

What Difference Does Faith Make in the Face of Death?

[Hebrews 11:17-22](#)

Hebrews, Day 42

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones. - Hebrews 11:17-22, ESV

"What difference does it make, anyway?" Have you ever had someone ask you that question? As a teacher, I've had students ask me that in class sometimes. I'll admit that sometimes that question hits me like nails on a chalkboard.

In many ways, the book of Hebrews is all about true and saving faith. The largest part of the book is spent magnifying the true object of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews shows us the superiority of Christ over angels, Moses, Abraham, the Levitical priesthood, the Tabernacle worship, etc. Then, Hebrews begins showing us what true faith looks like, culminating in this glorious chapter 11, sometimes called "the Hall of Fame of Faith."

Hebrews 11 defines faith as an assurance and certainty of the unseen things of God, revealed in His word. It then further defines faith that pleases God as the faith which sees God as good, a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Then, it clarifies the kind of reward we should be seeking from God, not earthly riches or comfort, but a heavenly country, an eternal city, where we will live with God forever.

So, what difference does it make, anyway? Today's passage makes it clear that saving faith in Christ makes all the difference in the world in the face of death. Consider:

1. Abraham's faith looked to God and trusted Him for the resurrection of Isaac. He believed this because he knew Isaac was the child of promise and God would not break His promise. Therefore, if he had to sacrifice Isaac, surely God would bring him back to life. This powerful faith was commended by God!
2. Isaac's faith allowed him to pronounce proper blessings on Jacob and Esau, once he remembered the word of God and realized his errors. He gave the greater blessing to Jacob, knowing Esau was stronger and a little older, but God had given His covenant promise for Jacob.
3. Jacob, in turn, worshiped God and blessed Joseph's sons, trusting in God's covenant faithfulness, even in a foreign land.
4. Finally, Joseph himself showed his faith in the face of death by giving instructions regarding his bones. He knew God would keep His promise.

When we have faith in the one true God, who is stronger than death, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, who has overthrown death, we can have confidence and expectant joy, even in the face of death. Such a faith is never put to shame, for it trusts in a God who never fails and in a Savior who is all-sufficient.