

A Good Testimony through Faith

HVFC

March 8, 2026

Jesus is Better Series

Hebrews 11:32-40

Good morning.

The day has arrived, I plan to complete chapter 11 today, and in some ways, I am sorry to see it go.

Last week we looked at the final examples highlighted by the author. And my plan was to show that even though the enemy seeks utter destruction through death, trials, and obstacles to our faith, Jesus has come that we should have life, abundant life. And that life gives us victory when the enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy. Victory brings opportunity to share our faith and see the Rahab's of life come to Jesus, the savior. And that is the ultimate goal of Faith, to go and make disciples of all nations, tribes, and tongues.

The Author states in our opening passage (verse 32 of chapter 11) this morning, "what more shall I say"?

It is evident that the author felt he had sufficiently described a full picture of faith, even though the examples could continue indefinitely from OT characters.

Yet in wrapping up this segment on faith, he does something interesting in naming the 4 judges, David then Samuel.

These 6 men show a range of people from horrible to great, yet all in the arena of faith.

It gives us hope, no matter where we find ourselves in life.

Through faith we can all be inspired to mighty deeds.

And at the same time Faith allows us to build fortitude as we walk through the lowest lows.

Turn with me in Hebrews 11:39.

Hebrews 11:39-40

39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,

40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

NKJV

Let's Pray.

I started preaching in Hebrews 11 on November 14. Now I did take 3 weeks for Christmas, and preached about expectations for the year in my first sermon in January. But we have spent about 3 months in this chapter.

And you may have the same sentiment as the writer in verse 32, what more can this guy say about faith?

Matthew Henry is quoted as saying:

After all our searches into the Scriptures, there is more to be learned from them.

This is a guy who wrote this book of commentary on the whole bible.

That is the awe with which we must approach scripture, and why it is important to read and reread and reread and reread the bible. In every season of life both familiar and less familiar passages become applicable in ways we never understood before.

This got me thinking in my own life from where I have come to where I am today. I would encourage you to do that for yourself.

How many of us are glad God did not leave us like he found us? Hopefully as you have walked with God and grown in your faith, you are a better person today for it.

The men in our passage today portray a graphic of growth we should see in our own life.

The shortcomings of each of these examples are all issues we face and fight today. And I won't showcase all of them, you will have to do your own study to find others.

Hebrews 11:32

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

NKJV

Excluding David and Samuel, the other 4 examples given, regarding personal character, are absolute bottom of the barrel type people.

Yet they represent each of us in so many ways. Ouch.

And I think they are purposely chosen. Unlike our earlier examples, all of which were in chronological order, these 6 are not. Barak comes before Gideon, Sampson comes after Jephthah, and Samuel is the one who anoints David, but doesn't see him become King.

I want to quickly cover the four Judges in a character overview, showcasing the type of men they were. These men, plus all the other heroes mentioned before are men and women just like us. They live life, struggle with issues, eat, sleep, bleed, celebrate, mourn, and question things. And just like us, it is faith that allows them to be and do more than they are capable of.

Let's start with Gideon.

He is known for two things. One is he asked for confirmation by placing the fleece before the Lord. Second, he led 300 men to defeat a massive army and won.

Gideon is found in Judges 6-8.

His gleaming traits highlighted in those chapters are fear and questions.

His lack of trust in the word of an angel sent from God, and asking for multiple confirmations. Doubt.

And ultimately, he was seen to be a harsh leader and vengeful to those who challenged him. Ruthless.

Zero star review for boss of the year.

Barak is found in Judges 4.

His gleaming traits were similar, being that he refused to stand and take the responsibility of a leader, and choose to hide behind a woman. A very weak man in the face of danger. Cowardice or lack of Confidence.

Sampson is a prototypical portrayal of many in today's world. (Judges 13-16)

Lust and all its trappings, seeking pleasure in all the wrong places and ways.

Disregarding his Nazarite vow. Truly it was a disregard for holiness, a purposeful spiritual immaturity.

He was ruled by emotions. A petulant man child, whining about not getting his way.

Sampson was driven by impulses and anger with outburst of rage.

And he was morally bankrupt. He had no boundaries between what was right and what was wrong.

Last, we have Jephthah. Truly a disgusting man. He is found in Judges 11.

He was one who ran and lived with worthless men. The worst of the worst, the vilest of humans. And he had no control over his zeal, and made crazy, rash vows.

This is the man who made the vow to offer whatever came out of the door of his home if God would give him victory. This shows a man who has his priorities all wrong. When he returned, his only daughter came running out the door to her daddy. He was a fools fool.

Not only that but he functioned in disunity.

God took these men, with character traits no one here would envy, but we all face and fight, and used these men to bring salvation to the nation. I am not sure why, but I have been thinking back to the transition a lot lately.

Three years ago, as we were preparing for becoming senior leaders here, I fought countless battles within my spirit of being worthy to pastor this church.

The reason is I found myself fighting the same character flaws of these men.

I was afraid. I had doubts. I was a coward with very little confidence in myself, ruled by emotions and temptations to sin, with outburst of anger, making rash decisions with no regard for the consequence. All things common to each of us in our way.

And in wrestling those thoughts I began praying a passage of Scripture found in 1 Samuel.

1 Samuel 10:9

So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day.

NKJV

Saul gave excuses, but when he agreed to be obedient, God gave him another heart, a heart to become what he was not.

This is what Faith does to us. It comes to us where we are, and begins to move us to accomplish the task and calling God has on each of our lives.

David and Samuel are similar, only with less sus character flaws.

God can over come even the worst parts of us through faith in Him.

Now with these men in mind, including all those who came before, and now adding ourselves to the mix, I want to explore these closing statements of the chapter.

Chapter 11 comes to a close by give a sum total of what a life could bring when lived through the lens of faith.

Hebrews 11:33-35

33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again.

NKJV

Through Faith ordinary men were inspired to heroism.

I don't mean that they sought the fame and privilege of being a hero. Rather in the moment of great suffering and pain, they responded to the call of God, at times reluctantly, to bring salvation around them

The premise of the thought is that unimportant people like Gideon. A man hiding in a winepress, threshing wheat for his family so the oppressors wouldn't take it.

The youngest member of the smallest tribe of the weakest clan leads an army to over throw the Midianites. The likes of Sampson, a womanizing whining man child, is given strength to cripple the Philistines.

Samuel, a child given to the temple at an early age, raised by less than stellar priest, to work righteousness all of his days. Daniel, a slave and captive, thrown into the den of lions for praying, to be raised up to senior leadership in the nation.

All came from weakness and were made strong by the Spirit of the God, being valiant in battle, destroying whole armies, and even raising the dead.

Heroes to those whom they helped, yet just ordinary men who acted in obedience to the calling of God and walked by faith.

One that impacts all of us was Joseph and Mary. Two people who scream insignificant in the day they lived, are called to parent Jesus, and they say yes. And from that act of obedience both OT and NT believers are indebted to them.

To those whom you are the hands and feet of Jesus to meet needs, be a friend, help in times of trouble, give a cup of water, visit in prison, and lead them to know Jesus as their savior. You are their hero. That is available to us through faith in Jesus to those who are being saved.

But there is another side of faith that is not as pleasant.

Hebrews 11:35-38

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented — 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

NKJV

This is the side of faith we don't like to think about. The cost of our faith.

Faith in Jesus makes us an enemy of the world.

Humans throughout history have exhibited a cruelty that knows no limits. And it has bared its teeth consistently on the men and women of faith.

I have read many stories from the book, Foxes book of Martyrs, where Christians were tortured, stoned, burned, killed, sawn in half, boiled in oil, and worse as time went on in an attempt to have them recant of their faith, but chose a better resurrection through Jesus.

Aren't you glad we don't suffer like they did back then...

Do you know in the last hundred years, more men and women of the Faith have been martyred than the previous 1900 years combined of the church?

And while we may have it easier here in America than the rest of the world, Christians are hated by the world. As Scripture teaches.

John 15:18

If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.

NKJV

Paul tells Timothy this

2 Timothy 3:12

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Jesus even says in the beatitudes blessed are those who are persecuted.

Through Faith we are able to handle times of persecution and to hold firm to our faith as many martyred heroes of the past have. This becomes our testimony.

Through Faith we build our testimony.

Our testimony is a story of where we have come from, to where we are today, to where we are going.

In our own lives we know of many people who have started a walk of faith, only to encounter persecution, whether from the outside world, or by their own choices of sin and walked away from Jesus.

Yet in that same vein, we know many who have come through some dark seasons and persevered to become heroes to those still struggling.

And that is the irony of faith.

Those who suffer the greatest persecutions and maintain their faith in God become the heroes we rely on today. Including those who gave their life.

If you have gone through a tremendous struggle and season in life and have come through it, God has plans to use your life and testimony to help your brothers and sisters through their season. And in doing that you become a hero of the faith to them.

That is how we obtain a good testimony, through living out our faith during the toughest seasons, and keeping the faith.

I want to close with verse 40.

Hebrews 11:39-40

39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

NKJV

I want to read one more quote.

Matthew Henry

And faith will enable a man to serve God and his generation, in whatever way he may be employed. The interests and powers of kings and kingdoms, are often opposed to God and his people; It is a greater honor and happiness to work righteousness than to work miracles. By faith we have comfort of the promises; and by faith we are prepared to wait for the promises, and in due time to receive them.

All these heroes died not receiving the promise because the writer says that God had something better in store for everyone.

They served God in their generation, just as we serve God in our generation as he calls us. Still today, the world and governments are opposed to God.

God is calling us to live righteous lives daily and prefers that over working miracles.

Now hear me out please.

How many times in our own life have we flocked to see some great minister work miracles, give prophecy, and function in the gifts of the spirit, and called a hero of the faith, only to learn later, that during that time of ministry they were living in sin.

All too often we want miracles in our life when God wants righteous living from our life.

The beauty of faith is that God will take us where we are, character flaws and all, but he never leaves us that way.

By Faith you and I should be striving to live holy lives before God and man.

Chapter 11 outlines how we live by faith, from top to bottom.

Stand with me.

We have covered some amazing passages of scripture over the past several months. As I entered this chapter, I felt God wanted to show us what it means to live a life of faith. It is more than church on Sunday, and praying “now I lay me down to sleep” at night.

Faith is about Obedience. It is denying what we want and how we want to live and embracing God’s way.

I want to encourage you, but even as I began looking ahead, I feel I want to warn you, chapter 12 ain’t no cake walk.

As kids, how did you learn to be obedient?

I can assure you it didn’t come naturally; I learned the discipline of obedience through my father’s belt.

And that is your introduction to chapter 12.

Let’s pray.

