

**Jesus Tells a Better Story, Part 3 - Hebrews 11:23-40**  
**Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

**Notes from the Sermon**

Our trip through the Hall of Faith comes to an end this morning. Hebrews 11 takes a fantastic journey into the faith of the key people whose stories are made known in the Old Testament. The original readers knew these stories intimately, and they saw the people as the heroes of the faith. Of course, all of them had deep flaws, and those flaws are not hidden in the story of the Bible. Yet, they believed God and Jehovah told His story through their lives. A key to understanding Hebrews 11, and the Old Testament as a collection of books and stories is to realize that these are not just a random set of tales and narratives telling stand alone stories. Each of the stories in this chapter and in all of Scripture are interwoven into one grand story, one epic meta-narrative. In this grand story, God is the True Hero, and His story is a redemption story. God rescues His people from slavery, redeems them from their sin and failures, and restores them into a right relationship with Himself and toward becoming the sort of people He created them to be.

The central moment in that story comes in the life of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt. Hebrews reminds us that every part of this story involves the faith of Moses (and his parents as well as the nation). He is rescued as a child by the faith of his parents. As an adult, Moses rejects the call of power and riches he could have certainly obtained as an adopted grand-son of Pharaoh, and instead sided with his own people who were destitute slaves. Yet, they were God's people. By faith Moses stood before Pharaoh demanding the release of the Israelites, and by faith he led the people to observe the first Passover on the night God brought ultimate judgment to Egypt. Then, by faith, when they were about to be destroyed by the Egyptian army, Moses put his staff in the Red Sea and God parted it for the people. At each step God is the one speaking to Moses calling Him to faith and obedience. And in every moment it is God who actually does it all. Moses really has nothing to do with it, other than to believe. As if Moses could conger up the plagues or actually part a body of water. God is the hero, and He is telling a grand redemption story through Moses and the Israelites. Yet, Moses finds Himself in the middle of the story and showered with the blessings of God's promises because he trusts.

The same is true of Joshua in the battle of Jericho, and of all the other figures listed in this chapter. Each spent their lives pursuing God and hearing His voice. And each, at key moments believed. And by faith, God did miracles to tell His story. Fires quenched, lion's mouths stopped, battles won, the dead raised. These things really happened, and they were part of God's great story. Yet, the author is careful at this point to remind us that stories of rescue, victory, and plagues are not always the outcome of our faith. We need to hear the final section of the Hall, the unnamed people whose outcomes were drastically different. Without these stories we can easily start believing the false Gospel that says that strong faith will always mean healing, wealth, victory in this life, and success. People being sawn in two by faith kind of puts a damper on that view. We want to believe in Jesus if it means our enemies are thumped and our bank account grows. Furthermore, we do really want to believe that earthly blessings are the true sign of great faith. Hebrews 11 ends by making it uber clear. God may rescue you from the flames, or the flames may kill you. He may overthrow enemies, or enemies may put you on the rack. Is God faithful to his promises when someone is healed or escapes, and less faithful to the poor, the one who suffers, or those murdered for their faith?

Of course, we know the answer is absolutely not. God's story is a redemption story, and that story outlasts this life. Whether they experienced blessings in their earthly life or not, each of these stories shows us that faith in Jesus does put us at odds with the powers and opinions of the world around. Yet, the ultimate hope for all of these people in the Old

Testament was that they believe in the God who would one day raise them from the dead, for a new kind of life, and into an eternal people.

The truly blessed life is the life of faith in Jesus. The Old Testament heroes were looking forward to Him, but their faith was always wrapped in the cloud of uncertainty, because Jesus had not come. Our faith has the full story, we know who Jesus was and is, and we know what happened on the original Good Friday and Easter Sunday morning. We see the full glory and character of this God on display, and we have His Word in the Bible. To live in the blessings of God comes as we continue beholding Jesus, seeking His voice in our lives, and trusting Him no matter what the world around threatens. And our faith grows as we, in obedience, no matter the cost live as people who know there is a better resurrection coming. So keep believing!

**Bible Reading for the Week**

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Genesis 30	Genesis 31	Genesis 32	Genesis 33	Genesis 34	Genesis 35	Genesis 36

Reading from this past week’s sermon: Hebrews 11:23-40

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Hebrews 12:1-4

**Family Worship**

Song - *By Faith*

<https://youtu.be/LcSmJdhMzSQ?si=VNiB2RR56L0Ko-Xi>

Gospel Project

Unit: God is Powerful

Story: Joshua’s Farewell

Big Picture Question: Why can we trust God?

Answer: We can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.

Scripture: Joshua 23-24

New City Catechism

Question 14: Did God create us unable to keep his law?

Answer: No, but because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve we are all born in sin and guilt, unable to keep God’s law.

Verse: Romans 5:12

Hebrews 11:23-40

- To help your family or C-group, spend some time working through the different stories referenced in this text, and make sure your people understand them.
- What is the connection between faith and the saving actions of God in these stories?
- In verses 32-38, the author gives a quick summation of the rest of the Old Testament. He names several blessings of faith in verses 33-35, yet the story turns with the second phrase of v. 35. Would you prefer that the text not point out those “sawn in two”? What would happen if we don’t remember these stories as well?
- What are some steps we can take to grow our faith in Jesus? How does Jesus work in us to grow our faith?

Prayer

\*Pray that God would build our faith as His people.

\*Pray that we would be led by wisdom and respond with good stewardship as we use our building and love our city.