

Faith That Preserves ■ Not Shrinking Back

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in God, highlighting how faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen. It explores the lives of biblical figures who demonstrated unwavering faith in God's promises, even in the face of unknown circumstances. The message encourages believers to trust in God's faithfulness, follow His teachings, and live radically different lives based on the unseen realities of God's Word.

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1, Hebrews 11:6, Hebrews 10:38, Hebrews 10:39, Hebrews 11:13

Topics: "Faith in God", "Trust in God's Promises"

Description

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Transcript

I have been burdened for some time. You know, I was thinking about the text that in Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything. But you know what really matters? Faith.

Working through love. And I thought maybe this first Sunday back in the pulpit, I would speak on faith maybe in two weeks on the idea of love. Brethren, I would like you to turn in your Bibles to Hebrews 10.

We have the Word of God. But if I have a burden, it is that our lives, my life, your life, they be conformed to this Book. God gave us a Book.

There's truth here. This is inspired truth. And where else would we go for faith? I mean, if there's a chapter, we're going to get to it.

Hebrews 11. But I want to start out at the end of chapter 10 just simply because this chapter division isn't inspired, and the author actually has introduced the idea of faith before he gets to chapter 11. Verse 38.

Maybe we pick up in verse 36. You have need of endurance so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised. For yet a little while in the coming one will come and will not delay.

But there's this, my righteous one shall live by faith. You know that's from Habakkuk. And this isn't the only place where this is quoted in the New Testament.

My righteous one shall live by faith. This is the strongest presentation. There's strong, uncomfortable words here.

Faith. And if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed.

Now look, people do shrink back. The author is being charitable here. The author is being optimistic with the people that he's speaking to.

He's wanting to encourage them. He's encouraging them with these words. We're not of those.

Of course, we're not of those if we're not of those. Because if you do shrink back, strong words, destroyed. Shrink back and are destroyed.

But we are of those who have faith and preserve their souls. And preserve their souls. Here's the thing, the idea that we have here is shrinking back.

And I think even when we've been talking about the idea of first love came up a couple weeks back, the Christian life isn't static. You know what? Those of you that were here four years ago, four years ago right now, the pastor over there in Manchester was resigning. And things were set in motion.

And I knew a lot of you. This is four years later. You're not the same and I'm not the same.

Some of you folks are new. So I don't know you at all. I don't know where you're at.

But you know what? I know this. Your life isn't static. Your Christian life is not moving along like this.

We have momentum in certain directions. You know how Scripture speaks. Scripture speaks of this idea of growth or progress.

There's maturing. Or, we know, you were running well. You know that's said about one of the New Testament churches or groups of churches? Who is that said about? The Galatians.

You were running well. What does that imply? You're not now. You were.

You know what the truth is? That four years removed, some of the people, some of you brethren that I knew here, you may be better off. You've grown. You've matured.

And there are others, perhaps, who haven't. You're fading. We recognize from Scripture that we can lose our first love.

You know what Paul told Timothy? He said you want to make sure that everybody can see your progress. That's where we ought to be, making progress. There ought to be some kind of movement.

What is the path of the righteous like according to the Proverbs? It's like the rising of the sun. And it's increasing in brightness. Brighter and brighter until the fullness of day.

That's what we want. We want to be making that progress. Or how does Paul speak to the Philippians? He talks about their love.

His prayer for them was that their love would increase more and more with knowledge and discernment. More and more. More and more.

But then you get some people that you were running well. You get some people that I have this against you. You've lost your first love.

Some of you have been on an increase. Some of you have been increasing in your maturity. You've been increasing in your closeness with Christ and your Christlikeness.

And others, there's movement. And there's movement in this verse. And what the author is concerned about is a shrinking back.

Now let's think about this. Not so much the path is this way, but think about the path that way because that gives you a proper perspective. You can imagine a person's walking.

A person's on this path going this way. And when you're able to look at it from the side, what does shrinking back look like? Shrinking back. You see, there's movement there.

The idea is there's some kind of hesitancy. The Word literally has the idea of there's a hesitation. There's all of a sudden a timidity.

A shrinking back from what? Well, our text is dealing with faith. Now I recognize at times our faith can be shaken. And it seems like the Hebrews are being written to here.

There are things that are happening to them that are shaking their faith. But you know what happens if you shrink back? Listen, this is not a small thing. When you lose your first love, there's a threat of having the candlestick removed.

When there's a shrinking back from faith, there is a threat of you are going to be destroyed. We're not talking about small things here. Would you agree? Folks, this is life and death.

This is the real deal. Faith is wavering. You know what? At the prayer meeting, did anybody else catch how many times prayer was talked about? Because I had this on my mind, I heard people either in their prayers or in their prayer requests, I heard the idea of faith come up probably no less than 20 times.

Did anybody else catch that? Maybe not. It's because of where I was going to preach. I was watching that.

But brethren, 2024, your faith at the end of this year is not going to be right exactly where it is now. What's going to happen? Progress? This is what we really want to think about. Is there going to be an advance? Is there going to be a decline? Let's read the text again.

Verse 38, My righteous one shall live by faith. And if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we're not of those who shrink back.

And like I said before, we're not. If we're not. I mean, we're not of those if we're not of those.

And they get destroyed. But, very optimistically, the author says, we're of those who have faith and preserve their souls. And you know what? Literally, the preserve here is a noun.

It's not a verb in the original. Believing to the preserving of the soul. That's what faith does.

There's a soul preserver in that. Everything's on the line here. Everything.

If there's anything fundamental to the Christian life, it is faith. We need to think about faith. What is this? I mean, if there's anything to be clear about, if we shrink back from this, if this is not found in our life, we're destroyed.

You think about that. You just think about that. I mean, the truth.

You think about 8 billion people upon the face of the earth. And you know what God's looking at that defines us as much as anything? It's this. Is God my confidence? We have among the 8 billion people, every single individual, me and you, we have confidence in God, or we shy away from that and we're on this path to destruction.

He destroys me. Brethren, I would just say this, you know what? We often look at things like pedophilia and murder and we look at these things as really gross sin and certain sexual sins. We look at certain things as bad.

Unbelief is usually not in our top number one or top number two or top number three places of the most vile and wretched and detestable sins. But isn't it amazing? Brethren, you need to think about this. I mean, how wicked and desperately perverse must unbelief be for God to talk this way? You shrink back from faith, I destroy you.

Because brethren, it is such a reflection on what we think about God, how we treat God. And so, I'm hoping, how warped it is, and this really needs to hit us, just how warped, how perverted, how perverse to not cast your weight upon the Lord and what He said. Unbelief.

You remember just the unbelief when the disciples, these are followers of Christ and they couldn't cast the demon out. And He called them perverse. So, brethren, this is the argument.

This is the warning that we have in this letter of Hebrews. I mean, just think about how the book starts. Very quickly, just run back to how this book starts.

We're going to jump back to Hebrews 11 in just a second. But you remember how this book starts? You never want to forget it. The very first chapter of Hebrews is the author says, behold this Christ.

Let me tell you, God spoke to our fathers in times past and He did it through the prophets. But in these last days, here it is. He has spoken to us by His Son.

And by this Son, He is heir of all things. By this Son, He created all things. This Son is the radiance of the glory of God.

The expressed image of God. This Son upholds it all. This Son made purification for sins.

This Son sat down and it is paid. And this Son is better than the angels. Where's Dorothy? It's not even close.

That's what we have. And then, what are we supposed to do with all of this? You get this kind of thing. Go to chapter 2. Therefore, verse 1, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift

away from it.

See, there it is. You drift away from it. You fall away from it.

You go away. Brethren, faith is not about faith. Faith is looking outside yourself to that which is outside of you.

It is looking to this Christ. That's the idea you shrink back. Let's not shrink back and you're all taken up with your faith.

Brethren, the shrinking back of faith, this drifting of faith, is when we fall back from who Christ is and what He's promised and who our great God. We heard there's none like Him. And here it is.

Listen, because it's so glorious and it's so real and it's so powerful and it's so saving, you don't want to drift away from this. You better pay close attention. Verse 3, how shall we escape if we neglect? Don't neglect it.

Don't neglect this. This is the tone. Go to chapter 3, verse 6. We're His house if indeed we hold fast.

See, there's no falling back here. There's no drifting. There's no straying away.

There's no shrinking. What is there? We hold fast our confidence and are boasting in hope. Verse 12, take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the living God.

And you have to remember, He's going to develop this whole thing about the Hebrew children out in the wilderness and how they did by their unbelief. They never entered the promised land. Brethren, this keeps going.

Look at v. 3, 14. We have come to share in Christ if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. Brothers, sisters, you do not want to fall out of this race.

And you know what? Usually falls don't come, oh, you're walking great one day and then you're gone the next. That's not how it happens. Brethren, some of you are drifting.

Some of you, you know your heart's growing cold. Your first love has diminished. Some of you know you're not where you ought to be.

And I know I'm not speaking to everybody here, but you know who you are. And brethren, I'll tell you, the way that people shrink back and the way people fall away and the way people end up making shipwreck, it doesn't happen in a moment. It happens by degrees.

And suddenly you wake up and say, how did I get here? Chapter 3, verse 19, so we see that they... now this is speaking about those Hebrews. They're unable to enter because of unbelief. Therefore, while the promise of entering His rest still stands, let us... see, this has to do with us.

Just because of what they did back then, brethren, they're a pattern. They're an example for us to look at. Because what happened to them can happen to us.

And what he's saying is let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. We don't want to be there. Verse 411, let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of

disobedience.

Or you go over to 414, since then we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. Let us hold fast our confession. No shrinking back, folks.

We have such a High Priest. Listen, you don't want to let go of this for anything. Sometimes the race can get long.

Sometimes it can weary. Sometimes the trials can come in. You know, we've heard our brother, the Mirandas, have been suffering.

Sometimes our faith can be shaken. But brethren, you don't want to shrink back. Not from this confidence.

But brethren, momentary light affliction is coming after this. This thing is big. This thing is glorious.

The desire of our hearts, we're going to have. It's out there on the horizon. Brethren, we need to understand faith.

Faith. It's nature. We need to distinguish it from that which is counterfeit.

In Hebrews, it's all about the good fight of faith. If anything develops this, starting in Hebrews 10, v. 38, all the way, 44 verses, until you get to the end of chapter 11, you know what you have? You have 44 verses of the most extensive treatment of faith in the Bible. Thirty times faith is going to be mentioned in these verses.

No other portion of Scripture like it. If ever there's a place that God intends for us to catch hold of the meaning of what faith is, the nature of it, the substance of it, certainly it is here. And oh, brethren, this is critical.

I know as a young believer, I come along and I'm reading John 2. What? They believed in Him? Well, that sounds like a good thing, but Jesus doesn't commit Himself to them. Why would He not do that? And then you come along and it's like these people believe, and it actually says they believe, but they don't have any root in them. There's such a parable as that.

You've probably read it. And then you come along and you find these other guys that believe, but because they're afraid of the Pharisees and they love the praise of man and the glory of man more than the glory of God, so there they are. And then you've got James come along and he's like, hey, you believe? Well, that's great.

The demons believe. Well, I mean, what is all this? You better be clear on this. Brethren, I don't want you to lose your soul.

I don't want to lose mine. God's given us a book that helps us track our way to the glory. And in here, it's the substance upon which we are to plant our confidence all the way to the end.

And you don't want to let go. None of the truth's in this book. None of the Christ's in this book.

And so, we need to be gripped with the reality. What's the difference between the faith Jesus sets His stamp of approval on and the faith that He doesn't commit Himself to? So, I believe that if ever there's any attempt in Scripture made to strive to define faith, it's here in primarily two verses. It's 11.1 and 11.6. And

you can look at those.

Go back to chapter 11 if you're not already back there. I just want to pull out four truths from these two verses very quickly. I want to start with 11.6. Without faith, it's impossible to please Him.

Now, by the way, that really is what He says in verse 38. If you shrink back, my soul has no pleasure. I'm not pleased.

That's pleasure. Please. You see, that's exactly what He's saying there.

Without faith, it's impossible to please Him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He... Now, the ESV says exists. It's literally that He is.

This is the first thing about faith. The first truth I want to... Don't miss this. Saving faith is clearly founded in who God is.

That's what's so essential about it and what God is like. This is not just the idea of believing that there is some Supreme Being or higher power. Faith has the idea.

We've got to believe that God is who God is. Not just this guy. You know what? I had an idea of God when I was lost.

A God of my own imagination. The emphasis of faith is never on faith itself. The emphasis of faith is on the character of God and who He is.

Brethren, there are people that have strong faith. I've heard it said like there's no strong faith. There's only some kind of pitiful faith and a strong God.

But the fact is there is strong faith in Scripture. Jesus identifies it. Jesus talks about people that had great faith.

Brethren, you can tie the two together. The people with the greatest faith are the people whose estimation of who God is is most glorious. Those who see Him strongest.

Those who see Him most magnificent. You can't detach the two. Strong faith can never be separated from strongly knowing God.

And here's the thing, would you increase your faith? You know, the disciples said that one day. Lord, increase our faith. But that goes hand-in-hand with what based on this? If it's believing that God is, so for your faith to be increased, what must you do? Have a greater perception of who God is.

Obviously. A higher expectation, a higher wonder, a higher appreciation. Look, there is a way God is and there is a way God is not.

And brethren, every one of us is falling short of seeing Him exactly. A good dose of who God is can unleash things in our life that have not yet been unleashed. Why? Because the truth is we're not trusting Him as much as we could.

What would we do if we had perfect faith? What would we do if we understood God like Christ understood His Father? Faith believes that God is who He says He is. And we'll do what He says He'll do. And you know, A.W. Tozer said this, what comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important

thing about us.

I think that's right. A man said that. That didn't come from the Bible.

But based on this, I think brethren, you can draw that conclusion. Our faith has everything to do with who we believe God is and what comes into our minds when we think about Him. Folks that take the most daring steps of faith, you can never think that's disconnected from what they think about God.

Ever. So, God. God.

James was saying it. There's none like Him. With God, there's none like Him.

But yet, this singular, very glorious God. Jesus said, Philip, I'm just like Him. You see Me? One of the ways that we know how God is is to know how Christ is.

Right? He's the radiance of the glory. So, here's truth 2. Again in v. 6. Whoever would draw near to God must believe that He is and that He rewards those who seek Him. Now look down at v. 26.

Moses considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. Ah, he was looking to the reward. Now, what I would say about this, you notice how true faith frees people from a preoccupation with wealth and money and riches? And think about all the other things Moses could have had in leadership and the greatest political power on the face of the earth.

He could have had harems, jewels, whatever his heart desired. Boats, military, might. You know what? True faith freed him over the preoccupation of all those things.

All the safety, all the security. It frees us from those ever-grasping tentacles of this world. That's what he did for Moses.

Why? Because he not only believed that God was, he believed that God was a rewarder and that God's reward was better than the stuff you can get here. Right? Oh, brethren, what a distraction the stuff here is. But when we really become glued into the fact that there is a God who is a rewarder, the God Who Is can do for me what no one else can do for me and He can give to me what no one else can give to me.

He bestows riches on all who call upon Him. On me if I call. Doesn't He say, open your mouth wide and you'll fill it all the things that God has given me and the things that God promises to give to me.

He is the God Who Gives. Brethren, do you recognize? We're not dealing with a stingy God, the Father of light from Whom every good and perfect gift falls down from above. Brethren, this is our God.

Our God is a giving God. He's a rewarding God. Brethren, what do we deserve? He gives us all sorts of riches of Christ, the eternal life, an eternal weight of glory.

Seriously? After what you and I have done? That's the kind of God we've got to believe in. You see, you launch out to whatever ministry God has called you to do and use your gifts, how He's called you to make the sacrifices He calls you to make and walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Brethren, there's a reward at the end.

We're not paupers. And we're not mercenaries. And we're not slaves.

Yes, slave in a certain sense, but brethren, we're bride of Christ. We've been saved to be lovers of Christ. To have our souls satiated, satisfied.

Nobody's got anything on us. And then here's a third truth about faith. Faith believes that God is.

Believes He's a rewarder. And now we go back up to v. 1. Faith is, I'm going to jump to the last part, the conviction of things not seen. Ah, I love this! Conviction.

Or the evidence. Or the proof. The argument for things.

I mean, that's it. The reward? Here's Moses. Think of him.

He can see the harem. He can see the treasuries. He can see the military might.

Could he see the reward? Could he see the city that has foundations? Could he see God? What could he see? You see, it's the conviction of things not seen. What freed Moses from those embracing arms of the world was that he saw what other men could not see. He saw the reward.

There was an unseen reality. There was an unseen city. There was an unseen kingdom.

There was an unseen Messiah. There was an unseen God. There was an unseen reward and riches and glory and honor.

You know what faith does? It fills us with conviction. It fills us with an argument for things that people can't see. Other people can't see.

It provides us with this evidence. It provides us with a proof of what's not seen, but is very real. Like God is.

I can't see that. Christ is. He's the unseen Christ.

Isn't that what Peter calls Him? We love an unseen... You ever think about that? Your chiefest love of all is the one you've never seen. Not with these eyes. But very real to you.

So real, you do crazy things. Your family looks at you and goes, what's this? Why would you do that? Friends, co-workers. The whole thing just mystifies them.

Why? Because faith gives us the ability to see realities in abundance that aren't seen, that are invisible, that are outside this dimension, beyond. The truth of v. 3 just thunders with this reality. Look at it.

V. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. You see, there are visible things and there are invisible things. All who have working eyeballs can see the visible things.

But, only those with faith can accurately perceive the invisible. Lost people have an idea about the invisible. But only people with faith can accurately perceive what they are.

You know what faith is? It's a gift of God. Ephesians teaches us that. But what is it that God gives us? It's like He gives us another sense.

I have eyes. I can see with them. I have ears.

I can hear with them. I have fingers. I can feel with them.

I have a nose. I can smell with that. But God gives another sense.

He gives this ability to see beyond the veil, to see on the other side. You know, somebody like Peter could come along and if Peter said to you, oh, that's a beautiful sunset, you wouldn't... Now, if you're blind, you might wonder about that. But if you can see and there is a beautiful sunset in fact, you'd say, yeah, Peter, I see where you get that from.

And Peter proclaims, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Well, how come everybody didn't see that? Because Peter, flesh and blood did not reveal that to you. My father did.

You see, faith is all about a revelation. It's about God giving the ability to have something revealed to us that other people just simply don't have revealed to them. That's just a fact.

If you've got the capacity to sense the unseen, it's because God gave you that. God endowed you with that. God poured out some kind of revelation of Himself to you.

To deny that? For unbelievers to come along and deny that is just as foolish as a blind man wanting to dismiss the fact that there's a sky out there that's blue because he can't see it. Or a deaf man says birds don't sing. Why? Because he's never heard it.

But the truth is that God gives the ability to have a perception of the invisible things. They become real to me. They become clear to me.

Faith is the evidence of things unseen. Faith is that God-given organ that gives me the ability to see what lost men cannot see. I see a reality that they don't behold.

And if you've got true faith here, that's exactly what's happened to you. Now, here's truth 4. It's the beginning of verse 1. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for. Now here, hope has to do with what's future.

Faith not only focuses on what's presently real yet unseen. Faith also is the assurance of things that are hoped for that are yet future and unseen. We hope for what we don't have yet.

Faith sees into the future at what God's promised. Folks, this is why this is no fool's errand. This is why we live this Christian life.

We're willing to make sacrifices the world's not willing to make. Why? Well, they don't want to give away their money. Why? Because they can't see.

They have no sense of these promises. They have no sense of the reward at the end. We can do what other people don't do.

We can make radical decisions and radical sacrifices in our life precisely because we've got this ability to see what they can't see. It's an assurance. That's what faith is.

It's the substance. It's the foundation of my hope that the reward I seek, I will one day have it because God has promised it. Brethren, when you begin to compare what God has promised to the measly, trifling things you can have in this life, it's a no-brainer.

But you'll never make that exchange if you can't see the glory of what's unseen. There's a reward waiting for us. Brethren, I'll tell you this, to the degree your faith has the ability to grasp hold of a promise like this, don't lay up your treasure on this earth.

Store up for yourselves treasure in heaven. You know, to the ability that a man or a woman has the ability to see that, you'll tell it by their life. Because they will say, wow, if that's true, why would I want to hoard anything here? Why not give it all away? It's eternal.

It's a reward. I'll have it forever. My works follow me right out into eternity.

But, brethren, I tried to derive that definition from two verses. I have seen the theologians, they can write whole books on faith. God, He gives us two verses where He gives us some information, but then you know what He does? He doesn't fill us with all these theses, all these treatises.

He says, do you really want to know about faith? He takes us by the hand and He says, let Me take you down through the corridors of time and let Me show you real men and real women who had this real faith. Because it always produces something. It always makes their lives different than the lives of people who don't have it.

And He said, I'm going to show it to you. The way God means to explain faith to us is simply to show it operative. So that's what we have in chapter 11.

Basically, the exploits of God's people. You want to know what genuine faith is? Come behold My people. You want to recognize true faith? See how it impacted real people.

And you know something that's so precious to me and beautiful from Hebrews 11? Look at verse 13. These all died in faith. And you might, right on the surface, you may say, you find that precious and beautiful? You know what's so precious about this? They not only had faith, they had it to their dying day.

And we know it from an inspired account. They died in faith. Remember what the book is about? You've got to hold this firm to the end.

They did. They didn't make shipwreck halfway. And I've heard it said here recently, you know about people that have made shipwreck.

I've been here since 2001. Minor departure to Manchester. But I've seen people walk away again and again.

Brethren, your race is not done until you get to the end, to the last day. The thing about us is no matter how much we're believing, we haven't finished the race yet. They made it! Oh, I love this! The odd people.

And listen, if you've got true faith, you're going to be odd. The odd people of chapter 11 made it. The whole point of stressing that these folks had faith and had it to the very end is because that kind of faith endures all the way to the end.

It always produces a people very different from everyone else. And you know what? These are the only people upon the face of the earth that please God. Without faith, it's impossible to please Him.

Do you feel the absoluteness of that? Impossible! If you're sitting here and you're not a Christian, oh, well, you know, things are good. Sun's shining out there. You know what? You don't please God.

And He's going to destroy you in the end. Why? Because you're not trusting Him. God takes personal offense if you will not trust Him.

Because if you won't believe who He is and what He promises, you're calling Him a liar. God doesn't like to be called a liar. Because God is not... Let every man be a liar.

God is not a liar. God is very true. You know how you have no right to go to hell? None of you.

God commands you not to. You're commanded to come. He commands all men everywhere to repent.

You have no license and no liberty to go to hell. This God tells you to trust Him. And here's the thing.

Nothing. Without faith, it's impossible to please Him. Think about pleasing God.

Nothing! Is there anything more? Look, do I want to please my wife? Yes. To some degree, do I want to please you? Yes. Do I want to please my fellow elders? Yes.

Do I want to please my mom? My parents when my dad was alive? Well, yes. Are there certain people in your life that you want to please? Brethren, I'll tell you this. There's nothing more significant in all of life than pleasing God.

Can you think of anything more personally significant for you than to have it said of you? You are a man or you are a woman. You're a boy or you're a girl who pleases God. Is there anything more significant than that defining your life? Or anything more significant if it doesn't define your life? Because the repercussions of such, remember the Word, back in 38, 39, is you'd be destroyed.

It's no small thing. I mean, think about it. God is the ultimate of all beings.

He's the absolute test of what truly is pleasing in all of the universe. And if He's pleased with you, that's the greatest thing imaginable. So, that's what chapter 11 is.

It's a list of God-pleasing people. So, when you read by faith Abel, by faith Enoch, by faith Noah, by faith Abraham, catch this, don't miss this, God is not saying they are some kind of special category of Christian. It's by that faith you please God.

So, don't put Abraham on some kind of pedestal or Moses on some kind of pedestal of superiority. You don't want to see Abraham's life, Moses' life, Noah's life as one thing, but your life is something else. And that's okay.

Do you realize what was said? We're children of Abraham. Uh-uh. Only if you do the works that Abraham did.

You know who the children of Abraham are? The ones that have faith. You remember what Jesus said? Here comes a centurion. He said, you know what? I have not found such great faith even in Israel.

And then you know what that launched him into saying? You know what? Many are going to come from the east and the west and they're going to sit down with Abraham. You remember what Paul said in the Roman letter? That Abraham was counted righteous by faith and he said that wasn't said for his sake only. It was said for ours.

You see, brethren, what you never want to do is read Hebrews 11 and say, well, these guys are the champions of the faith and of course, I'm not like David and I'm not like Noah. You don't want to say that. That's not the point of this.

The point of this is not, well, I'm not like them, but it's going to be okay with me in the end. That is not the point here. Abraham had faith.

He had deep faith. Remember what it said at the end of 10? That preserves the soul. The point of this is the same way they had faith entrusted in the unseen.

So you and I will continue to the end and we will not shrink back. Notice saving faith. It always takes hold of what God says.

And let's just give you a couple examples. Why did Abraham leave his home? Did he just decide one day, you know what, I'm going to venture out into the wilderness? We call it the promised land. Why? Because God spoke.

Abraham, leave your family, leave your home, and go somewhere where you don't know. But I'm going to take you and I'm going to bless you there. See, God spoke.

Noah, build an ark. A lot of people think it hadn't even rained yet. The very fact that they never saw a rainbow before that makes that somewhat probable.

The ground was watered a different way before that. But think about this. God spoke to these men.

They had the Word of God. And what happens? You know what happens? Christians hear the words that come out of this book and then they end up doing things that no one else does precisely because they hear God speak to them about things that others just don't hear. Christians live different because they hear different.

Christians live different because than they otherwise would if they didn't hear what God has said. There's Noah. What was Noah's hope? Noah's hope that after he spent 100 years building an ark and undoubtedly the people mocked at him and laughed at him and thought it was absolutely ridiculous, his hope was that after 100 years of building this ark, he wasn't going to be the laughingstock of all of humanity.

Rather, he and his family would be saved. What was Abraham's hope? Abraham's hope, can you imagine it? You're going to leave the city. You're going to leave the family.

You're going to go where? Out there? I mean, what's your hope? Your hope is that you're going to get out in the wilderness and not find God's not here. I'm all by myself. What was Sarah's expectation? Her hope was God said, year from now, you're going to have a child.

Her hope was that that was going to come to pass. That that was indeed going to be the end. That was going to be the reality.

That was going to be how all of this thing worked out. Brethren, God speaks. God speaks and when we build our life on the fact that God has spoken something, that's saving faith.

It believes what God has said. It believes who He is. It preserves the soul.

This is saving faith in real life. God's Word, God's promises are something for you and I to put our weight upon. And you know what? Saving faith does not run from the unknown.

If there's anything about all of this that you can see in Hebrews 11, it's like, what? It's not seen. It's a conviction of things not seen. This universe was created by something that's not seen.

What is visible was created by that which is not seen. Abraham, verse 8, obeyed when he was called to go out of a place that he was to receive as an inheritance and he went out not knowing where he was going. Brethren, by faith, the Mirandists took Michael in.

Do they know where they're going? Do they know how they got here? They know how they got here because it's here now. But do they know where it's going tomorrow? They don't know where it's going tomorrow. We've got some families packed up and got over to Nepal.

You think they know where they're going to be in a year? They don't know where they're going to be in a year. You know what we have? We have the character of God put on display. We have His faithfulness.

You get to the end of this book, I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. Now we have that.

I don't know what the future... You know what, coming back from Manchester, I have no idea. It's unseen. I don't know where I'm going.

But, I have this. I have the faithfulness of God and I have the promises of God. Brethren, you don't always have to know.

I mean, that seems to be a pretty predominant thing here. Verse 10, he was looking forward to a city that has foundations. Had he seen it yet? No, he hadn't seen it from.

Verse 13, things promised. They greeted them from afar. How do you greet promises from afar? It means you see them out there on the horizon.

The faith. They were seeking a homeland. Verse 20 talks about Isaac and voting future blessings on Jacob.

He hadn't seen him yet. Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph. He hadn't seen that yet.

Joseph at the end of his life made mention of the exodus, but they hadn't seen that exodus yet. Yet, he was so convinced it was going to happen. See, it's a conviction of things that are not seen.

Verse 26, you have Moses. He was looking to the reward, but he hadn't found it yet. Verse 27, he was seeing Him who is invisible.

Brethren, this is faith. Can you see it? Listen, we've been spoken to just as well as they have. Think with me.

You know, in times past, God spoke to us by the prophets, but in these last days, He's spoken to us by His Son. What does His Son say to us? What does He say to you and me? Listen, a scribe comes along one day and says, I'll follow you. Foxes have holes.

Birds of the air have nests. I don't have anywhere to lay my head. Wow! And you know what? That was the end of the matter.

Is that unsettling to anybody? That was just the end of the matter. Now, well, it's okay if you live in your house for 40 years and then you decide that you want to do something. It's just boom! There it is.

Hits the guy right between the eyes with it. And then it's like there's no further explanation. Or did he follow? Did he not follow? It was almost like, what do we... Brethren, what does your faith do with that? We're called to live by faith.

Faith. Things not seen. But God has spoken.

Jesus has spoken. My followers, I want you to follow Me. And you know what? You know what's true of me? I don't have a house.

I don't have any permanent dwellings. I'm passing through. I'm moving.

I don't even have the same securities that birds and foxes have. Still want to follow Me? What does that mean for you? What does that mean for your faith? What does that mean for future decisions? But you know when He comes along and He says other crazy things, like whoever would save his life will lose it. Whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospels will save it.

Are you losing your life for the Gospels' sake? That's what He says. And He says if you don't lose your life for Him and for the Gospels' sake, that you will lose your life. Permanently.

Eternally. You see, these are the kind of words that have been given to us. It's like Jesus came along and He spoke these words.

What does faith do? Faith is going to do what people will not do who can't see what you see. But you see there's a reward coming. You know these promises.

Jesus said, "...Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or lands for My sake and for the Gospel who will not receive a hundredfold. Now in this time, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, lands, with persecutions in the age to come, eternal life." When He says things like this, I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon so that when your money fails, you may be received into the eternal dwellings. By who? Obviously, by the people you invested in.

How much do you believe this? How much is our faith captivated by these things? Brethren, the unknowns of it all. I don't know what tomorrow holds. You don't know what tomorrow holds.

But we know this. We know what Jesus has told us. He said, come follow Me.

And He said, I don't have a place to lay My head. Follow Me. I want you not to lay up treasure in this earth.

Follow Me. I want you to be like a grain that falls into the ground and dies. Follow Me.

I want you to give up all these things that are most precious, most dear, when I call for them to follow Me. He's calling us to radical lives. Don't be anxious.

You can trust God. I want you to be righteous people. I want you to pluck out eyes.

I want you to gouge them out. I want you pure. I want you to love each other more and more.

I want you to love each other. Love not like the world. By that, the world's going to know that you belong to Me.

I want you radical people. I want you doing things that nobody else does. Because you see things they don't see.

You recognize that I am the Christ who came to save you from the uttermost. You recognize there's a reward. You recognize there's a city that has foundations.

The builder of this is God. You recognize what's coming. This is a fleeting life.

The things here are going to burn up. You recognize what sort of people ought you to be in light of the fact that everything you have is going to burn up. Brethren, we have promise.

We are people of faith. Don't look at these people and think, oh, these guys have the exceptions. These guys are set on a pinnacle.

These guys are special. That's not what Hebrews is all about. Hebrews is our lives will be like their lives if we have the faith they had.

Don't you believe it? That if you shrink back, we're destroyed. What do you think Corrie Ten Boom and her family thought? They didn't know what was going to happen if they took Jews in. It's unknown.

So much of Hebrews 11 is unknown. But what is known? We know something about our God. He is.

He's a rewarder. He's faithful. He's not going to leave us.

There is a city. There is a Christ who has made purification for sins. He sat down.

The work is done. Look, you are no fool to throw in with this God and with His Son and cast yourself on His promises. You are no fool.

Don't shrink back from this. Our race isn't done yet. The race isn't over.

They made it to the end. Brethren, you know what this tells me? That when we begin to add on, it's not just by faith Abel, by faith Enoch, it's going to be by faith Nellie. What do you do? By faith... I can go right back through.

You can put your names in there. By faith, what are we going to do? Because that's what this is all about. By faith, John is going to do something.

By faith, Carlos is going to do something. By faith, Ruby is going to do something. By faith.

By faith. What are we going to do by faith? Because we see what the world doesn't see and we know what the world doesn't know. And we've got a perception of these things.

Brethren, there is just the most unbelievable, indescribable glory waiting before us. And Jesus has given us the privilege to follow in His footpaths and to basically be expressions of Him in this world. Now that He's seated there, He's going to dwell with us with the Spirit of God giving us power and now leaves us in

the world with His Spirit to carry on the work that He did.

Wow! And this is glorious. Brethren, we are a privileged people. There's nobody like us.

It's not because we made ourselves special. It's because He made us special. He made us people of the promise.

He's given us faith. He's given us the glorious privilege of seeing what the rest of the world can't see. What a thing God has done for us.

Thank You, Father. Amen. You're dismissed.

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