

Hebrews 11:23-31

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Preacher: Clay Naylor

[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Open up your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 11. So, I'm aware that this is one of the most favored passages in Hebrews 11.

! So, no pressure. I will endeavor to be faithful to the text and preach to my heart as well as yours this morning.

So, even though I just prayed, just pause with me just for a moment. It's just good for me to get up here and to recognize that the presence of the Lord is here and that He is ready to speak to the hearts of His people through His Word.

Lord, we are very gracious that You have brought us here. So, help us to put our mind's attention and our heart's affection on You to worship You in spirit and in truth.

And that You would help me just only be an instrument in Your hand to love Your people well and to inspire faith in them through Your Word, Lord.

[1 : 09] So, we put this in Your hands. In Christ's name, Amen. Amen. So, Hebrews 11. I think that it's a very timely chapter that we're in because I feel like in my own life, I've been way too focused on the natural, way too focused on what I can see with my eyes and not with the eyes of faith.

I've been so focused on the temporal and the earthly rather than the eternal and the unseen. And I am very thankful that I've kind of landed in Hebrews 11.

There will be a connection between this week and next week. Next week, I'm also really looking forward to. But just as a broader context, I want us to...

Our text will be Hebrews 11, 23-31 today. But as just a broader context, I want us to think about what the author is trying to say to us in Hebrews 11.

And, like, why the history lesson? Why is he going back to look at all these different people who have gone before us, particularly in the Old Testament, to inspire that kind of faith in us?

[2 : 24] He wants to motivate those who are professing faith in Christ to look to these examples for endurance and persecution. He wants them to obtain God's unseen future promises.

And so, as it says in Hebrews 6-12, he wants them to be imitators of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. So, just a couple of selective verses before we get to our main text. So, look at Hebrews, just the beginning of the chapter, Hebrews 11. It says, Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Jump down to verse 6. And without faith, it is impossible to please him. Whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

And, jump maybe over to verse 13. We've been talking about Abraham and Sarah. And it says, All these 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.

[3 : 46] Verse 16. But that is, they desired a better country, that is, a heavenly one. And therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

And so, it's in these verses that we kind of come on down to, verse 23. But faith, I've been trying to put together, paste together, just sort of what I really think Scripture teaches faith is, to live by faith, to walk by faith.

Because if you ask many people to define it, it's kind of like one of those things that a lot of believers just stumble to even explain. It's like, well, you just, you know, you just got to have, you just got to trust God.

And it's like, all right, good, trust God. So, here's sort of a rough definition, I believe, that fits the biblical description, what we're looking for.

But follow this. Faith is a settled confidence that something in the future, something that is not yet seen, but has been promised by God, will actually come to pass, because God will bring it to pass.

[5 : 01] I'll do it one more time. Faith is a settled confidence that something in the future, something that is not yet seen, but has been promised by God, will actually come to pass, because God will bring it to pass.

And this is so obvious of the way that a lot of people portray faith, sort of a blind faith, a leap of faith. Nathan's illustration a long time ago worked for me.

I grew up watching Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, where he like did the little boot, the boot thing and just, you know, fell like on the bridge. And that's just not what we're talking about. We're talking about a confidence.

We are persuaded, convinced that these things are true, that God has spoken, he has promised, and he will deliver on what he promised.

And so God is not a liar. He is not a man. He should not tell the truth. So real faith is the sure confidence that our sovereign, wise God is trustworthy, that he will bring to pass what he says, that he will never leave or forsake his people.

[6 : 10] And we're just so not used to that in our world, in our own lives, our relationships. But such faith in the unseen realm of God provides confidence that we need to endure.

And the first few verses I read here meant a lot to me because they were instrumental, I think, in my conversion when I was 18 years old. And when my body, my physical body was falling apart and my hope in the physical world and this temporal world was falling apart.

And so it was huge for me at this time. But we're looking at the example of Moses today, of Joshua, and the people of Israel.

So we'll start, we'll pick up in verse 23. It says, By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents because they saw that the child was beautiful and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

By faith, Moses, when he has grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

[7 : 31] He considered the reproach of the Christ's greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith, he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

By faith, he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. And by faith, the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they had attempted to do the same, were drowned.

And by faith, the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. And by faith, Rahab, the prostitute, did not perish with those who were disobedient because she had been given a friendly welcome to the spies.

So, underneath all of this, before we walk through this, I want to give you just two true statements. One of them is that through our faith in God and his wise providence, he can and does work miracles to help and deliver his people.

And I hope that you believe that. I hope that God's even allowed you to see that in your life. Through faith in our God and his wise providence, he can and does work miracles to bring deliverance and help to his people.

[9 : 04] And then next week, we'll actually unpack this one a lot more, but God and his wise providence does not always work miracles for our deliverance from suffering, but rather by faith, he sustains his people through their suffering.

So, we're going to unpack this, I guess, in just three sections, but we'll look at the faith of Moses first. Number one, by faith, Moses. And we see that in verse 23 through 29.

And as I've said before, Moses is one of my favorite Bible characters. I think I identify a lot with him. He was not this great, huge, leading the charge kind of guy.

He wasn't extremely charismatic, you would say, like Joshua or David, and I kind of identify with him. He was the reluctant leader and preferred to be more of a number two guy often and not a great public communicator.

Don't really feel that I am either. But I agree with a lot of the things that he says and does. But in verse 23, if you want to look at verse 23, we see first his preservation.

[10 : 19] Moses' preservation in verse 23. And what did this have to do? It didn't have to do as much with Moses as it had to do with the faith of Moses' parents. If you remember from Exodus chapter 1, verse 22, it said, Pharaoh commanded all his people saying, every Jewish son who is

born you are to cast into the Nile and every daughter you are to keep alive.

So this cruel, you know, wicked, demonic edict of Pharaoh to destroy all the baby boys and to spare the daughters and have them cast into the Nile.

And so Moses' parents were faced with a decision. Do we give in and give up our child, obey the king's edict and then we're spared or if we refuse then our lives could be at risk.

There's only two options. If we refuse to obey this edict then our lives will be endangered as well.

So they had those two choices, kill their sons or save themselves.

Right? Or try to save their sons at risk of their own lives. And that's huge because their faith demonstrated that they knew what God had promised that one day they would send someone to deliver them from bondage.

[11 : 49] And they chose rather to not give in to that fear of death and torture. And they said we're going to not do this. This is not what our God would have us do.

He would have us look to him and trust him. And so they said in the face of that terror we will not give in. We will not kill our son for fear of our own lives but we will trust in our God and death will not control us.

So he was preserved. He was put into the Nile in the basket as we know he floated down the river to where Pharaoh's daughter who I believe historically was Hapshepsut and was taken into the Pharaoh's household and raised in that context.

And we see that really in our next few verses. So that's Moses' preservation and verse 24 through 26 we see his identification.

So who did Moses choose to identify himself with? The Egyptians and Pharaoh's household or with the people of Israel.

[13 : 04] And I want you to there's just a couple places for you to look today. But flip over to Acts chapter 7 to kind of give us a broader picture of what's going on.

Acts chapter 7 and this is when Stephen is giving testimony and going back and sort of explaining the redemptive story and how crisis had come.

Acts chapter 7 we'll look at verse 20. all right and he says this starting in verse 20.

At this time Moses was born and he was beautiful in God's sight and he was brought up for three months in his father's house and then when he was exposed Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own and Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and he was mighty in his words and deeds and when he was forty years old it came into his heart to visit his brothers the children of Israel and seeing one of them being wronged he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian he supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand but they did not understand and on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them saying men you are brothers why do you wrong each other but the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside saying who made you a ruler and judge over us that's going to be repeated in the life of Moses a lot do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday at this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian where he became a father of two sons so Moses' identification but think about this if this life is it if this temporal world is it why in the world would he leave such privileges that he had in Egypt why he was perfectly set up for life earthly status privilege and pleasures all that he could really enjoy but why did he choose to identify rather with the people of Israel and so even that being a adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter so but in our text gives the answer he chose to do so because of the fleeting pleasures of sin right we see that and it's important to note that

[15 : 56] I think we kind of betray sin is unpleasurable and it is but we got to understand that the pleasures of sin are very real they feel good in the moment when we're indulging in them but they're short-lived they're vanity they're fleeting they don't remain and so Moses I think had learned this in his context like I've enjoyed 40 years of this kind of stuff and you know what it is not what I'm looking for and instead he chose to bear the reproach of Christ and he considered it greater riches the reproach of Christ and so think about how Moses serves as a foreshadow or prefigure of Christ and all these things so remember make all the connections in your mind our

Lord Jesus his parents also fled a wicked king seeking to destroy all the boys all the baby boys in Bethlehem and yet he was preserved just like Moses was preserved he was the king of kings who humbled himself leaving all his heavenly glory and majesty behind and seeking to rather identify

with us his people and coming to take on human form and take on our weakness he came to be with us and then like Moses he suffered on behalf of his people Christ suffered on our behalf and so Moses serves as a model for believers to endure that kind of reproach and so we need to take note of this that he saw that there was reward in the future for the faith that he would have in the God of Israel and he fled the temporal pleasures of sin so some of us may be stuck even as believers in a pattern of sin that's just destroying!

us and remember that they're fleeting they don't remain and that if we have Christ we have the one thing that will not ever leave right he is there forever and nothing can take him away and he is not going to leave us or forsake us so look at verse 27 back in Hebrews 11 it talks about Moses separation how he left the land of Egypt and he did this by faith he wasn't afraid of the anger or wrath of Pharaoh but he endured as seeing him who is invisible and I really think this is implying this idea that he saw through the eyes of faith like we do the God of Israel and he endured the wrath the wrath of Pharaoh and he fled into the wilderness right for 40 years and in that time God was prepping him preparing him for what was ahead and even though

Moses did come to see some physical manifestations of God's presence like the burning bush and the fire and the cloud and all these things he still looked upon God through the eyes of faith and so by faith he left Egypt and verse 28 we see that by faith his salvation came by faith he kept the Passover so remember remember guys like the story they have been telling commanding Pharaoh to let the people go and he has refused he hardened his heart he stood his ground and they kind of warn him like if you don't let the people go something worse than ever before is going to come and he refused so as judgment God sent one more plague to kill all the firstborn the angel of death the destroyer to execute that judgment yet we read that

God graciously provided a way for the Israelites to be spared and we read that they were to take a lamb without blemish I'll read this to you out of Exodus 12 such beautiful pictures for us to see it says then they will take some of the blood of the lamb and put it on the doorpost and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it it is the Lord's Passover for I will pass through the land of Egypt that night and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt both man and beast and all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments!

[21 : 08] when I strike the land of Egypt that's Exodus 12 11 through 13 so Moses celebrated the Passover before seeing the deliverance that it would bring from the destroyer and it serves as a foreshadow of the true deliverance that we in Christ are to receive because judgment is coming one day and I tremble to think about it and in a similar way God will execute judgment and he will bring ruin upon those who have stood against him and been disobedient to his word and so in Christ as Paul says in 1st Corinthians 5 Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed so when judgment comes and we are seen washed in the blood of the lamb we will be passed over and so by faith

Moses knew that if he did this and was obedient to the command of God that they would be spared and so we have that command to repent and believe the gospel to come to Christ to be washed in his blood so that we can endure to the end so by faith his salvation and then underneath this we see he and his people deliverance in verse 29 verse 29 by faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land but the Egyptians when they attempted to do the same were drowned and one of the most I would say probably one of the most like crazy visuals you can see in display of God's power and the scripture God parting the Red Sea which I believe is probably in the Gulf of Aqaba I would guess come talk to me later if you want to nerd out but we see

I'll read you this passage out of Exodus 14 they were standing at the Red Sea trapped right trapped and Moses said to the people fear not stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord which he will work for you today for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again for the Lord will fight for you and you only have to be silent good words just the Lord will fight for us we will stand and see his deliverance so Moses was delivered his people were delivered and they were spared so we have these awesome pictures of Moses to look to for an example of faith such wonderful faith and then it goes on so it's kind of going through the storyline right across the

Red Sea went into the promised land but some stuff happened and they wandered in the wilderness until that generation had passed and we see our second point so that was by faith Moses but number two is by faith Joshua and the people of Israel right so verse 30 by faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been in a circle for seven days and I think this is one of the places I wanted you to look at Joshua chapter five really quickly Joshua chapter five we see that he has this divine encounter before going to the city of Jericho they have crossed the Jordan river they

set up the memorial stones and their faith is being strengthened by seeing God part the river Jordan as he did the Red Sea so Joshua chapter five look at verse 13 this is right before the siege it says when Joshua was by Jericho he lifted up his eyes and looked and behold a man was standing before him with his sword drawn in his hand and Joshua went to him and said said to him are you for us or for our adversaries and he said no but I am the commander of the army of the Lord now I have come and Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped! [26 : 02] and said to him what does my Lord say to his servant and the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua take off your sandals take the sandals off your feet for the place where you are standing is holy and Joshua did so so some people believe that this was what they call a Christophany an earlier appearance of the Son of God possibly before his incarnation the arguments for that I think are strong I won't go far to say it but if you look at where it says that he is the commander of the Lord's army we know that in revelation Christ is the one leading the armies of heaven to bring judgment upon the earth he fell down to his face and worship and we know that if it was just an angel what always happens like no no no get up you're not supposed to worship me I'm only an angel but he allowed him to worship then he heard the familiar phrase that he know his master

Moses had told him take the sandals off your feet from where you! standing is holy who knows instructions on what to do but there were a lot of obstacles to this in the natural realm this was a crazy idea to attack Jericho I could go into the details of how strong the fortifications were which I have here but I will spare you that just for time sake but it was a crazy fortress a lot of modern day archaeologists have know where Jericho is and they've confirmed a lot of the stuff the bible said about it it was a strong fortified city that the attack occurred right before the harvest time it was a short siege the walls were leveled and listen to this the city was not plundered that's odd and the city was not burned and one archaeologist said this giving testimony to the biblical account as to the fact then there remains no doubt the walls of this city fell outwards so completely the attackers were able to clamber up over the ruins into the city why so unusual because the walls of cities do not fall outwards they fall inwards ever thought about that always knocked down these like it just unfolded like a flower and people just come right up into the city that's what he said is very odd like how this looks did the biblical account so they walked around for seven days and finally on the seventh the trumpets blew and the cry went out let go for the

Lord has given you the city so what crazy imagery that would have been but we see that true faith true faith leads to obedience he did exactly what God said exactly they didn't try to negotiate it or compromise it but they followed his instructions to the letter in faith but also their faith was focused on the presence of God now what was the ark doing the ark was in the front right and it was serving as a physical reminder that God's presence is with you the ark is mentioned 11 times in that account which I think is trying to give emphasis to the fact that this was a visual thing they could look at and say God's presence is with us and so if we're going to have true faith we have to obey God take him at his word don't say that we have faith in what he says and then do the opposite but true faith takes

God his word and is obedient to it and it focuses on the unseen presence of God and it cultivates that awareness of God's presence how different would your life be and mine if we just took that idea of God's presence and just focused on that for a week and look at what scripture had to say about the presence of God that he is with us and in us how differently would our lives be so by faith Joshua and the people of Israel started the conquest so lastly thirdly these could all be individual sermons the book that we've kind of followed just for an outline has these three different chapters I was like going trying to cram three into one here but number three and lastly by faith Rahab by faith Rahab verse 31 by faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies so my heart is moved when I think about this woman clearly an outcast and lowest of society even to a pagan ancient people she would have been at the bottom right as as it's true in many cases who knows maybe she was forced into that to provide for herself or her family but nevertheless in the ancient world she would be looked upon as dishonorable and not valuable to that society an outcast and remember the story the spies went in to look at

Jericho to take an assessment and it was discovered so they fled to the house of Rahab and she hid them she took them on the roof and hid them under the flax thatches and lied and sent off the guards to look somewhere else and I was going to read you this account some of the stuff that she

says but some people would say a skeptic may say well her faith was just for her own her own life she didn't want to die and she didn't want her family to die it was just self preservation it wasn't like you really believed in the God of Israel but not true not true at all she says in Joshua chapter 2 I know that the Lord has given you the land and that the fear of you has fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you for we have heard how the Lord dried up the water the

[32 : 45] Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt and he says this here and as soon as we heard it our hearts melted and there was no spirit left in any man because of you for the Lord your God he is the God of heaven above and on the earth beneath and so she pleads with them because she helped them to spare!

her and her family and they agree and they told her to hang a scarlet cord outside her window so that when the invasion or the conquest happened that they would be spared and they were they kept their word she was spared among the inhabitants of Jericho she was delivered by her faith but furthermore the rest of scripture points out that she was redeemed she had true saving faith in the God of Israel it wasn't just I don't want to die so whatever I got her do not to die it was a true saving faith she brought up several other times in the scripture one in James chapter two and it says that she was justified not by her worth but by her faith I'll read it to you right here it said at the same time not also Rahab the prostitute justified by her works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way for as a body apart from the spirit is dead so also faith apart from works is dead and most of you know what that means but really her faith was displayed in her obedience and her actions she displayed actions as such to where she believed and what was said about the God of Israel and astoundingly I'll save you from turning to this as well but in Matthew if you want to write it down Matthew chapter one verses four through six she was redeemed but man she was also honored she was honored not just in James but she's mentioned in the blood line of the king of kings she's mentioned in the blood line of Jesus it says in Matthew chapter one going through the genealogy it says the father of Boaz by Rahab and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth and Obed the father of Jesse and Jesse the father of David the king so she is mentioned in the blood line of our Lord so she was redeemed and she was honored what a great honor that was so in conclusion just want us to think about a few things if you're still looking to the fleeting pleasures of this world look to Moses as an example because he trusted in the God who was unseen and he walked away from all the sinful pleasures of this world and had faith in the promises of God and he bore the reproach of Christ so do you believe that would your life display that when people say you man you were you have lost it because you've left all these things that we enjoy so much behind to follow a God that is unseen and then also if you think that you're outside of the grace of God or that even as a believer you've lived in such a way that God has now cast you aside who let's just ask God to help him apply his word to our hearts