



HEBREWS

Jesus is GREATER THAN...SO STAND FIRM

THEREFORE...

HAVE FAITH—CHAPTER 11

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

In the last chapter, the author laid out a painstaking argument to convince his audience that the work of Christ is the only sufficient means by which we can be saved from sin. He then encouraged them to persevere in their faith regardless of their circumstances and pointed out that they had already done this in the past. In this chapter, he describes this saving faith and gives concrete examples from history of what it looks like in action.

IMPORTANT: As always, we encourage you to begin preparing for each lesson by committing the class and the teaching to God in prayer. After this, we encourage you to dig into not only the specific chapter in Hebrews for this week (Chapter 11), but also the book of Hebrews as a whole and the Scriptures at large. As you move through your readings, jot down any thoughts that come to you and particular passages that stand out and speak to you. We assure you that these will come into play as you facilitate this discussion. It is **ONLY AFTER DOING THESE THINGS** that you should approach this lesson plan and perhaps use it as a guide. Your group is different than all the rest and so your lessons should be adapted accordingly.

PRAYER

Begin your time praying that we will maintain our faith regardless of circumstances and will it to grow in us.

FOCUS

- God always expects faith from His people.
- Saving faith is one that gives rise to action.
- Saving faith requires more than intellectual commitment, it requires trust.
- God's promise is filled in His time.

- Recognize that JESUS IS GREATER THAN, THEREFORE...Have Faith.

LESSON

Discussion Starters (OPTIONAL)

- Describe a time you stepped out in faith or observed first-hand someone doing so.
- How would you explain acting in faith and trust to a non-believer?

FROM GOD'S WORD

- 11:1-3
 - Key Points
 - English translations vary in exact wording, but the Greek word used for *assurance* or *confidence* is transliterated to English as *hypostasis*, which is defined as:
 1. A standing under; a taking of a thing upon one's self; an assumed position, an assumption of a specific character (2 Cor. 11:17)
 2. An engagement undertaken with regard to the conduct of others, a vouching (2 Cor. 9:4)
 3. A pledged profession (Heb. 3:14)
 4. An assured impression, a mental realizing (Heb. 11:1)
 5. A substructure, basis; subsistence, essence (Heb. 1:3)
 - These definitions suggest two things about saving faith:
 1. It moves beyond simple intellectual consent to trust and commitment. This is a faith that shapes *everything* about one's being including one's actions.
 2. It assumes the truth and reality of what we do not see and expects us to live according to *that* reality, not according to only what is seen.
 - The word *elenchos*, sometimes translated as *assurance* or *conviction* is best translated as *proof, demonstration, or evidence*. This verse is the word's only appearance in the NT.
 - The author reinforces this in v. 3, reminding his audience that what is seen (existence itself) came from what is unseen (the Word of God).
 - For Discussion
 - What are some common misconceptions about faith?
- 11:4-7
 - Key Points
 - The author attributes the Lord's favoring of Abel and his sacrifice to Abel's acting in faith.
 - It should also be noted that the Genesis account points out that Abel brought the first and best of his sheep for the offering.
 - Enoch was spared death because his faith pleased God.

- Noah responded to God's word about something not yet seen. His action was born out of saving faith.
 - His righteous conduct condemned the world by comparison.
 - For Discussion
 - Is there anyone in your life whose example alone challenges you? Who? What do they do?
- 11:8-12
 - Key Points
 - Abraham gave up his past and all he had with no precedent for such behavior. In practical terms, what God called him to do could only look like madness.
 - He was willing to live in the land promised to him as a stranger because he anticipated the delivery of God's promise.
 - By faith he and Sarah were able to do the impossible: *conceive a child in their old age*.
- 11:13-16
 - Key Points
 - Abraham and his descendants did not receive the Promised Land in their lifetimes. All that they knew was that their descendants (both physical and spiritual) would receive a home from the Lord (even if they did not know exactly what that would be).
 - For Discussion
 - Are there any promises to those who follow Jesus that you don't understand?
- 11:17-22
 - Key Points
 - Abraham knew that God's promise rested on Isaac; and his statement to his servants that "we will return to you" suggests that he fully expected God to somehow keep His promise, either by resurrection or by stopping Abraham from completing the sacrifice.
 - Romans 4:20-21 suggests that Abraham expected God to reconcile the command (to sacrifice Isaac) and the promise (that Isaac would be the means of God's promise) even if Abraham himself did not know how this could be done.
 - Jacob and Joseph, likewise, maintained this expectation of the future fulfillment of God's promise. Joseph was so confident of it that he ordered his remains to be buried in the Promised Land.

- 11:23-31
 - Key Points
 - With no knowledge of what his future entailed, Moses:
 1. Rejected a life of royal ease that he could have claimed as a member of Pharaoh's family
 2. Aligned himself with an oppressed people
 3. Left the safety of Midian and returned to Egypt to lead the Israelites to freedom

Discussion: Do you know of others who, because of their faith, have given up wealth or other things that the world places great value on?
 - Despite their later faithlessness, the Israelites had enough faith to cross the Red Sea.
 - Finally, Rahab was accredited with righteousness (despite being a Gentile and prostitute) for sheltering the Israelite spies.
 - For Discussion
 - Do you know of others who, because of their faith, have given up wealth or other things that the world places great value on?
 - What does the story of Rahab tell us about God's attitude toward human position and station in life?
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- 11:32-40
 - Key Points
 - There is a long tradition of those who are called by God having to suffer and endure staggering hardship. Yet those who do so and remain faithful are also able to do great things by His power.

REFLECTION

- Aside from acting in faith, what are some other commonalities among all of these people mentioned?
 1. They all trusted God to do things that seemed impossible.
 2. They all trusted God to keep His word even if they did not know how He would do it.
 3. They all acted based on nothing but their trust.
- How can the church help to cultivate this kind of faith?
- What in the lives of contemporary believers interferes with the development of this kind of faith?

PRAYER

LESSON OUTLINE – Here are the lessons we will be studying the weeks to come.

- INTRODUCTION (January 5)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Angelic Beings–Chapter 1 (January 12)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Angelic Beings–Chapter 1 (January 19)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...But Still Human–Chapter 2 (January 26)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Moses–Chapter 3 (February 2)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The High Priest–Chapter 4 (February 9)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The High Priest–Chapter 5 (February 16)
- THEREFORE, Don't Fall Away–Chapter 6 (February 23)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Melchizedek–Chapter 7 (March 2)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The Law–Chapter 8 (March 9)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The Tabernacle–Chapter 9 (March 16)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Sacrifices–Chapter 10 (March 23)
- THEREFORE, Have Faith–Chapter 11 (March 30)
- THEREFORE, Stand Firm–Chapter 12 (April 6)
- THEREFORE, Offer Acceptable Sacrifices–Chapter 13 (April 13)
- CONCLUSION (April 27)