

9-3-2023, COTR Texarkana

Title: Faith Endures; Faith Receives, pt-10

Purpose: Provoke people to have enduring faith when we suffer, sacrifice, or are persecuted for our faith in Jesus.

Truth for Today: Faith in God enables us to endure when we suffer, sacrifice, or are persecuted for our faith in Jesus.

Text: Hebrews 11:35-38

Topic: Faith, Endurance, Persecution, Suffering

Series purpose: Provoke people to have faith in God that is aligned with His will so we can obediently endure difficulty and receive what He promises in His timing.

Series Truth for Today: Faith that endures becomes faith that receives God's promise.

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I. Introduction

A. Today we'll conclude the series: Faith Endures; Faith Receives, a vs. by vs. study of Heb. 11. Series text: [Heb. 11:6 (NLT) And **it is impossible to please God without faith**. Anyone who wants to come to him must **believe** that God exists (NCV He is real) and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him (NCV truly want to find him.)

B. Def. faith: To believe that God is real, and His Word is true; Faith in God implies we obey God and act on what He says.

C. Today we'll focus on the balance of receiving faith and emphasize enduring faith when we are forced to suffer, sacrifice, or are persecuted for our faith in Jesus.

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II. Review: Faith receives, i.e., our faith in God helps us accomplish God's will and meet our needs.

A. [Heb. 11:33–40 (NLT) **By faith** these people overthrew kingdoms, (*Joshua and the Promised Land*), ruled with justice, (*Solomon*) and **received what God had promised them**. They shut the mouths of lions, (*Daniel and the lion's den*)³⁴ quenched the flames of fire, (*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*) and escaped death by the edge of the sword, (*David*), Their weakness was turned to strength, (*Samson*) They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight, (*Gideon's 300*).³⁵ Women received their loved ones back again from death (*Elisha raises the Shunammite's son from the dead*).]

1. All these men and women had faith in God that was aligned with His will. They were obedient to God, endured some difficulty but ultimately received what God promised in His timing. We can expect the same for us.
2. Most of the series has focused on faith that helps us receive, have our needs met, find provision, protection, etc. Now we'll look at a different benefit of faith.

III. Faith endures, i.e., Faith in God enables us to endure when we must suffer, sacrifice, or are persecuted for our faith in Jesus.

A. [Heb. 11:35 **But others were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection.** ³⁶ Some were jeered at, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in prisons. ³⁷ Some died by stoning, some were sawed in half, and others were killed with the sword. Some went about wearing skins of sheep and goats, destitute and oppressed and mistreated. ³⁸ **They were too good for this world,** wandering over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.]

1. Sometimes Christians sacrifice, suffer, face persecution, and even die simply because they are Christians. Why? [John 15:18–19 (NLT) “If **the world hates you**, remember that it hated me first. ¹⁹ The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so **it hates you.**] Who's behind it? The devil himself. He operates through the influence of demons who provoke people to attack Christians

B. Jesus warned us about persecution and suffering in the last days before He returns. [Matthew 24:9–13 (NLT) “Then you will be **arrested, persecuted, and killed.** You will be **hated** all over the world **because you are my followers.** ¹⁰ And **many will turn away from me...** ¹³ **But the one who endures to the end will be saved.**]

1. Nobody wants to suffer as a Christian but we must remember it's only for a short while and eternity is forever.

C. Christian persecution today, Open Doors: Every day, 13 Christians worldwide are killed because of their faith. Every day, 12 churches or Christian buildings are attacked. Every day, 12 Christians are unjustly arrested or imprisoned, and another 5 are abducted. 309 million Christians living in places with very high or extreme levels of persecution, up from 260 million in last year's list.¹

1. This week I received communication from a Pakistani Christian leader. “We are in great danger at this time. Please help if you can...22 churches have been burned and over 300 houses were looted and burned. We are truly thankful to you for your love, prayers and support.” **PJ** “What kind of help is needed?” “First and foremost, we all need your prayers. Give financially if you would like...They've lost everything. We can purchase some household items. Even to purchase Bibles. As many Bibles were burnt in the churches. Thank you. This week COTR sent \$2,500 to help Christians in need and \$2,500 for Bibles.

IV. How do we develop the kind of faith to endure suffering, sacrifice, or persecution?

- A. Parable of the Sower, [Mk 4:14–17 (NLT)]¹⁴ The farmer plants seed by taking **God’s word** to others.¹⁵ The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have **Satan** come at once and take it away.¹⁶ The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and...receive it with joy.¹⁷ But since they **don’t have deep roots**, they don’t last long. **They fall away** as soon as they have **problems or are persecuted** for believing God’s word.]
- B. How do we develop deep roots, vs. 17, to endure suffering or persecution? We deliberately pursue a path of spiritual maturity and growth.
 1. Attitude: Make the pursuit of God and commitment to His will the primary pursuit of our life. Am I a believer or follower of Jesus? Illus. Lord’s prayer: [Matthew 6:9–11 (ESV) Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.¹⁰ **Your kingdom come, your will be done**, on earth as it is in heaven.¹¹ **Give us this day our daily bread,**] God is 1st, and I am 2nd.
 2. Seek to know God, His Word (The Bible) and His voice by committing to the daily disciplines of Bible reading and prayer.
 3. Develop strong relationships with committed believers and be vulnerable about your struggles (Life Groups). Hebrews 10:25 (NLT) And let us not neglect our meeting together (*NCV church meetings*), as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.
 4. Keep our eyes on Jesus, [Hebrews 12:1–2 (NLT)]...let us **run with endurance the race God has set before us.**² **We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus**, the champion initiates and perfects (*NKJV finishes*)

our faith.] Strive to make knowing and following Jesus the center of our life.

5. We look to the Holy Spirit to help us when suffering or persecution comes.
 - a. [Mark 13:11 (NIV) Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for **it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.**
 - b. Acts 7:54–60 (NLT) The Jewish leaders were infuriated by Stephen’s accusation...⁵⁵ But Stephen, **full of the Holy Spirit**, gazed steadily into heaven and **saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus** standing...at God’s right hand. ⁵⁶ ...⁵⁷ ...They...⁵⁸ ...began to **stone him**...⁵⁹ ...Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ He fell to his knees, shouting, “Lord, don’t charge them with this sin!” And with that, he died.

V. Closing verses, [Heb. 11:39-40 NLT) All these people earned a good reputation because of their **faith**, yet **none of them received all that God had promised.** ⁴⁰ For God had something better in mind for us, so that **they would not reach perfection without us.**

A. We are connected to believers in God from Adam to today because we look forward to relationship with God in heaven for all eternity. Faith in God is the common thread that unites us all.

VI. Conclusion: SMA demonstrate the tension of faith between enduring and receiving.

A. Context: bow to an idol, [Daniel 3:15–30 (NLT) ¹⁵ I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made...But if you refuse, you will be thrown...into the blazing furnace...¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied...¹⁷ **If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. ¹⁸ But even if he doesn’t, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”**

1. They lived in the tension of faith; They had faith to receive a miracle, but they also had faith to endure suffering and death for their belief in Jesus Christ. That’s why we called this series, “Faith Endures; Faith Receives”.

VII. Response

A. Prayer

B. Souls

VIII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2021/january/christian-persecution-2021-countries-open-doors-watch-list.html>

IX. Supplemental Material

A. The word faith occurs 243 times in the NT and is one of the most important words in the Bible and Christianity.

B. [Hebrews 10:32–39 (NLT) ³² Think back on those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering. ³³ Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were suffering the same things. ³⁴ You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail, and when all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever. ³⁵ So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! ³⁶ Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God’s will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. ³⁷ “For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay. ³⁸ And my righteous ones will live by faith. But I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away.” ³⁹ But we are not like those who turn away from God to their own destruction. We are the faithful ones, whose souls will be saved.]