

# Faith that Can Bear Truth

Series: Real Life. Real Faith.  
Brad Bailey – June 19, 2016

Hebrews 11:1-3 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. <sup>2</sup> Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation. <sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.

Hebrews 11: 32 (NLT)

How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets.

1. To bear truth I must grasp the difference between my opinion and \_\_\_\_\_.

Ezekiel 2:1-3, 6-8; 3:10-11 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> "Stand up, son of man," said the voice. "I want to speak with you."<sup>2</sup> The Spirit came into me as he spoke, and he set me on my feet. I listened carefully to his words. <sup>3</sup> "Son of man," he said, "I am sending you to the nation of Israel, a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me. ....<sup>6</sup> "Son of man, do not fear them or their words. Don't be afraid even though their threats surround you like nettles and briars and stinging scorpions. Do not be dismayed by their dark scowls, even though they are rebels. <sup>7</sup> You must give them my messages whether they listen or not. ...<sup>8</sup> Son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not join them in their rebellion. <sup>3:10</sup> Then he added, "Son of man, let all my words sink deep into your own heart first. Listen to them carefully for yourself. <sup>11</sup> Then go to your people in exile and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says!' Do this whether they listen to you or not."

2. My commitment to truth must grasp the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ to those in need of it.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 (MSG)

I'm not responsible for what the outsiders do, but don't we have some responsibility for those within our community of believers? God decides on the outsiders.

3. To bear truth I must look beyond the \_\_\_\_\_  
of what is acceptable.

Jeremiah 5:30-31; 6:13-15

"A horrible and shocking thing has happened in the land: <sup>31</sup> The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end? ..."From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit. <sup>14</sup> They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace. <sup>15</sup> Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen.

4. To bear truth I must grasp an appropriate \_\_\_\_\_  
for others.

Ezekiel 33:1-6

The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, speak to your countrymen and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, <sup>3</sup> and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, <sup>4</sup> then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning and the sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head...<sup>6</sup> But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.'

Ephesians 4:25

"Therefore, let each one of us put off falsehood and speak truthfully to our neighbor for we are all members of one body."

Matthew 5:13-14

Hebrews 11:39-40 (MSG)

Hebrews 12:1-2

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**Today we are concluding our series** titled, “**Real Life. Real Faith**” in which we have been looking through the lives that are found throughout God’s earliest days of working with humanity - through the Old Testament. A list of several is given in The Biblical Book of Hebrews...in the eleventh chapter.

Looking back upon these lives helps us remember “Our Story.” For many of us...the Old Testament is a less familiar part of what God has made known. We need to realize that when God began to call a people to Himself...through which He would reveal His saving work...it is part of OUR STORY. Later referred to as “people of the promise”... all who turn to God enter His promise...and are people bound with Him...not based on race or religious traditions. So looking back at Abel, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Samael... are looking back into our story ...our roots...as how God has worked in our common life of faith. [1]

The writer begins describing the common quality of faith....

### **Hebrews 11:1-3 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup> Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. <sup>2</sup> Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation. <sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God’s command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.

**Faith finds it’s force in "things hoped for,"** that is, **it starts** with a **sense of discontent**. Faith rises out of that element in which we realize that something is not right...in us and through us...and around us. The longing for belonging amidst alienation...for right amidst the darkness we within...for justice amidst injustice...these are the longings out of which faith exists. If we develop such a deep attachment to the world the way it is...and to ourselves the way we are...we will lose the faith that lives amidst “things hoped for.” But if you sense that something is not right... then you are in a position to consider that there is a larger reference point.

Then comes "the conviction of things not seen" - not only a desire for something better, but an awareness of something else. It means we become aware that we are surrounded by an invisible spiritual kingdom, that which is seen is not the whole explanation of life, that there are realities which cannot be seen, weighed, measured, analyzed, or touched, and yet which are as real and as vital as anything we can see. In fact they are more real because they are the explanation of the things which can be seen. We must understand there is a spiritual kingdom that exists.

This is so beautifully seen in the words and teachings of our Lord Jesus. He speaks of God the Father as though he were standing right there, invisible and yet present. He speaks of the world as a great family home in which there is a Father with a Father's heart welcoming us. He does not see the universe as an impersonal meaningless material random machine.... but he sees it as an invisible, but very real, spiritual kingdom.

It's **not wishful thinking** but **taking hold of the larger reality**. The writer declares that faith grasps that the temporal **material world is a manifestation of the eternal** unseen source that it reflects. While some consider that what is unseen cannot be real... others recognize, that in fact, everything is a manifestation of something that preceded it...something outside itself.

**So faith is responding to whatever one discovers about that source ...namely God.**

It is never a matter of understanding everything...but understanding what we don't know by what we do know. Faith responds to whatever God makes known amidst a lot that we don't understand...a lot of mystery.

The common quality on all these lives was a responsiveness to God... a quality of "faith."  
The list of faith concludes in verse 32...

**Hebrews 11: 32 (NLT)**

How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, **and all the prophets**.

**He concludes** with speaking of **the prophets**. They are the last in this list. **For every Jew of that day**...that referred to their **more recent** and **sobering history as a people**. [2, 3]

**The prophets** were **those who God raised up to call the people back to Himself**.

He called them to **declare the truth** that **they needed to face**...but **didn't want to face**.

God had called the people unto himself and through them and through the covenant He made with them He would reveal Himself to bless all nations. But **the people wandered away** ....they became **absorbed by the culture at large in all it's destructive ways**...or became lost to a **self-righteous superiority**...that hid behind their sense of religious identity or false piety.

**So God raises up voices to declare the condition and consequences at hand.**

He raises up those in whom He will give His truth that others have not been able to see anymore. The prophets are raised up and they are able to speak to the nature of people's errors, to the consequences of the people's error and to the opportunity for the people to be restored back into what God had always intended for them to know and how they might bless others.

The Prophets bore a faith which **carried an unusual commitment to truth**.

**Today truth is in a precarious place**. The whole idea of truth, the whole nature of truth .... Has become lost to merely something self-serving...relative to how it can serve us.

**I read about a letter that the IRS received**. The individual who wrote it said that they were unable to sleep, that they had been **suffering from insomnia** and as a result, and this is a true story, **they wanted** to go ahead and **admit that they hadn't paid all of their taxes**. And so they said, **"Enclosed is \$150."** And it said, **"P.S. If I still can't sleep, I'll send the rest."**

I laughed...but I also think **it says something about our desire for truth**, that we want it, but **we want just enough to feel okay**.

The truth is that we have mixed feelings about truth. I want it, but I **really would just want enough to serve my desires.**

**In just one or two generations,** we have **shifted from a culture** which was **proud to shape itself upon higher moral guiding truth...**to one which is **proud of dismissing any claim to absolute truth.**

We want to define ourselves.

[It began with a generation stopped and said, "I'm not sure the establishment has it right and I want to really rethink that. I don't necessarily want to buy in to everything that's been given to me because I see things in our society that really don't seem so virtuous." And so there was a fresh thinking of truth. Many people came and found God a fresh and came back to the profound truths that they saw in the life of Jesus Christ. Many also just embraced a self-serving cynicism that would eventually dismiss all truth.]

**We live with a world struggling to declare and dominate others with versions of truth...or a passive dismissal of all truth in the name of tolerance and open-mindedness.**

Today live in a world where **moral truth is either used to justify killing others...or** moral truth has been **replaced by opinion polls.** Children are offered little more than just looking around to see what others are doing.

It's difficult because we live in a time where **the whole notion of truth** that is **desperately needed** is so **deeply resisted.** The very thing that we see that our culture is hungry for, someone coming after truth, we've been told to hate and to try to resist.

**It is amidst such times** that we **do well** to **consider the prophets of old.** They bore a unique **faith to bear the truth.**

They too faced a culture in which the truth that was so desperately needed was so deeply resisted. **Two of those prophets in particular, Jeremiah and Ezekiel** who make up the largest work in the Old Testament of the prophetic work.

Those two prophets are sometimes referred to as the "Prophets of Responsibility" because the people thought, *"Well, we're God's people and we're protected by our past. Everything seems okay. I mean, God's on our side, so what else could happen to us?"*

God spoke into this false reality. He spoke of the consequences at hand. Needless to say...these prophets were not popular. The people wanted to feel good about their position...and like today...it was hard to be one who bore the truth.

**The prophets were bearers of truth that didn't fit the cultural mindset.**

What we can learn from those who lived their lives with an unusual commitment to truth in a very compromising world? Let me suggest to you **four things we learn about the faith that bears truth.**

Faith to bear truth...

## **1. To bear truth I must grasp the difference between my opinion and God's Word.**

The first thing we need to grasp is the prophetic source for truth. My commitment to truth is to be founded on God's word, not simply my ideas.

We're reminded that the prophets' calling was not just to go out and share their own mind or heart or knowledge, but just to share what God said.

We see in Ezekiel's calling, He said to me, speaking of God,

**Ezekiel 2:1-3, 6-8; 3:10-11 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup> "Stand up, son of man," said the voice. "I want to speak with you." <sup>2</sup> The Spirit came into me as he spoke, and he set me on my feet. I listened carefully to his words. <sup>3</sup> "Son of man," he said, "I am sending you to the nation of Israel, a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me. . . .<sup>6</sup> "Son of man, do not fear them or their words. Don't be afraid even though their threats surround you like nettles and briars and stinging scorpions. Do not be dismayed by their dark scowls, even though they are rebels. <sup>7</sup> You must give them my messages whether they listen or not. . . .<sup>8</sup> Son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not join them in their rebellion. 3:<sup>10</sup> Then he added, "Son of man, let all my words sink deep into your own heart first. Listen to them carefully for yourself. <sup>11</sup> Then go to your people in exile and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says!' Do this whether they listen to you or not."

**Some of us may be prone to presume that we are always right...**and that people should accept our views as the truth.

**Some of us may feel we never have a basis to speak of truth.** We may feel intimidated. "How can I really speak truth? What basis do I have?"

**Their ability to bear truth** in a world that didn't want to receive it **wasn't born out of their wisdom**, their own **knowledge** or their own **perception**, but of God's wisdom, God's knowledge and God's perception.

Many of us have good ideas and insights that we can add to the truth in essence or that we can help shape truth with, but **at the foundation and to the core, it's needs to be that in which we know to be God's sure word.** That's where we can find confidence. That's where we have the right and even the necessity to speak into other's lives.

Knowing that there is an eternal unchanging center of truth... brings courage...but not pride.

Do you sense how the prophets bore that which they could not find any sense of superiority in? God was so clear. They belonged to this people...and they needed to hear this word first.

**Ezekiel 23:10 (NLT)**

**Then he added, "Son of man, let all my words sink deep into your own heart first. Listen to them carefully for yourself.**

The second thing we learn is that...

**2. To bear truth I must grasp the humility of belonging to those in need of it.**

**The prophets were not standing in a position of separation...or a posture of superiority. They were a part of the people who God's truth was speaking to.**

**That is so vital for us to grasp.**

- That truth will change **how we share life** with God with others.
- That truth will change **how we fathers can best impart truth** to our children.

This is what strikes me about those who choose to declare the sin of "the outsiders" .... The unbeliever...or lost culture. When we presume the position of judge with no agreed basis for having such authority... few can hear anything other than the superiority.

The prophets understood that they stood with the people...belonged to all their ways.

The apostle Paul would later say,

**1 Corinthians 5:12-13 (MSG)**

I'm not responsible for what the *outsiders* do, but don't we have some responsibility for those within our community of believers? God decides on the outsiders.

Among community we have a common unity...which is that God is at the center and we are all desiring to shape our lives around His light and love.

**3. To bear truth I must look beyond the appearance of what is acceptable.**

Do you recall when we reading Israel's history...the day they declared..."let's turn away from God and give ourselves to the destructive ways of the pagan culture?"

You won't find it....because such a turning from God had crept in and worked its way without notice.

They **kept up at outward religious** form of **rules** and **rituals**. Though their hearts were clearly turned away from God...they were self-deceived. [4, 5]

There is a **collective deception** when everyone begins to accept ways in which the heart is not honoring of God. Everything is **reduced down** to it's **lowest common denominator**. **Truth is lost** and obscured by the **common mindset**.

**And the prophets noted** that this **especially happens** when the **perpetuators** of it where the **very priests and prophets themselves**. Those who God had set above the people began to give in to the peoples' desires. Those who were supposed to be the guides and authorizes were just appeasing the people...and in turn the people continued to affirm their role as the religious authority. It becomes kind of a give and take system. Truth is slowly quieted down until no one bears the strength of conscience.

Jeremiah's reveal this in the strongest terms as you see there in Chapters 5 and 6. He makes these statements. He says (this is God talking to him),

**Jeremiah 5:30-31; 6:13-15 (NIV)**

"A horrible and shocking thing has happened in the land: <sup>31</sup> The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?

... "From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit. <sup>14</sup> They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace. <sup>15</sup> Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen.

Those words strike home to me. "They don't even know how to blush."

In our desire to become free of the false and destructive shame that humans bear upon one another...we have lost the healthy shame of grasping when our behavior defies the dignity of our humanity.

It's the power of **when we begin to have our own consciences seared** and our own consciences are just **led by commonality**, not by truth coming in and penetrating, by nothing more profound than pleasure itself.

Those were committed to appease the people were causing the people not to see the consequences of where they were going. They were **letting their consciences grow sleepy**.

And it reminds me of the **often noted discovery** of what happens **when a frog is placed in a kettle that is slowly warming up**.

You can take a frog and place it a kettle of water and place it on the stove. And as you turn up the heat and the water begins to get warmer, the frog who is always able to jump out of the pot, it can do it in a very shallow pot. The frog receives the temperature at such gradual amounts that the frog just stays there growing more comfortable eventually more sleepy and **eventually boils to death without every jumping out**.

> That is a picture of what can happen individually and collectively when we allow our conscience to adapt to the slow changes to what is commonly accepted.

[Next week...going to **begin a new series**... a series that re-engages the 10 Commandments. **The very word "commandment" represents** a lot in us that might be **resistant**. We **don't welcome commands**...we don't like rules. **But... in fact...these are life-giving truths**. We **think we can break them**...but in fact...we are the ones that end up broken...not them. What we grasp the **spirit of those boundaries**...we discover they **are live giving**...they are **God's top ten truths for the flourishing of life...for thriving as human beings**.]

But let me note one more quality that the prophets teach us about the faith to bear truth...

**4. To bear truth I must grasp an appropriate responsibility for others.**

Ezekiel finds God declaring it this way, as you may remember this,

**Ezekiel 33:1-6 (NIV)**

The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, speak to your countrymen and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, <sup>3</sup> and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, <sup>4</sup> then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning and the sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head....<sup>6</sup> But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.'

Powerful image. **God uses an image of a watchman**, those who were set on the highest walls of the city and **they were given a real responsibility and they knew it**. Their responsibility was to their fellow countrymen that they were to watch and **they were to sound if the coming sword was approaching**. The "coming sword" was a term that was used to speak of armies that God would allow to come in judgment of the people. He's saying when judgment comes...the consequences of the people's rejection of God...if those entrusted to the watchman do not hear the warning and do not have the opportunity to change their ways, then that watchmen will also be held accountable. But if they are told the truth...and do not take heed...they alone will be responsible.

**This image may be used by some to stand on the street corner** that's shouting at everybody and warning sinners...**appeasing themselves**...perhaps thinking "Hey, I've done my duty and I have warned sinners down at the promenade or on the street corner in Westwood."

**I don't believe that is what God intends.**

- God was calling one to go to **his own people** who **recognize his role**.
- **God was calling him to call them back to what they had known and understood**.
- Perhaps most notably...what is often lacking is humility and love.

Often we may be proud to proclaim something but we don't love people. The prophets were **praying for the people**. They were **weeping for the people**. They were **confessing that they were a part of the sin**. They were a part of the people. And so we need to have the same kind of commitment.

**Not just proclamation, but participation in one another's lives.**

A good sign is mutuality.

As Paul wrote in

**Ephesians 4:25, he says,**

**"Therefore, let each one of us put off falsehood and speak truthfully to our neighbor for we are all members of one body."**



He's speaking to the community of those who joined together in Christ. We're members of each other. **Do you realize that you have an obligation to bear both truth and grace to those around you.**

You have a responsibility before God to bear truth....**particularly for those who you may have intimate relationships with.** God's given us truth and we're supposed to share in it.

**Today, God wants you to know that you can you can make a difference in the lives of others...when you have the faith of the prophets to bear truth.**

**When you are the friend who bears truth and grace.**

**When you are the father who decides to not let the frog fall asleep.**

#### CONCLUSION:

In verse 39-40 as the author brings to a conclusion his list of the heroes of the faith, he says [6], **Hebrews 11:39-40 (MSG)**

Not one of these people, even though their lives of faith were exemplary, got their hands on what was promised. <sup>40</sup> God had a better plan for us: that their faith and our faith would come together to make one completed whole, their lives of faith not complete apart from ours.

He is saying that this story – **God's great story of faith is not complete without you.** We are a part of God's story of faith. God looking down through the ages foresaw that lives would be a part of this great story of faith. What a privilege!

Hebrews 11 is God's "Perpetual Plaque" of those who lived by faith...and if you look closely, you can see there is **plenty of room for more names.** There's **room for you** and there's room for me.

#### Resources:

This message was adapted from a message I gave May 21, 1995 "Lives of Faith" - The Prophets: A Commitment to Truth. It reflects a different emphasis and in series and growing thoughts about healthy prophetic "truth-telling." I have also drawn on the thoughts on faith by Ray C. Stedman ("What Faith Is").

#### Notes:

1. While this series has focused on the quality of "faith" which we can glean from each of those mentioned, and is clearly the intent of the writer in the context of this passage, looking at these lives can also help us recall some of the larger story of God and humanity. Sometimes the Old Testament is intimidating to us. It's that big thick part at the beginning of your Bible, the part that you open up to and you just feel intimidated by. Looking back at some of these key lives and their story...can help us capture some of the storyline. It helps us remember "Our Story." For many of us....the Old Testament is a less familiar part of what God has made known. We need to realize that when God began to call a people to Himself...through which He would reveal His saving work...it is part of OUR STORY. Later referred to as "people of the promise"... all who turn to God enter His promise...and are people bound with Him...not based on race or religious traditions. So looking back at Abel, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Gideon,

Samael... are looking back into our story ...our roots...as how God has worked in our common life of faith.

2. The reference to the prophets bring the final segment of OT history. The additional OT Books of wisdom literature - Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon were authored by the kings predominantly...and the other historical books, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, connect back to the patriarchal period.

The prophets is notably given to us in general. As Steve Brandon describes,

<http://www.rvbc.cc/sermons/2011-014>

There are the writing prophets, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah Micah, Nahum Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, or Malachi. There are other prophets who did great things, like Elijah or Elisha. There are the lesser known prophets, like Uriah ([Jer. 26:20-23](#)) or Shemaiah ([1 Kings 12:22-24](#); [2 Chron 11:2-4](#), [12:5-15](#)) or Baruch (Jeremiah 32, 36, 43, 45).

Some of the prophets in the Old Testament were women, like Miriam ([Ex. 15:20-21](#); [Num. 12:1-12:15](#), [20:1](#)), like Deborah ([Judges 4:1 - 5:31](#)), like Abigail ([1 Sam. 25](#)), like Huldah ([2 Kings 22:14-20](#)). This is only a sampling of the Old Testament prophets. The Jews used to number the prophets at 55. (<http://www.jewfaq.org/prophet.htm>)

3. John McArther in A Conquering, Courageous Faith, Part 2, describes the connections between the list in verse 32 to the incidents that follows. (<http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/90-389/a-conquering-courageous-faith-part-2>)

Verse 35 says, "Tortured," ...Others experienced mockings and scourgings and chains and imprisonments. I think of one who went through just about all of this and that would be Jeremiah...tortured, chained, imprisoned, thrown into a pit, Jeremiah 38, scourgings, beatings, imprisonments...that would be true of Daniel, too, wouldn't it? And there are surely others.

Verse 37, they were stoned. That happened to Jeremiah according to tradition. And the Old Testament record of Zechariah as well indicates a stoning. Sawn asunder, tradition says, Isaiah the prophet's life ended when he was sawn in half. They were tested, that's probably a better translation than tempted. They were tested, the torture of being tested, pressured to deny their God which they would not do.

These aren't the triumphant ones on a human level, these are the ones who suffered even death. They were put to death with the sword, died by sword. And some of them became exiles. Some of them went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, ill treated, mistreated, treated with evil force is the Greek verb.

And then down in verse 38, some of them wandered in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And I think all of these things would be somewhat familiar to the Jewish people who were hearing this, being read in their congregations. They knew the stories of these people that we don't know because they're not necessarily contained in the pages of Scripture, but likely much of it was passed down. And so in a cryptic fashion, it can be rehearsed to them. They were wanderers, vagabonds, just existing

because they had been put out society. That was the price they paid for their faithfulness to God.

4. The very word that the Greeks use for truth, the one that we read throughout our Bible, impresses this point. The very root of that word “alethia”, which means to “escape notice” or “to forget.” And it has the prefix “a,” which means to negate that, which means that... truth is that which does not escape notice. It is literally interpreted, “Truth as opposed to that which appears to me.” That’s the way they understood truth. Truth in contrast to what appears to be. That’s the truth that we’re invited to take up.

5. It reminds me of an event that took place and some of you might remember, in the 1972 Olympics that were held in Munich, Germany. And when it came down to the marathon and the stadium was filled with 50,000 people were there waiting for the end and Frank Shorter, some of you would remember his name, a US runner who was clearly expected to win the marathon well the stadium knew he had been ahead in the race and they anticipated him. And so when in to the stadium for the last lap comes this figure in to the stadium, 50,000 people rose to their feet and they applauded this figure except for a very few. Those few who really knew Frank Shorter knew it was an imposter. A man had snuck on right outside of the stadium and entered into the applause of 50,000 people, but a few knew him. They knew his mannerisms. They knew what a real marathon runner was like and they could see it was an imposter. And they tried to share that with a few people sitting by them, but it didn’t go over well, not until the media finally picked it up **because there is a power, somehow in mass appeal see things one way.**

6. The NLT version reads...

All these people earned a good reputation because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. <sup>40</sup> For God had something better in mind for us, so that they would not reach perfection without us. - Hebrews 11:39-40 (NLT)

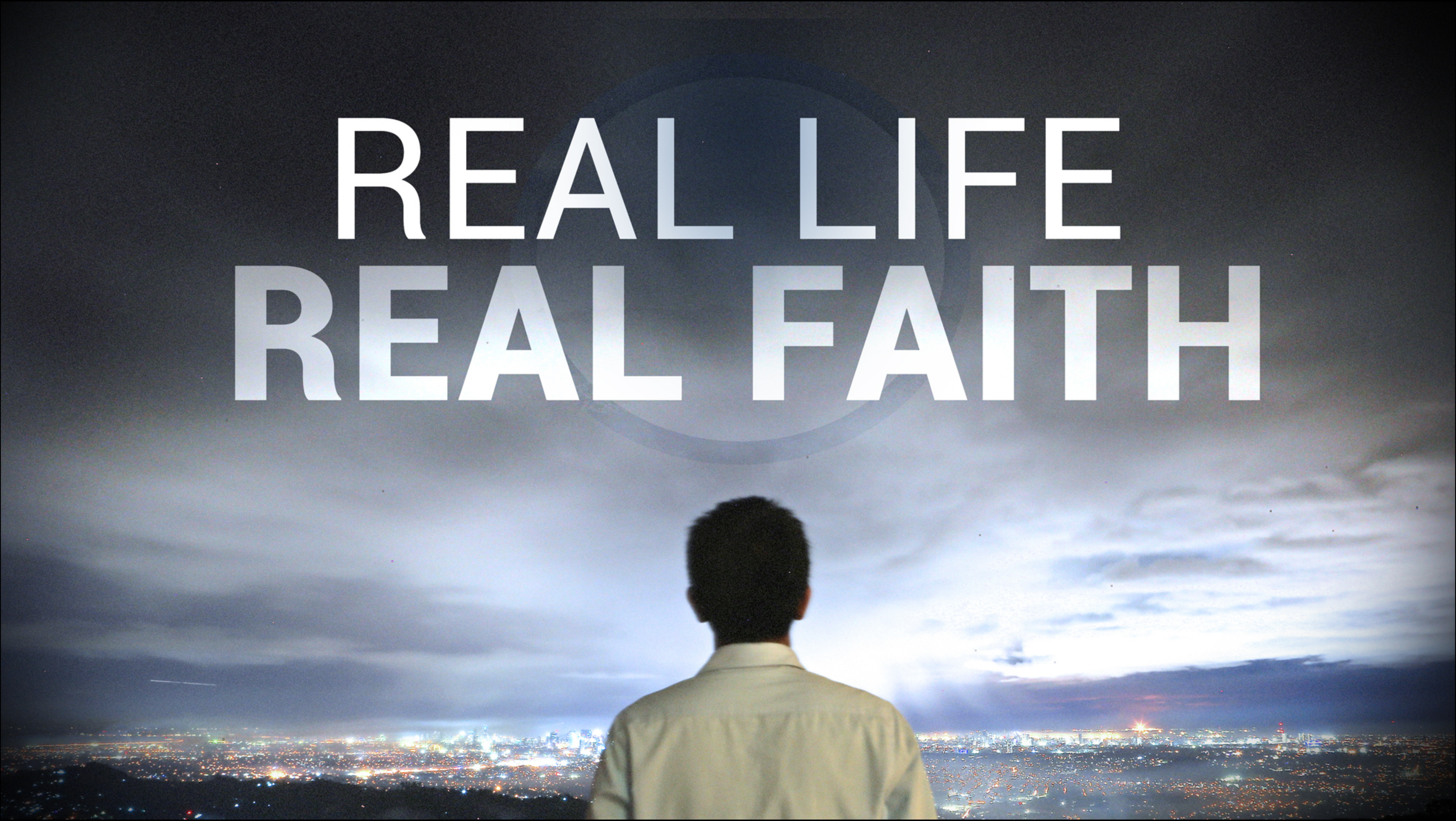
7. It could certainly be noted that the most challenging lesson of the prophets is the prophetic cost for truth. The prophets learned that being the bearer of challenging truth bears a great cost sometimes.

Jeremiah was imprisoned. Jeremiah was beaten. Jeremiah was starved. Jeremiah was thrown in to a muddy pit and left there. And Ezekiel didn’t fair much better.

People didn’t want to hear what they had to say. And you wonder, how it is, that they must have lived with that physical pain and I wonder how they lived with the emotional pain, which might have even been greater. Consider in the hearts of these two and the others, that they came to bear truth was desperately needed. They came to serve the people. They came to give the people what they needed. They were being faithful to the people in their need and yet, what were they called? They were the ones called traders. They called Jeremiah a trader because he wasn’t supporting the apparent cause of the people. They called him an enemy. “You’re our enemy.” And I wonder if those words didn’t cause more pain than even the physical pain they suffered. Have you ever known that? Have you ever tried to speak the truth and the cost comes back? And it’s resentment? And rejection for a time? And it’s hard.



REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH





## Hebrews 11:1-3 (NLT)

*Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. <sup>2</sup> Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation. <sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



## Hebrews 11: 32 (NLT)

*How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets.*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH





REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



*1. To bear truth I must grasp the difference between my opinion and God's Word.*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



*Ezekiel 2:1-3, 6-8; 3:10-11 (NLT)*

*<sup>1</sup> “Stand up, son of man,” said the voice. “I want to speak with you.” <sup>2</sup> The Spirit came into me as he spoke, and he set me on my feet. I listened carefully to his words. <sup>3</sup> “Son of man,” he said, “I am sending you to the nation of Israel, a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me. ....<sup>6</sup> “Son of man, do not fear them or their words. Don’t be afraid even though their threats surround you like nettles and briars and stinging scorpions. Do not be dismayed by their dark scowls, even though they are rebels. <sup>7</sup> You must*



*Ezekiel 2:1-3, 6-8; 3:10-11 (NLT)*

*give them my messages whether they listen or not.*

*...<sup>8</sup> Son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not join them in their rebellion. 3:<sup>10</sup> Then he added, “Son of man, let all my words sink deep into your own heart first. Listen to them carefully for yourself.*

*<sup>11</sup> Then go to your people in exile and say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says!’ Do this whether they listen to you or not.”.*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



*1. To bear truth I must grasp the difference between my opinion and God's Word.*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



*Ezekiel 23:10 (NLT)*

*Then he added, “Son of man, let all my words sink deep into your own heart first. Listen to them carefully for yourself.”*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



*2. My commitment to truth must grasp the humility of belonging to those in need of it.*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



*2. My commitment to truth must grasp the humility of belonging to those in need of it.*

*1 Corinthians 5:12-13 (MSG)*

*I'm not responsible for what the outsiders do, but don't we have some responsibility for those within our community of believers? God decides on the outsiders.*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



*3. To bear truth I must look beyond the appearance of what is acceptable.*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



3. *To bear truth I must look beyond the appearance of what is acceptable.*

*Jeremiah 5:30-31; 6:13-15*

*"A horrible and shocking thing has happened in the land: <sup>31</sup> The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?"*

*..."From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit.*

LIFE  
REAL FAITH



3. *To bear truth I must look beyond the appearance of what is acceptable.*

*Jeremiah 5:30-31; 6:13-15*

*<sup>14</sup> They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace. <sup>15</sup> Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen.*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



*4. To bear truth I must grasp an appropriate responsibility for others.*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



## *Ezekiel 33:1-6*

*The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, speak to your countrymen and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, <sup>3</sup> and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, <sup>4</sup> then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning and the sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head....*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



## *Ezekiel 33:1-6*

*<sup>6</sup> But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.'*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



4. *To bear truth I must grasp an appropriate responsibility for others.*

*Ephesians 4:25*

*“Therefore, let each one of us put off falsehood and speak truthfully to our neighbor for we are all members of one body.”*

REAL LIFE  
REAL FAITH



## Hebrews 11:39-40 (MSG)

*Not one of these people, even though their lives of faith were exemplary, got their hands on what was promised.<sup>40</sup> God had a better plan for us: that their faith and our faith would come together to make one completed whole, their lives of faith not complete apart from ours.*

REAL LIFE  
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TEXT

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