

Faith Part 5 – Faith to Endure (4-7-2019)

Faith Series: Seeing our way Home

Key Verse: “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Review: First 3 weeks - God moves towards us, we believe & take Him at His Word, & we pursue Him back.

Last Week: God gives us faith to fight the giants that we face

This Week: “Faith to Endure”

We are going to open with the most moving, but also my least favorite part of Hebrews chapter 11 . . .

Hebrews 11:35-39 (ESV)

(35) Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. (36) Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. (37) They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— (38) of whom the world was not worthy— wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. (39) And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised . . .

Notes: We cannot have an honest review of Biblical Faith, without acknowledging the suffering & ultimate failure of the saints. If we don’t at least get real about that fact that part of the human story, and especially the story of God’s people through history, is that suffering, tragedy and failure – then we aren’t being honest about life, and we can’t speak to the ultimate redemption & goodness of God.

John 16:33 (ESV)

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

1) The Nature of Endurance

- a. Tragedy, Suffering, and a broken world
- b. The difficulty of living with broken people
- c. The enemy we face, who lives to antagonize: Lie, Accuse, Tempt, Steal, Kill, and Destroy

These are the obvious, varied, and extremely difficult circumstances that we navigate over the course of our lives. They bring hurt, discouragement, anxiety, pain, suffering, betrayal, loss, and ultimately death.

But they are not the primary things we endure. They are very real and incredibly difficult, but they are secondary to our real battle for endurance!

2) A Picture of Endurance - Moses

God takes Moses, 120 years old and at the end of his life, up the mountain (Nebo) to see but never to touch the promised land for we he had toiled for many long years . . .

Deuteronomy 34:4-7a (ESV)

(4) And the LORD said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, 'I will give it to your offspring.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." (5) So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD, (6) and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day. (7) Moses was 120 years old when he died . . .

This is Moses . . .

- Burning Bush
- The Exodus – 10 plagues and leading his people to freedom
- Red Sea opens
- Fire & Cloud lead them
- God on the mountain – 10 commandments
- Speaks with God face-to-face as a man speaks to a friend

Yet he dies, with no fan-fare. Unable to enter the promised land, and buried in an un-marked grave.

Why? Many of you know – he hit the rock in anger to perform the miracle of providing water in the desert . . .

Full story is found in Numbers 20:1-13

- Out in the wilderness – His sister Miriam dies and is buried
- In that context the people are thirsty and complaining
- To the point of longing for Egypt & accusing Moses of bringing them to their death!

Numbers 20:6-8 (ESV)

(6) Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them, (7) and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (8) "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and **tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water**. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle."

Notes: God has compassion on the people and wants to take care of them. That is not Moses reaction . . .

Numbers 20:9-11 (ESV)

(9) And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as he commanded him. (10) Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" (11) And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock.

Notes: Moses has every right to be upset – He is mourning his sister & the people are being jerks!

But God doesn't see that as the primary issue . . .

Numbers 20:12-13 (ESV)

(12) And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them."

(13) These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the LORD, and through them he showed himself holy.

Notes: The issue was in Moses heart & his mis-representation of who God truly is.

- Our real issue in our journey of endurance isn't tragedy, suffering, or even other people.
- We are the biggest obstacle in our faith journey!

3) A Life of Endurance – My life through my death

Let's return now to where we started in Hebrews 11, there is 1 final verse tacked on at the end of the list of the suffering & enduring saints who never saw the promise of God ultimately fulfilled in their lifetime . . .

Hebrews 11:39-40 (ESV)

(39) And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, (40) since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Notes: God is telling a larger story, and he wants to bring us into that story, counting us with those who endured. Therefore . . .

Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV)

(1) Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (2) looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Notes: In light of the saints, let's recognize our personal battle to endure (sin), and look to Jesus (the one who perfectly & finally endured for all) to help us complete this journey. How do we run that race?

Hebrews 12:3-6 (ESV)

(3) Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. (4) In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. (5) And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. (6) For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."

Notes: The real test of endurance is who am I, and how will I respond in the midst of a broken world filled with broken people. The issue with Moses is the issue with me: It's what Bob Goff describes as our journey in life: **"I am becoming love"**

Conclusion: Moses death falling short of the promises, leads to His life & the fullness of all of God's promises!

Deuteronomy 34:10-12 (ESV)

(10) And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, (11) none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, (12) and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

Notes: His life had meaning: Face to Face relationship with God, and in spite of challenges and failures, He saw God work in and around his life to bring healing and freedom!

And because his story didn't end there, we know that he is counted with this number, the same group we are invited to be counted with as well . . .

Hebrews 11:13-16 (ESV)

(13) These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (14) For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. (15) If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. (16) But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

There is a city that has been prepared . . .