

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

OCTOBER 17 - 21, 2022

Hebrews 11-13

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Sermon Series

Oct 2 - Nov 20

MONDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:23-29; Exodus 1:8-2:10**

Continuing our Hebrews studies, this week's theme is "Faith presses through fear." The encouragement to "fear not" is prominent throughout the Bible. Believers are to "*fear the LORD*" (Psalm 111:10); however, such "fear" is better understood as "deeply revere" versus "dread." The fear that Christians are not to submit to is the "*fear (being afraid) of man*" (Proverbs 29:25) because, after all, "*The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?*" (Psalm 118:6).

Moses' parents, Amram and Jochebed, did not submit to the "*fear of man*" when Pharaoh's decree would have taken their newborn son's life. "[These] events ... are recorded in Exodus [1-2], where it is told that another king having arisen, '*who knew not Joseph,*' and [with] the Egyptians deciding ... to reduce the number of their slaves, the king [thereby] decreed that all male [Jewish newborns] should be destroyed. ...

"Moses' [parents] disobeyed the king's order ... [Pharaoh's] decree ... [got baby] Moses out of the Nile river, where his parents had ... placed him, into the lap of the (Egyptian) princess who adopted him as her own son. This provided Moses ... [with] the education, training and experience ... so necessary in his great mission of deliverance for the Hebrews." (Charles Burton Coffman)

Pharaoh became fearful about the Hebrews' growing numbers, anxious regarding a potential slave uprising. Jochebed hid newborn Moses for three months, then stepped out in faith by putting him into a seaworthy basket and placing it in the Nile. God providentially brought the king's daughter to where baby Moses was floating among the Nile's reeds, taking him into Pharaoh's household as her adopted child. God even orchestrated things such that Jochebed would be paid for nursing her own baby, Moses.

On a larger scale, God had located the Jews in Egypt to keep their lineage pure. In His perfect timing and sovereignty, however, God used Pharaoh's fear and Jochebed's faithful fearlessness to mobilize Israel's exodus to the Promised Land some eighty years later. This pictures how God redeems we who follow Christ—leading believers out of “Egypt” (our old lives of slavery to sin) while adopting us into His eternal family.

QUESTIONS

What are the differences between “*the fear [of] the LORD*” and “*the fear of man*”? Why did God place Moses in Pharaoh's home for Moses' first 40 years? How did all of this figure into God's plans for Israel?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

GTi HOPE brings hope to the hopeless while training and equipping indigenous leaders in India. Pray for the Vision Trip from October 17-30. GTi HOPE staff will be visiting its partner and local ministry programs. Pray for safety and stretched hearts as they are witnesses for Jesus' love for all people. www.gtihope.org

TUESDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:24-28; 1 John 2:15-17; John 17:14-18**

Yesterday we considered the fearless faith of Moses' parents and how God used this, ultimately, to deliver the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage. Today we spotlight Moses' story of aligning with God's will and leading His people despite some rough spots along the way.

“Having been schooled in ... Egypt in the sciences and the arts, Moses [was] raised in the Pharaoh's palace, ... having at his disposal all of the riches ... [and] glory of Egypt. ... He could have just gone on as the son of Pharaoh's daughter and enjoyed through his lifetime the pleasures of sin, but that would have been a very short time ... [when compared to eternity]. But he chose ... to identify himself with God's people, suffering the affliction of God's people [rather] than ... [enjoying] the pleasures of sin for a season.” (Chuck Smith)

However, Moses' career got off to a dubious start with lethal consequences, followed by a fearful getaway and uncertainty. The 40-year-old Moses sought to identify with fellow Jews, killing and burying an Egyptian who had beaten a Hebrew. Learning that his murderous deed was discovered, Moses fled Egypt for Midian. God used Moses' next season in Midian's wilderness to prepare him—he learned more about God along with patience and the desert's ways, equipping him for leading the Jews' Egyptian exodus to the Promised Land.

Even after this preparation—40 years learning Egypt’s ways followed by 40 years living in the wilderness—Moses struggled with fear. Though God shared His plan for liberating the Jews, Moses doubted his ability to lead and speak effectively (Exodus 3-4). But God used him mightily regardless, seeing things in Moses that he could not see in himself. Moses learned to trust God and love His people—even when the Hebrews were unlovable—rejecting the ways of the fallen, rebellious world.

Perhaps you’ve heard, “Moses spent 40 years believing he was somebody; God used the next 40 years to show him that he was nobody. During Moses’ final 40 years, God showed that He can use anybody.” “Moses wisely chose the eternal over the immediate.” (Smith) He became a glorious example of being “in the world, while not of the world.”

QUESTIONS

What benefits resulted from Moses’ 40 years in Midian’s wilderness? What fears did Moses have to work through in order to be used of God? How does Moses’ story illustrate being “in the world, while not of the world”?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

Gently Used Bibles and Christian Books project: Pray for the collection of 25,000 Bibles and selected Christian books to bless English-reading Christians and seekers in India. Donations received at book expos will provide in-country revenue, which will fund ministry programs. Glenkirk is collecting books through October 30.

www.gtihope.org/books

WEDNESDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:29-31; Proverbs 3:5-6; Luke 1:37**

In today's Hebrews "Hall of Faith" passage, we consider three remarkable faith stories. The first exhibited God's faithfulness—and the Jews' faithful response—in escaping the Egyptian army. The second shows God using the faith of a social outcast to enable Israel's overthrow of a key Promised Land city. The third shares the incredible way in which God had the Jews conquer this city, Jericho.

After Pharaoh released the enslaved Jews following God's tenth plague on ancient Egypt (killing the firstborn male of each Egyptian household), the Hebrews fled with Pharaoh's army in hot pursuit. God led them to the Red Sea's edge, the Egyptians approaching and, apparently, trapping them. Israel's only hope? Trust God. The LORD parted the sea—enabling Israel's escape—then brought it down on their pursuers, wiping out Pharaoh's army.

The next incident happened about 40 years later. Though living in Jericho's pagan society—her profession ("harlot") occupying her sinfully—Rahab faithfully responded to the opportunity to aid God's plans. Aware of Yahweh and His power—having seen Him begin establishing the Jews in Canaan—Rahab hid Jewish spies, enabling Joshua to sack Jericho later. She was rewarded with her family's safety during the assault. Matthew's genealogy (Matthew 1:5-6) indicates that Rahab married Salmon, making her King David's great-great grandmother and establishing her in the Messiah's lineage.

Joshua's subsequent, successful conquest of Jericho was similarly unorthodox. This victory came in Israel's first military campaign in their occupation of the Promised Land. Joshua faithfully followed God's instructions: have the Jews silently march around the city each of six days; on the seventh day, march around it while shouting and blowing trumpets. Miraculously, Jericho's walls then fell, enabling the Jews' successful attack.

Brought to the limit of their abilities—to the edge of their faith—God delivered them: first Israel, then Rahab, and finally Israel's army to victory at Jericho. When I'm selfishly in my flesh—even if my aims appear godly and noble—I “close the circuit” to the Spirit. God does His best work when we get beyond our limits, when our flesh gives way to God-honoring faith that overcomes fears.

QUESTIONS

Why did God allow the Israelites to be trapped between Pharaoh's pursuing army and the Red Sea? What does God's use of the harlot Rahab tell us about God's ways? Why does God often bring us to “the edge of our faith”?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

Glenkirk is bringing the light of literacy and the message of peace to the Madiya people in Maharashtra, India. This three-year project is in its second year. Twelve church leaders are being trained to share the message of peace and the love of Jesus. Pray for protection and an abundant harvest.

THURSDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:32-34; Matthew 16:24-25; James 1:2-4**

I've experienced believers who apparently ponder, "What's the big deal with Jesus' living sinlessly, doing miracles, even rising from the dead? After all, He's God." Remember, however: Jesus' works were done as a Spirit-empowered Man, for "[He] emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7). Understanding this is highly convicting, while also enlightening regarding the challenges accompanying doing the Father's will.

Jesus issued several sobering warnings to followers, notices most believers heard about if not personally experienced. The Lord advised the disciples on the eve of His crucifixion, "*If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you. ... Because you are not of the world ... the world hates you*" (John 15:18-19). Later that evening Jesus cautioned, "*In the world you will have tribulation*" (John 16:33).

Hebrews 11:32-34 recognizes the faithfulness of several Old Testament figures, including some judges, a king and a prophet. What Hebrews does not share are the details regarding persecution often accompanying faithful responses to God's call. Being used by the Lord can be a tough, faith-stretching assignment.

Jephthah made a tragic vow to God if He would deliver Israel to victory over the Ammonites; Jephthah's post-victory response is murky, but

his faithfulness greatly affected Jephthah's and his daughter's lives thereafter. Samson died alongside enemies while pushing down the pillars of a building containing 3,000 Philistines. King-in-waiting David was doggedly pursued by Israel's King Saul out of the latter's paranoia and envy. Among Israel's prophets: Elijah fled under a death threat by Jezebel; Isaiah, per tradition, was sawn in half by King Manasseh; Jeremiah was cast into a cistern; and Daniel was wrongly betrayed, leading to his being thrown into a lion's den.

Taking up your personal "cross" to follow Jesus faithfully invites persecution from a fallen world. But we can take heart in knowing, *"In Me (Jesus) you may have peace ... [for] I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). The Apostle Paul's encouraging declaration is: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13). Let your faith prevail, enduring fear and trials!

QUESTIONS

As Jesus is God the Son, why was it still challenging for Him to live and die as He did? Why did many of Israel's prophets and judges experience extreme trials and persecution? How has following Jesus compelled you to "take up your cross"?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

Pray for courage and perseverance in the face of increasing persecution throughout India. Pray for pastors, church leaders being trained, literacy teachers, and students. Pray for safety and protection, for open doors, and for softer hearts among the persecutors. Pray for ongoing Bible-based literacy programs for over 17,000 men and women.

FRIDAY

Read **Hebrews 11:35-38; 2 Corinthians 11:23-30; Psalm 51:17**

If you were marketing Christianity, you wouldn't include much from Hebrews 11:35-38. The promises of “[being] tortured ... [experiencing] mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment ... [being] sawn in two ... [or] killed by the sword ... destitute, afflicted, mistreated ...” are not strong selling points. As surveyed yesterday, faithfulness to God's calling can be brutal. The Apostle Paul knew this—2 Corinthians 11:23-30 lists related aspects of his ministry.

Consider two phrases within Hebrews 11:35-38: “*that they might rise again to a better life*” and “*of whom the world was not worthy.*” Jesus Himself embodied these in His life, death and teaching. Among believers, this second phrase is indisputable. Jesus, “*God with us*” (Matthew 1:23), lived a perfect, sinless life and died to purchase our salvation. He alone is worthy of righteous standing with the Father, yet God grants this to us when we abide in Christ.

Though Jesus resurrected—defeating Satan, death and sin in satisfying God's justice and confirming His sacrifice's sufficiency—one could argue that this did not yield a “better life” for Him. After all, the eternal Word of God preexisted creation in loving, perfect, blissful communion with the Father and Spirit. Yet He chose to join fallen humankind in our plight, taking on flesh while accepting extreme poverty, being despised by many, betrayed by friends, and faithfully enduring the most painful,

humiliating death possible. “For the joy that was set before Him, [Jesus] endured the cross, despising [its] shame” (Hebrews 12:2).

One might ask, “Why? What was in it for Him?” “The joy that was set before Him” comes in claiming His Bride, the true Church being prepared for Jesus. The challenges revealed in today’s Hebrews and 2 Corinthians passages fall infinitely short of the costly sacrifice made by God to claim you as Christ’s Bride.

When accepting Jesus and walking faithfully as “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Corinthians 4:1), we are promised a “personal Easter,” to be raised in glorified bodies and dwell with God eternally thereafter. And while the “world [is] not worthy” of such grace, neither are we. It’s a gift ... meant to be shared gratefully and lovingly!

QUESTIONS

In what ways is the world “not worthy” of Jesus? What is “the joy that was set before [Jesus]” and how is this “worth it” to Him? What promises can we claim based upon what Jesus has done?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

Pray for the Vision Trip over the next week as the team travels to visit ministry programs, including the dedication of a church, graduation of church leaders, dedication of a water well, literacy, VBS, and distribution of sewing machines. Pray that the supply of local language Bibles returns to normal levels.

Sources

- Charles Burton Coffman's quote can be found at <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/bcc/hebrews-11.html>.
- Chuck Smith's quotes are from <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/hebrews/11-24.html>.

