

"The Walk of Faith"

Part 29

11:1-40

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of Hebrews we stopped with several verses from Psalm 66.

**Psalm 66:10-12**

<sup>10</sup> *For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.*

<sup>11</sup> *Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.*

<sup>12</sup> *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*

The writer of Psalm 66 tells us that when we go through the storms and the valleys of life that we come out into a "wealthy place" after it is over. The "wealthy place" is a reference to how we grow and mature as we go through the valleys and the storms of life.

The Hebrew believers who received this letter were going through some very trying times. They needed encouragement to continue to persevere through the persecution which they were facing. They most likely did not stop to think about the riches which would come from the times of testing. Notice the Words which God had given to Isaiah concerning Cyrus.

**Isaiah 45:1-3**

*Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;*

<sup>2</sup> *I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:*

<sup>3</sup> *And **I will give thee the treasures of darkness**, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.*

God promised to Cyrus the TREASURES OF DARKNESS. God also takes us through the times of darkness in this life and it is in the darkness that great spiritual riches/treasures are found.

The reason we looked at this thought last week was because of the transition which the writer of Hebrews makes in Hebrews 11:35.

**Notice Hebrews 11:35**

This verse is so important because it lets us know that even when God's people walk by faith there can be times when we are not delivered from the storm. It may be God's will that we go through the storm. Some of the Old Testament saints stopped the mouths of lions, some quenched the violence of fire, and some escaped the edge of the sword and some defeat great armies of the enemy. But then there were those who suffered greatly and they too exercised great faith.

I. **The Pinnacle of Faith**

**Part 3**

A. **True Faith Continues**

**Notice Hebrews 11:35 again.**

There is a truth within this verse that I need to remind us about and that is these people refused to compromise because they had completely turned their back upon the world. Their focus was upon the eternal reward. I point this out because this same focus will enable you and me to stand in the valleys and the storms of life without compromise.

**Notice Hebrews 11:36**

There is much to be considered within this verse but we are going to keep it short and to the point. These people whom the writer refers to here faced:

1. **Mockings** - This is a reference to public ridicule. They were made to be outcasts of their communities. They were talked about and shunned all because of their faith in the promises of God which kept them from living for the world. To read over the fact that they were ridiculed seems to be lite affliction compared to being stoned or scourged. But public ridicule along with the torment of Satan as he attacks the mind can be far more difficult than a stoning or being sawn in half. You see if you are stoned it ends after a while or when you die. If you are sawn in half you die and it is all over. But public ridicule and being judged falsely by society around you goes on for long periods of time.
2. **Scourgings** - This was to be beat with a whip which had bone or metal fragments tied to the ends so as to shred the flesh.

3. **Bonds and imprisonment** - This is a reference to chains. Samson was a man who was placed in chains.

#### Notice Hebrews 11:37

I want to just comment upon a few of these statements here.

1. **Tempted** - This means they were tested. The enemy knew their stand and did everything possible to get them to compromise and recant their faith.
2. **Slain with the sword** - This actually means to be slaughtered with the sword.
3. **Wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins** - This is pointing to the fact that this is all they had. Everything else had been taken from them because they stood for God.
4. **Destitute** - This is a reference to being last, left behind, excluded or inferior. These people never had abundance. They sometimes did not have enough food or drink for days. They were at the bottom of the barrel in their society.
5. **Afflicted** - This means they were crushed. The word can refer to physical crushing or emotional crushing. The point here is many of those whom the writer refers to were under great pressure.
6. **Tormented** - This means they were constantly harassed.

#### Notice Hebrews 11:38

The first point we need to notice is what the writer places in parenthesis here. He tells his readers the world was not worthy of these believers. The word "WORTHY" here has the idea of balancing the scales. What the writer is saying here is that if the world was placed upon a scale and these believers were placed upon the other side of the scale and the one with the greatest importance tipped the scale then the saints would far outweigh the world. Let me show you another place where the word is used and this will help us to see the idea.

#### Romans 8:18

<sup>18</sup> For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

The idea here is the glory which awaits us in eternity far exceeds the suffering here in this life.

Now let me get you back to our verse. The world views you and me who have faith in Jesus Christ as fools and people who are worthless. But through the eyes of God we are the most important people on the earth. The reason is because we are His witnesses.

## 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

<sup>18</sup> *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and **hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation:***

<sup>19</sup> *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

<sup>20</sup> *Now then **we are ambassadors for Christ,** as though God did beseech you by us: we pray **you in Christ's stead,** be ye reconciled to God.*

To teach the Bible, tell others about Jesus Christ, and to live a life of surrender so that the Holy Spirit can manifest Jesus Christ in us is the most important thing anyone can do in this world. We can teach people to be surgeons, nurses, teachers, soldiers, police officers, carpenters, electricians and they can take that and make a good living for their families, but if they do not know Jesus Christ then when they die they go to hell. The saints whom the writer is referring to were extremely valuable. They were like light houses in the storm. But many in the world missed their message and chose to try and put out their light.

## Notice Hebrews 11:38 again.

These saints had no permanent dwelling place on this earth and it was because of their stand for God and their faith in His promises. Their faith and the lifestyle which their faith produced were very costly for them. They lived for something far greater than this world.

All the suffering and all the persecution could not extinguish the hope of these believers because they believed in the promises of God.

## B. The Appeal

### Notice Hebrews 11:39

**Here is an amazing statement!!** These who are listed in this chapter ALL pleased God with their faith. Let me just remind us all that even when God is pleased with our faith we

can still face some very serious suffering and affliction. Now concerning those whom the writer has referred to in this chapter the end of this verse is so important. They walked by faith and they were never permitted to see the fulfillment of the PROMISE. This then makes me ask a question, "What is the PROMISE which the writer is referring to here?"

I believe to answer this question we must step back and take in the entire theme of this letter. This letter is to prove that Jesus is BETTER than anything of the Old Covenant so we can say the theme is to show that the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant. So the PROMISE which they had not received was really the PROMISE of the Messiah Who would ratify the New Covenant. The PROMISE of the Messiah was first given in Genesis 3.

### **Genesis 3:14, 15**

*<sup>14</sup> And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:*

*<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

The PROMISE was there would be a future Redeemer who would destroy Satan. As time went on there were more details of the PROMISE given. But the picture was fragmented throughout the Old Testament. Let me just outline a little about the PROMISE to help us to better understand.

- I. The Coming of the Jesus Christ
  - a. The New Covenant
    1. The removal of sin.
    2. Access unto the throne of Grace.
    3. Clearing of the conscience.
    4. A High Priest to intercede for us.
    5. Fellowship with God

The Old Testament saints continued to look forward to the day when Jesus Christ would come but they never received the PROMISE while they were alive.

### **C. The Application**

**Notice Hebrews 11:40a**

Now the writer confronts these Hebrew believers with something which they could not dispute. God had something better for them. What was that which was better? It was the fulfillment of the PROMISE. They knew of the birth of Jesus and they knew of His death and resurrection. They could now see the complete picture. Under the Old Covenant the picture was fragmented but now Jesus had come and they could see how all the Old Covenant rituals and ceremonies all pointed to Him.

Here is the point which the writer is making; these Hebrew believers were struggling to stay steadfast in the face of the persecution in their lives. But those listed in this chapter held tightly to their faith and they did not have nearly as much LIGHT as the Hebrews had. These Hebrew believers had far more LIGHT and therefore they had no excuse for not standing steadfast in their faith. How could the Hebrews justify pulling back based upon the amount of Truth which they were exposed to? They could not justify pulling back especially when the writer held up the Old Testament saints who stood steadfast having never received the PROMISE.

The application for our lives is very clear. We have even more LIGHT than the Hebrew believers who received this letter. We have the completed Scriptures. We know what is coming and how it will all end. We can look back and see how faith sustained those in the Old and the New Testament as they faced trial after trial. Therefore, we have no excuse to pull back. Let me also remind you that we are also accountable for the LIGHT which we have.

**Luke 12:48b**

*For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required:*

**Matthew 25:14-19**

<sup>14</sup> *For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*

<sup>15</sup> *And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.*

<sup>16</sup> *Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.*

<sup>17</sup> *And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.*

<sup>18</sup> *But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.*

<sup>19</sup> After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

There will be a day of reckoning in which we will answer for what has been entrusted to us and that includes Spiritual Truth.

**Notice Hebrews 11:40b**

The Old Testament saints had to wait for us to be complete. This means that they had to wait for the Jesus Christ to die and shed His blood for the New Covenant and lead them into the presence of God. It was when Jesus died that they were made perfect. They could never reach perfection under the Old Covenant because the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin.

**Hebrews 7:11, 19**

<sup>11</sup> *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?*

<sup>19</sup> *For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.*

**Conclusion:**

Next week we will step into Hebrews 12 and follow along as the writer continues to encourage us to live by faith.