time and say, God, get this thing from mi cabeza to mi corazón.

I don't want it in my head. If I could live as good as what my head knows, I would be a giant. But we're all held back because we got more in our head than we have in our heart.

How many say amen? That's what we want. We want God to make it, reveal it to us in that place where it changes us. Look, as I close what it did to Noah, he was warned about things not seen.

So in holy fear or reverence or awe, he built an ark to save his family. Notice that when real faith comes in your heart, it always produces a change in action. He wasn't building anything, but when he heard the warning from God, he sprung into action.

He built an ark. Why? Because when the judgment comes, I won't be safe. And God gave him instructions how to build that thing so that his family could be saved.

I one time spoke in Hong Kong three years ago with my friend Ravi Zacharias, two underground church leaders from mainland China. And it was held in Noah's ark in the bay, which is part of Hong Kong. Some wealthy Christian built an exact replica of Noah's ark according to the scripture.

And it can't sail. It's moored there, but it's been turned into a conference center and like a park of some kind. It's so huge.

And here I was every day going into an ark to talk to these hundreds and hundreds of precious people. He built an ark because whenever you have real faith, it changes your life. He didn't just believe it up in his head and say, boy, that's something, I think this judgment, I think this judgment, it could happen.

No, he was, I gotta get ready. I wonder what you believe in that's changed your actions or is changing your actions right now. I get 50 emails a year from people saying to me, do you know of any church in my city where there's a prayer meeting? Because God's house shall be called the house of prayer.

God answers prayer. Why is it pastor that nobody in my church or in this city will have a prayer meeting? It's because they don't believe in prayer. Now they would never say that.

They're gonna say, of course I believe in prayer. God answers prayer, praise God. Here's what it says in the book.

Ask and you shall what? Well, if you really believe that, you'll ask. If you don't really have faith in that, you'll sit home and watch television and just work the remote. What a person does is what they believe and what a person believes is what they'll end up doing and that's how we know where our faith is at.

So he built an ark and he condemned the world by it. Can you imagine him, I close, the mocking that went on when he was building that ark on some bright, sunny day. Yo, Noah, what are you doing building an ark? Yo, Noah, look, humidity is 15%, it's 94 degrees.

We're suffering drought around here and you're building an ark for what? There's a flood coming. Noah, come on, what kind of concept do you have of God? God is loving, he would never hurt anyone. No, he told me, he showed that to me.

Noah, be real, what are you, holier than us? What, he's gonna judge us? Who are you to judge me? Everybody's all the same. You create your own morality. Noah said, that's not what he told me.

I'm gonna go by what he told me. I'm not gonna go by what the media says is right and wrong. I'm not gonna go by what the Supreme Court says is right or wrong.

We're not gonna go by what President Obama says is right or wrong. We're not gonna go by Mayor de Blasio. We're not going by Republicans.

We're not going by Democrats. We're not going by conservatives. I don't care what the liberals say.

I don't care what white people say. I don't care what black people say. I'm uninterested in all of that.

I just wanna know what God says. Can we say amen to that? Whatever God says, that's what the truth is. And Noah was mocked and laughed at.

And can I make a suggestion to you? The heaviest mocking of us is yet to come. The heaviest persecution of us, who knows where it'll end. But the government from top to bottom will support it, I'm afraid.

I don't know about you, I've decided to follow Jesus. How many are with me? Can we put our hands together? Come on, real loud. We have decided to follow Jesus.

We have no bad feelings about anyone. Everybody live your life the way you wanna live it. I don't wanna interfere with what anyone does.

But do not tell me what to believe. Do not tell me what the Bible says is false. Come on, can we say amen one more time? Lord, we love you, we believe in you.

So, Lord, increase our faith, because the teaching in the Bible, I believe, is true. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the coming of the days of the Son of Man. And Noah built an ark.

You young people that are visiting from, I think, Atlanta, listen to this. Noah built that ark, and he got in it, and the people were like, k-k-k-k-k, such a joke. You're such a fool, you idiot.

You jerk. It's getting dark up there in those clouds. But keep laughing at them.

Jesus himself said, and they were all swept away. And the one who had faith was saved. For the just shall live by faith.

If you are not in the ark of safety today, everybody close your eyes. If you are here, and you are not sure that you are in that ark of safety, if you don't have a faith that has changed your life radically, if that's never happened to you, if you're just a churchgoer, if you just grew up around this stuff, white church, black church, West Indian church, Latino church, that will not cut it. The just shall live by faith.

I would love to pray for you, because the clouds are now getting dark. They are. I don't know if there's any drops falling yet, but they're getting dark.

And we're gonna have to stand against the entire flow of a culture. But we're gonna do it by faith. Faith is gonna give us the confidence we need, the strength.

If you're here today and say, pastor, I don't wanna go this meeting to end, unless somebody just prays for me. I don't care if there's one of you, two of you, I'll be happy if there's just anyone here who would say, pray for me. I wanna put my faith in Jesus Christ as my savior, my Lord.

I wanna ask him to forgive me and wash me away all the blood, the precious blood that washes away all our sins. You can experience that today. Because I'm done talking to the Christians.

I'm now talking to that one. Maybe you've been shrinking back. Maybe you've been losing your faith, your confidence.

You were once on fire for the Lord. Don't you remember when you were 14 or 18 or 22 or maybe nine years old? Remember what you believed and how you lived and how it affected your life? And now there's hardly any difference between you and people that don't even know the Lord. Anybody here today, I'm asking you to just stand up where you're sitting.

Just stand up right where you are. Just stand up and say, pray for me, minister. Pray for me.

Anybody watching on the webcast, just lift up your hand wherever you are, even though it's not in real time with me speaking. Just lift up your hand and say, God, help me. Just lift up those in the building here.

Just stand up right where you are and say, pray for me. I want those of you that are standing, come quickly downstairs here. Come on, come quickly.

Come quickly, I have something for you. Congregation, just keep praying, keep praying. Anybody here wants to be sure or you've been shrinking back just like the warning went to the Hebrews.

Don't shrink back and be destroyed, but we're those who believe to the end and are saved by faith. Come on, stand right here in the front. This is your day.

This is your day. I'm waiting for you from the balcony. Not a churchgoer, not a Catholic, not a Protestant.

That doesn't matter to God. Faith, faith that grips the soul, changes the heart. Everyone in the front, just lift up your hands like this lady whose hands I'm holding.

Just lift them up to the Lord and repeat after me, dear Jesus, I believe in you. You are my savior. Forgive me of my sins.

Wash away my guilt. Change me by your power. Increase my faith.

Help me to live a new life, different priorities, different values, different way to spend my money, different kind of friends because of my faith in you. I praise you, Jesus, for dying for me, shedding your blood, loving me so much. You endured the cross.

I put my trust in you. I will serve you all the days of my life. Everything will be different because you're in my life now.

I ask all these things. So your name would be praise. Amen and amen.

Can we all congregation put our hands together?

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