

Hebrews 11:1-40

Session	Chapter	Topic
1	Hebrews 1:1-4	Introduction to Hebrews
2	Hebrews 1:5 – 2:4	Jesus is Greater than the Angels
3	Hebrews 2:5 – 3:6	Jesus' Sonship is Greater than Moses' Servanthood
4	Hebrews 3:7 – 4:13	Jesus' Rest is Better than Joshua's Rest
5	Hebrews 4:14 – 5:10	Jesus, Our Great Appointed High Priest
6	Hebrews 5:11 – 6:20	Exhortation to Persevere in Light of God's Promise
7	Hebrews 7:1-28	Jesus, High Priest in the Order of Melchizedek
8	Hebrews 8:1-13	Jesus, High Priest of the New Covenant
9	Hebrews 9:1-28	Jesus' Sacrifice is Greater
10	Hebrews 10:1-39	Persevere On In Light of Jesus' Perfect Sacrifice
11	Hebrews 11:1-40	The Faith of the Ancients in Action

The author of Hebrews reminds his readers of their faith in their early days. They endured suffering because they knew that they had better and lasting possessions. They do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed. Instead, they belong to those who have faith, persevered and as a result, are saved.

However, what is this faith and how does persevering faith looks like? Up until now, there has only been fleeting mentions of faith throughout his epistle. However, as we come to Hebrews 11, we come to the climax of the book, with the author emphatically demonstrate to his readers what persevering faith looks like in action. This serves as a great clarion call for all of us Christians today, to persevere on in our faith in a world that is increasingly hostile to the Christian faith.

Launch

- 1) What are some modern examples of Christians who persevered to the end, and examples of Christians who did not persevere to the end (fell away)?

The Faith of the Ancients – Abraham

Read Hebrews 11:1-19

- 2) What does the author say faith is? (v1)
 - a. What does that mean?
 - b. Who was commended for that?
- 3) What do we understand about the universe by faith? (v3)

4) Complete the following table (v4-7)

By Faith		
Person (include verse number)	Action	Question
		In what way does he still speak?
		Why is it impossible to please God without faith?
		How did he condemn the world and become an heir of righteousness?

5) What did Abraham do by faith? (v8-9)

- a. Place yourself in Abraham's shoes and time. What would be some of the challenges that he would be facing in travelling to an unknown foreign place?
- b. How did you think he was able to do that? (v10)
- c. In what way did Abraham demonstrate what the author mentioned in verse 1?

6) What did Sarah do? (v11)

7) What was the result of Abraham and Sarah's faith? (v12)

8) What was common with all these "ancients" with regards to their faith? (v13)

- a. What were they longing for? What didn't they do? (v14-16)

9) What else did Abraham do by faith? (v17-18)

- a. What was surprising about what God said to Abraham?



- b. How did Abraham reason that out? In what way did he receive Isaac back from the dead?

The Faith of the Ancients – Moses

Read Hebrews 11:20-31

10) Complete the following table. (v20-31)

By Faith		
Person (include verse number)	Action	Question
		Why does blessing his sons require faith?
		In what way did he speak about the exodus of the Israelites? (cf. Gen 50:24-25)
Moses (v24-28)		How is it possible that he can regard disgrace for the sake of Christ greater than the treasures of Egypt?
People (v29-30)		
Rahab (v31)		

11) What are the similarities of the faith of Abraham and Moses? (v25-27)

- a. How does Moses demonstrate what was said in verse 1?

The Faith of the Rest of the Ancients

Read Hebrews 11:32-40

12) How do you think these Old Testament figures were able to do or go through these amazing things for God? (v33, 35)



- a. What does this show us about the kind of life we will have by faith in God? What common expectations does this list of things defy?
- 13) How does the author of Hebrew describe these people? (v38)
- 14) What were they all commended for?
 - a. Why did they not receive what had been promised? (v40)
- 15) Having read about the faith of the ancients, how would you answer question 2a now?

Application

- 16) How can we have faith like the ancients that we just read about?
- 17) How can faith in action look like today in our lives?

Conclusion

The author has spent many chapters preaching about how the Son is greater in every way to the Old Testament figures and practices. Now, as he reminds his readers of their early confidence in their faith, he comes to the climax in Hebrews 11 – what many has called the Hall of Fame of Faith. He has just mentioned that we belong to those who have faith and are saved, what is faith and what does it look like in practice?

Anticipating these questions, the author gives us a great definition of faith – “Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Having faith in almighty God who has sent his Son to purify us from our sins through his sacrifices means to grasp hold and to have confidence in this hope we have in Christ. We have assurance about these things that we do not see – these promises of God that he has given to us in Christ. It means to live our lives in a way that we take hold of what is promised by God as something real and solid, even though we may not see it yet. We live today as if those promises are true in our lives – because they are true! So even though the promises will be fulfilled in the future, it affects our lives today.

The author of Hebrews then shows us what this looks like in action. He goes chronologically through the Old Testament storyline and lists out all the different characters and shows how they lived out their life in faith. He particularly focuses on Abraham and Moses – (1) Abraham by faith followed God’s call to go to a unknown foreign country, (2) Moses by faith chose to identify with the people of God, instead of being part of the royal court. After that, he summarises all the amazing things that the people of God had done throughout history *by faith in God*. He praises them highly with words that all of us should aspire for – these are people of whom the world was not worthy.

However, this is not because they were so great in of themselves. This was because they had faith in the only one who is worthy – God almighty.