**Fixing Our Hearts on Jesus**

**God Approves Those Who Live by Faith**

**Hebrews 11:17-40**

**Hebrews 12:1-3** *- Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

**Hebrews 11:1** *- Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

**Hebrews 11:2** *- For by it [faith] the men of old gained approval.*

**Hebrews 11:6** *- And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*

**Hebrews 11:16** *- But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.*

**Hebrews 11:39-40** *- And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.*

**I. The Obvious Choices**

A. Noah – ark

**Hebrews 11:7** *- By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*

B. Abraham – killing Issac

**Hebrews 11:17,19** *- By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son … He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.*

C. Moses’ parents – preserving Moses

**Hebrews 11:23** *- By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.*

D. Moses – giving up all for the Lord and to lead courageously

E. Rahab – welcomed the spies

**Hebrews 11:31** *- By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.*

**Hebrews 11:32-34** *- And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.*

F. David – man after God’s own heart

G. Samuel – first prophet, priest, and king-like figure

H. The ones who endured torture and death

**Hebrews 11:35-38** *- Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.*

**II. The Runners Up**

A. Isaac, Jacob, & Joseph – passing the promise to the next generation

**Hebrews 11:20-22** *- By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come. By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.*

B. Nation at Jericho

**Hebrews 11:30** *- By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.*

C. Gideon

**Hebrews 11:32-34** *- And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.*

D. Some of the prophets like Jonah

**III. The Head Scratchers**

A. Barak

B. Samson

C. Jephthah

**2 Thessalonians 1:6-10** *- For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.*