



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

FAITHFUL YET FLAWED • FAITH FOR ALL SEASONS • HEBREWS 11:32-40 •

MAIN POINT

Biblical faith is not dependent on circumstances—it is a steadfast trust in God that experiences victory, endures suffering, and finds hope in His promises, regardless of the season.

INTRODUCTION

When you think about faith, do you naturally connect it more with success or suffering? Why?

How do you typically respond when life doesn't go the way you expected?

Have you ever seen God work powerfully in a good season, but struggled to trust Him in a hard one?

Hebrews 11 reminds us that faith is not one-dimensional. Some experienced miraculous victories, while others endured intense suffering. Yet all were commended for their faith. Biblical faith is not about outcomes—it is about trusting God in every season.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ HEBREWS 11:32-35A.

What examples of victory and success are listed in these verses?

What role did faith play in these outcomes?

What does it mean that they “conquered kingdoms” and “enforced justice”?

How did faith provide protection and strength in dangerous situations?

Faith in this passage: Provides victory, Protects from harm, Produces strength and renewal.

Why do you think God sometimes chooses to display His power in visible, miraculous ways?

How can success test or shape our faith?

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ HEBREWS 11:35B-38.

What contrasts do you see between this passage and the previous one?

What kinds of suffering are described?

Why would some choose to endure suffering rather than accept release?

What does this reveal about their faith and perspective?

How does this challenge the idea that faith always leads to comfort or success?

Why is it important for believers to understand this reality?

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ HEBREWS 11:39-40.

What does it mean that all these were “commended through their faith”?

What promises had they not yet received?

What is the “something better” God has provided?

How does this point us to Jesus and the bigger picture of redemption?

How does future hope encourage present faithfulness?

Why is it important to see faith from an eternal perspective?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Does your faith remain steady in both success and suffering?

How do you typically respond when God gives victory?

How do you respond when He allows hardship?

Are you more likely to trust God when things are going well or when they are difficult? Why?

How does your faith reflect an eternal perspective?

Are you living more for temporary comfort or lasting promises?

Where might God be calling you to trust Him in a new or deeper way?

What is one specific step of faith you need to take this week?

PRAYER

Pray that your group would develop a faith that is strong in every season—whether in victory or suffering.

Ask God to give you:

Trust in times of success

Endurance in times of hardship

Hope rooted in His eternal promises

Pray for believers around the world who are suffering for their faith, that they would remain strong and encouraged.

COMMENTARY

| HEBREWS 11:32-40

Heb. 11:32-40 This summary invokes great names and faithful deeds of OT saints (see ESV cross-references for likely identifications).

Heb. 11:32 time would fail me to tell. For OT references to the people listed in vv. 32-38, see chart. For a discussion of the reason why the author of Hebrews included Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah as examples of faith (even though their mistakes and sins are presented so clearly in the OT), see Introduction to Judges: Assessment of the Judges. The prophets refers to OT prophets who either wrote the OT Prophetic Books or appear

in OT historical narratives (e.g., Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc., some of whom are clearly alluded to in Heb. 11:33–38).

Heb. 11:33 through faith. The focus remains more on the faith of these OT people than on their deeds alone. Who . . . conquered kingdoms includes the conquests God accomplished through those specifically named in v. 32 (even the prophet Samuel; see 1 Sam. 7:3–14). enforced justice. Or “worked righteousness,” which was especially important in the roles of the judge (e.g., Samuel in 1 Sam. 7:15–17) and the king (see David in 2 Sam. 8:15; cf. Jer. 23:5–6). obtained promises. God fulfilled many promises to the leaders of Israel (e.g., Judg. 4:6–7, 14; 6:12–16; 7:7; 13:5), especially to David and his messianic heir (2 Sam. 7:11–14; Heb. 1:5). stopped the mouths of lions. Likely a reference to Daniel (Dan. 6:16–28), though Samson and David also combated lions (Judg. 14:5–6; 1 Sam. 17:34–37; cf. Ps. 22:21).

Heb. 11:34 quenched the power of fire. In light of the reference to lions (v. 33; see Dan. 6:16–28), this likely refers to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 2:49–3:30). The other descriptions in this verse apply to many OT leaders and prophets; e.g., for escaped the edge of the sword see 1 Kings 19:2; 2 Kings 6:31–33; Jer. 36:26; and contrast Heb. 11:37. made strong out of weakness. Perhaps serving thereby as an example to the audience, who have “weaknesses” (4:15).

Heb. 11:35 Women received back their dead by resurrection. Elijah raised the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17–24), and Elisha raised the son of a Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:18–37). tortured. Probably in the form of beating (some commentators compare this to the intertestamental story of Eleazar in 2 Macc. 6:18–31). rise again to a better life. Literally, “obtain a better resurrection,” which means better than the OT “resurrections” just mentioned (which were really just resuscitations back to mortal life, and did not impart a perfect resurrection body).

Heb. 11:36 mocking . . . imprisonment. Much like some of the readers of Hebrews (10:32–34; 13:3). This verse is especially reminiscent of the treatment of Jeremiah (see Jer. 20:2; 37:4, 15–21), though others were similarly abused (e.g., 2 Chron. 36:15–16; also 1 Kings 22:26–27; 2 Chron. 16:7–10).

Heb. 11:37 stoned . . . sawn in two. These likely represent the traditional accounts of the deaths of Jeremiah and Isaiah in early Jewish and Christian extrabiblical literature, though other prophets were also stoned (2 Chron. 24:21; Matt. 23:37; cf. Luke 11:49–51; 13:33–34; see also Introduction to Isaiah: Author and Title). killed with the sword. While some through faith escape the sword (Heb. 11:34), others do not (e.g., 1 Kings 19:10, 14; Jer. 2:30;

26:20–23). skins of sheep and goats. The clothing of prophets, such as Elijah (2 Kings 1:8) and others (Zech. 13:4; Matt. 7:15).

Heb. 11:38 world was not worthy. See v. 7. Their presence in the world was itself evidence of God's grace, for their proclamation of the word of God to sinful people was a greater privilege than people deserved. dens and caves. Especially associated with prophets in hiding (1 Kings 18:4, 13; 19:9).

Heb. 11:39–40 commended through their faith. Cf. vv. 2, 4–5. did not receive what was promised. Most of those mentioned in this chapter saw only preliminary glimpses of what was specifically promised (see v. 13), and all were anticipating a greater future hope (v. 16). In light of chs. 1–10, something better for us refers to the new covenant realities of the superior Son of God, with his superior priesthood, and the consequent eternal perfection of the faithful. made perfect. The perfection of believers is elsewhere the goal (10:14; 12:23; cf. 7:19; 9:9; 10:1), accomplished through the work of the perfect Son of God (2:10; 5:9; 7:28). apart from us. The saints of the OT, along with those of this era, will partake together of the same end-times perfection: sinless selves in deathless resurrection bodies.