

Intro: As we have seen in various ways, faith is trusting in God's word. It is unconditional confidence in what He says for no other reason than He said it. We only have two options, trust Him or trust in our own reason, wisdom, and understanding. A Jew becoming a Christian in the first century was costly. They might lose friends, family, privileges, job, social status, respect, and probably asked to leave or thrown out of the Synagogue. The tendency with fear of loss is to try and hold on tight to what you might lose or try to have the best of both worlds. Chapter 11 is calling them to trust God as these OT saints had, completely. Like them, they needed to remember God cannot lie, cannot make mistakes, can do no wrong, cannot be defeated, cannot be surpassed. A God like this can be trusted. Faith, then, is based on the knowledge of God. If our god is too small, there is reason not to trust him, but if He is all that God claims and has revealed to us, there is no reason not to trust Him. Trusting God when life is going well is easy, but trusting Him in difficult times is courageous.

XXXII. The Courage of Faith - vs 30-40

A. Conquering in Struggle - vs 23

1. Joshua and Israel at Jericho

- a. city walls were important in a time of battle
 - i. good walls were wide enough to ride two chariots side by side
 - ii. Jericho was a frontier fortress city
 - located near the mouth of the Jordan
 - by the standard of the day, the walls were impregnable
- b. 40 years wandering in the wilderness
 - i. 3 day journey from Egypt to Canaan
 - ii. Due to gross unbelief, complaining, idolatry, God judged their sin by letting that generation die off in the wilderness
 - iii. Nothing is said of that generation's faith since the crossing of the Red Sea
- c. Jericho, the first obstacle
 - i. Negative report of the spies
 - the people were bigger
 - Moses rebuked them, not because they lied, but because they were unbelieving and fearful
 - ii. God's plan to destroy pride and confidence in self
 - March around the city once a day for six days
 - on the seventh day, march around the city seven times. blow the rams horn, shout, God will take down the walls
 - for Jericho, their pride was abolished seeing their city destroyed in the most foolish possible way -
 - for Canaan, they got to see the power of God that was coming against them
 - for Israel, their part was just symbolic, they could take no credit
 - iii. Lessons learned
 - no complaining in Josh 6
 - By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

2. Rahab

- a. unlikely candidate for hall of faith

- i. she was a prostitute
 - ii. she was a Gentile, Canaanite, Amorite, a race marked by God for destruction - Ge 15:16
- b. Her response to light given compared to other inhabitants of Jericho
 - i. She hid the spies - Jos 2:9-11
 - I know that the LORD has given you the land
 - we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.
 - for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.
 - ii. She did not perish - Jos 6:23 And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel.
 - iii.** those who did not believe - *apeitheo* - to disbelieve (willfully and perversely):--not believe, disobedient, obey not, unbelieving.
- 3. Many Others
 - a. The leaders spoken of in no chronological order
 - i. Gideon
 - assembled 32000 men for battle against Midianites and Amelekites
 - in order to eliminate self confidence, God cut the number to 10,000 and then to 300, based on how they drank water
 - the enemy were as numerous as locusts - Jg 7:12
 - Israel had trumpets and pitchers with torches inside
 - the enemy was routed - Jg 7:16-22
 - ii. Barak
 - story in Jg 4-5, not much known
 - Deborah, the prophetess, foretold Israel's victory over Jabin the Canaanite and Sisera, his commander
 - Deborah told Barak to raise an army of 10,000 from Naphtali and Zebulun, to show Israel God's power
 - Barak wanted Deborah to go with him, so a woman would get credit for slaying Sisera
 - could have been his value of her over the 10,000
 - iii. Samson
 - not remembered for faith
 - in many ways, was selfish and immature
 - never doubted that God was the source of his strength of which his hair was only a symbol
 - called to be a judge and oppose the Philistines
 - his motive for such opposition was not always godly, but he knew he was doing God's will
 - The spirit strengthened him in his amazing one man battles - Jd 13:25; 14:19; 15:14; 16:28
 - we tend to judge Samson by his weakness, God commends him for his faith
 - iv. Jephthah
 - was around before Samson, was called to subdue the Ammonites

- Made a foolish vow - Jd 11:30-31
- was still a man of faith - vs 29-32

v. David

- one of the great men of OT
 - trust developed while tending sheep
 - enhanced when killing the bear and the lion
 - culminating in taking on Goliath with a slingshot
- not a perfect man, but called by God a man after God's own heart - Ac 13:22

vi. Samuel

- included in a list of warriors, though his enemies were idolatry and immorality
- those that stood against him were often the people of Israel
- he began ministering before the Lord as a boy - 1 Sa 2:18
- continued faithfully until he was asked to appoint a king

vii. the prophets

- none named,
- but all risked everything for the Lord

b. Their exploits

- when thought out, can put a possible face to each exploit
 - stopped the mouths of lions, - Daniel
 - quenched the violence of fire, - Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego
- The power to accomplish all these came from God
- The power to accomplish all these was received by faith

B. Continuing in Suffering - vs 35-38

1. Women received their dead raised to life again.

- Elijah raise the son of the widow of Zarephath - 1Ki 17:8-23
- Elisha did the same for a Shunammite - 2Ki 4:18-37
- the women suffered for a while waiting to see what would happen

2. sometimes suffering is inescapable

- And others were tortured,
 - tumpanizo* - to stretch on an instrument of torture resembling a drum, and thus beat to death:--torture.
 - Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.
 - they were sawn in two, - tradition says Isaiah
 - Many other mistreatments

b. not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

c. of whom the world was not worthy.

- They lived outside of the norm
 - They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins,
 - being destitute, afflicted, tormented--
 - They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.
- They did not deserve how they were treated, but God had offered more
 - Ro 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.
 - 1Pe 1:4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

d. God does not promise deliverance from all suffering, but does give power to endure and rejoice in the midst

i. Lu 9:23 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

ii. Jo 15:20b If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

iii. 1Pe 4:13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

iv. 2Co 7:4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.

C. Counting on Salvation - vs 39-40

1. And all these,

a. having obtained a good testimony through faith,

i. *martureo* - to be a witness, testify, charge, give (evidence), bear record, have (obtain, of) good (honest) report, be well reported of, testify, give (have) testimony, (be, bear, give, obtain) witness.

ii. They gained God's approval through faith

b. from Abel to the end

i. didn't receive the temporary promises of this life

ii. They looked to the ultimate promise - 1Pe 1:10-11 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

2. did not receive the promise,

a. God having provided something better for us,

i. The promised New Covenant

ii. Not until our time could their Salvation be made perfect

b. that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

i. they looked forward in hope of a promised redeemer

ii. We can now see historically when that happened