

Heb 11:13-22

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

Heb 11:13

13 These all died in faith (probably in reference to those we’ve been reading about in this chapter), not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

- Their faith in God didn’t fade,
- not even at death.

The ultimate test of a person’s faith is when they’re lying on their death bed.

That’s when their faith becomes evident.

Notice these people spoken of saw the promises from afar.

- Have you ever prayed for someone’s salvation,
- someone you know, and your desire is to see them saved.

We may not always see those come to Christ whom we have prayed for.

- Don’t ever think your prayers are wasted
- because they’re not.

Notice in verse 13 that not only did those spoken of

- receive the promises, but they embraced them.
- That means that they welcomed them
- and held on to them.

The word “embrace” as used in Hebrews 11 literally means “to express greetings upon meeting someone.”

So when you all meet someone here at church and you welcome them,

- you embrace them with a hug.

Not only did they embrace the promises, but they were assured of them.

- They were fully convinced that God
- would keep His promises,

When David spoke to Saul about facing Goliath, David said:

1 Sam 17:37

37 The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!" Saul finally consented. "All right, go ahead," he said. "And may the LORD be with you!"

Later, David said to Goliath:

1 Sam 17:46

46 Today the LORD will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel!

In a way, David embraced the idea of facing Goliath.

- But this is a different embracing than in Hebrews.

David's embracing was a faith-driven willingness rooted in confidence in God.

Heb 11:14

14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.

Heb 11:15-16

15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Jesus is preparing a city for every believer, and we're not too far from being there.

Again, David said in the Psalms:

Psalms 27:4

4 One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.

After Job lost everything he had,

- his family, his health, his security,

Job said:

Job 19:25-27

25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; 26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, 27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Job was confident that something better was at the end of the tunnel.

He knew and believed that the Redeemer lives.

A redeemer is someone who steps in on your behalf,

- someone that vindicates you and restores you.

Listen, your hope is not based on circumstances.

When the storms come, we are to rise up,

Heb 11:17-19

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

This is from Gen 22 when Abraham was told by God

- to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering
- on one of the mountains
- which God would show him.

Abraham obeyed God by taking his son early in the morning

- to the place which God had told him.

There are 3 words in the book of Genesis

- not mentioned until this chapter.

The words are “love, worship and obey.”

Gen 22:2

2 Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love,

Gen 22:5

5 And Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.”

Gen 22:18

18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

The first mention of those words is used of

- a father giving his son in sacrifice.

God's direction in our life may not always make sense to us.

- His direction in your life
- may not make sense to others,
- but when He's directing, it's best to follow.

Choosing to obey God often comes with a cost.

There may be things in a person's life

- that God wants them to change.

Following God comes with a price.

Luke 9:23-24

23 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

When we decide to follow Jesus, we submit to Him in our decisions.

And those decisions often cost us relationships as Jesus says in Matt 10:34-39.

Our faithfulness to God may bring persecution from the world

- because of our opposition to worldly values.

But we're not of the world. In fact, Moses is a great example of that.

- He chose to suffer with God's people
- rather than to enjoy the pleasures of Egypt.

Look at verse 19. Abraham had enough faith in God that he believed

- even if he were to sacrifice his son
- that God could raise him from the dead.

Well, we know the rest of the story.

- God prevented Abraham from sacrificing his son
- and God Himself provided a ram
- as a substitute sacrifice.

Jesus Himself became a sacrifice for us,

Does this mean that we will never suffer as Christians? No!

Rom 8:18

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Our current suffering can never compare to our future glory

Heb 11:20

20 By faith Isaac (Abraham's son) blessed (his two sons) Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

Isaac seems to me as a more of a "laid-back person."

Isaac had two sons, Jacob, "heel catcher" and Esau,

- traditionally meaning "hairy or rough."

Isaac's wife Rebeka favored her son Jacob while Isaac favored Esau.

Esau was a hunter.

Gen 25:28-33

28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. 31 But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." 32 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" 33 Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

Esau had no future in sight, he just wanted some food,

- Jacob took advantage of that.

As Isaac grow old,

- he lost his eyesight
- and wanted to bless
- his favorite son Esau.

So Isaac tells Esau to go out to the field and hunt game for him

- then prepare that delicious food
- so that he could bless Esau.

Well, Rebekah heard Isaac tell Esau to go out and hunt game.

- So she devised a plan to dress Jacob as Esau

She made some savory food for Isaac just as he liked

- and had Jacob take it to him

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- with the idea of him stealing the blessing
- that Isaac was planning on giving to Esau.

Jacob then went to his father Isaac with the food

- dressed as his brother Esau.

And Isaac asked how the hunt was found so quickly.

- Jacob then deceived Isaac by telling him,
- “Because the LORD your God brought it to me.”

Isaac had Jacob approach him, he touched him and smelled him.

I would imagine Jacob’s heart was pounding in his chest by now

- since he knew he was lying
- and knowing that his brother
- could return at any time.

The deception was part of a larger deception orchestrated by Rebekah.

- She deceived her husband,
- then had her son lie which led him
- to invoke God’s name to legitimize the lie.

Don’t ever think to yourself, well, it was something small, no big deal.

Jacob tricked Isaac into thinking he’s Esau and Isaac blessed him.

Gen 27:30

30 Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

When Esau returned, Isaac had already blessed Jacob

- thinking it was Esau he blessed,
- and here was Esau expecting a blessing.

Esau became upset to the point he wanted to kill his brother.

Once again, Rebekah steps in for her son Jacob

- and tells him to flee
- to her brother’s home in Haran.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph (Manasseh/Ephraim), and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

People often think of death as the end of all but the scriptures say in

Psalm 116:15

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints.

Joseph, presents his two sons, Manasseh (the older) and Ephraim (the younger) to Jacob for a blessing.

In Gen 48 Joseph presented Manasseh on the left (Jacob's right) and Ephraim on the right (Jacob's left).

Joseph was expecting Jacob

- to give Manasseh the greater blessing.

But Jacob crossed his arms to place his right hand on Ephraim (the younger)

- and his left on Manasseh.

Joseph then tried correcting his dad

Gen 48:19

19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. (It's like saying, son, I know what I'm doing. I may be old but I still know what I'm doing) He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations."

God's purposes are not bound by human traditions, but unfold according to His will.

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

Joseph was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers and was taken to Egypt

- where he served in Potiphar's house
- as a household slave.

Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph

- of trying to assault her.
- He was then thrown into prison.

Joseph was raised to know God as were his brothers.

- Yet, his brothers sold him into slavery.
- He was imprisoned and still chose
- to trust God and remained faithful.

Notice what Joseph said when he was dying:

(He) made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

He believed God at His word. He knew God had made a promise

- and believed the promise would be fulfilled.

I believe Joseph was saying, God promised to take us out of here

- and I believe that promise,
- so don't leave me behind.

Take my bones with you. His desire was to be associated

- with God's covenant people
- in the promised inheritance.

We should have the same attitude, "Lord, where you lead, I will follow,