**Examples of Persevering in Faith Without Proof**

Hebrews 11:1-16; August 17, 2025

Welcome back – It is a joy to gather together

* I know that not all of us are football fans – I love watching football.
* It was a blast watching the first ever home game as our school’s new stadium…
* College ball started this weekend
* for the pro football fanatics – the NFL season kicks off on Thursday.
* For most of us, we love watching football because it may be a game we played when we were in school, but never again,
* Or for some, we did not play because, well, we just were not gifted in that manner.
* But there is a place that I think anyone with even a hint of love for the game can enjoy…
* The Pro football Hall of Fame in Canton Ohio
* It recounts the greatest players at the greatest moments of the game.
* And as you walk through the halls, you might dream of what could have been, what it would have been like…
* But we all have to be honest at the end of the day.
* These men enshrined in the Hall…they are not there as an example for me to emulate
* I could dream all I wanted
* I could have worked as hard as I possibly could – but that was never going to be the end of my journey.
* But our journey today is not about the pro football hall of fame
* But rather what we often like to call God’s Hall of Faith…
* In out passages this week and next, we will be in Hebrews Chapter 11 to look at some of the most incredible examples of Faith…
* But unlike the Pro Football Hall – which considers itself the destination…
* The Lord’s Hall of Faith is given to us as an example or as a motivation for the race that is set before us…

**Hebrews 12:1-3**

* When we truly understand Hebrews 11, then we will be ready to
* Run the race describe in chapter 12 with
* Our eyes will be fixed on Jesus
* **Fixing our hearts on Jesus**
* So that you will not grow weary or lose heart…
* With our journey in mind…
* Please join me as we make a stop at the Hall of Faith to give thanks for

**Examples of Persevering in Faith Without Proof**

* Open with me to Hebrews Chapter 11…that will be on page \_\_\_ of the bibles in your chairs
* I will be reading starting at verse 1
* This is the Word of the Lord…READ Hebrews 11:1-16
* Before we unpack the five examples in today’s passage,
* I would like to share 3 attributes that are common all who walk by Faith…

**I. Faith means that we will not have proof (vv. 1-2)**

* What does it mean to have faith?
* If I said everyone has faith in something would you argue with me?
* As I drive in town, I have a level of faith that others are going to follow the traffic laws
* When I pull up to the Speedway, I have faith that they will have Diet Coke available in the soda fountain
* We all exercise faith…
* But is that the faith we are talking about?
* When we talk about religion and faith, isn’t that different?
* Again – I would say that everyone exercises faith…
* It is easy to see men and women of faith in other systems of religion, such as Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam.
* Even the Atheist – though they might deny religion, they are placing their faith in something
* So – What does it mean to have faith…take a look at our passage again…

**Hebrews 11:1-2  Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval.**

* Faith is not a feeling. It is not just saying “I hope it is true.”
* Faith is the assurance, a confidence in what you hope for, is based on our confidence in the one who makes the promise.
* This Faith, or certainty, does not come because we have the ability to know and determine all things.  It is not even about our ability through logic to eliminate any doubt about the future…
* Our faith in “things hoped for”
* Begins with the object of our faith…
* That being God
* And the nature of His promises
* All of which either have come true – or based on God, we can know that they will come true
* This is why we are called to hold fast to our conviction of who Jesus is, what He has done and the promises that He has made
* This is true for all of us
* When we hold fast our confession – as we are called to do on Hebrews 10:23…
* We have the assurance of our faith
* Our faith does not wait for God to prove He will do the next thing
* Our faith does not require another miracle…
* God has already shown His unchanging faithfulness to us through His Son…
* He who was revealed in the flesh – that is Jesus
* Was vindicated in the Spirit – by His resurrection
* Seen by Angels – as well as 500 people after the resurrection
* Proclaimed among the nations – The Word of Jesus continues to spread today
* Believed on in the World – this is why Christianity is growing today
* Taken up to glory
* Praise the Lord – our Savior lives and is seated on the throne today…
* He is the Object of our Faith today
* And we need no longer to be seeking further proof.
* Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of this not seen…
* Faith IN CHRIST
* allows us to hope upon the only Object of Faith worthy of that unwavering assurance
* and know that His promises will never fail.
* Our 5 examples all had this unwavering faith with even less proof than we have…
* Another thing common between them all is that

**II. Each example died before they saw the fulfillment (v. 13)**

* Can we all admit, that we sometimes have trouble trusting in others to do something we are expecting them to do today…
* When I am waiting to meet someone who has promised to join me…
* How long do I wait, before I have my phone out wondering where they are…
* Its 2 minutes past the time on my calendar…
* Are they blowing me off…
* How quick do I stop believing in their promises?
* And that is for something with a defined time…
* What about for a promise with no defined timeline and an expectation that it may not happen until after I die?
* If I struggled to hold fast my faith for 5 minutes, how am I going to believe until the end?
* That would take a total confidence in the object of my faith, the maker of the promises
* And that is where today’s examples can help us
* As they held fast until the end…
* For a promise that had not been fulfilled…

**Hebrews 11:13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.**

* The Bible acknowledges in multiple places the greatest argument against believing in Jesus
* If He said He is going to return…Where is He?
* How do I know that He is coming back?
* It seems like forever since He made the promise…
* Peter taught that we need to appreciate God’s patience rather than clamor for all His promises to be fulfilled…

**2 Peter 3:7-9** **But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 8 But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**

* .
* The Lord has a reason for His timing,
* and to ask for Him to meet our timeline would have an eternal impact on others
* because when He fulfills His promise, the door will have closed for those who have not placed their faith in Him
* and it does not just close, it means the destruction by fire for ungodly men.
* What does that mean for you and me today…
* That as we seek to fold fast to our faith, as we remain in this world, our faith will continue to be tested.
* You may experience pain and suffering at the hands of others that raises doubts in your heart
* You might fall to temptations and sin in grievous ways for which you are ashamed and wonder if God even cares, how culd he take you back again
* But God has not left us to fight these battles alone
* Hebrews teaches us to fix our eyes on the object of our faith
* To remember who God is and what He has done.
* Paul reminds us in Philippians that
* If there is any encouragement in Christ…
* If there is any fellowship in the Spirit
* He calls us to be intent on one purpose
* That would be holding fast to our faith
* Persevering, and enduring while we wait for the fulfillment
* Grounded confidently in the promises of God
* Just as our examples of Faith show us today.
* But can we praise the Lord that He has given you and me even more…
* We can look to these examples
* Then we can add the promises that God has fulfilled after they died.
* The promise that I am referring to
* God’s promise of a Savior for his people
* God’s promise of a King to sit upon His throne
* That promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of God
* Who fulfilled over 300 promises through His birth, life, ministry and most importantly, through His death, burial and resurrection…
* We can have confident assurance of these things, even though we did not see them.
* And assurance of things Hoped for through faith in Jesus.
* If you do not have a saving faith in Jesus,
* Please notice that the Bible most certainly addresses your objections or any barriers to your faith..
* In fact the Lord invites your questions and does not ask you to blindly accept an empty statement
* Rather, through the truth of Scripture, God has revealed Himself, He has sent His Son so that you might know Him and have assurance based on the past for a hope for the future in Him by trusting the the finished work of Jesus for your salvation.
* We would be happy to meet with you anytime to talk about your need for Jesus Christ.
* This fall, you have heard me say -Jesus Make life better…
* We believe that a relationships with Jesus changes wyour life today and for eternity.
* And we look to the eternal in the same way that…

**III. Each example longed for the ultimate promises (vv. 14-16)**

**Hebrews 11:14-16 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 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.**

* All of the examples we are about to explore held this in common, that they longed to be in heaven with their Savior.
* Ask yourself –
* How does the promise of heaven and eternal life impact your faith?
* Or do the weights of this world hold you down.
* If you want to desire a better country, a heavenly one
* It begins with Faith in the One not ashamed to be called our God
* It begins with a desire to be pleasing to Him
* Thus a key truth that we need to hold on to…

**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.**

* To keep it simple – What is it that makes up our faith
* First – Faith is convinced of who God is…
* What does that mean?
* It is more than acknowledging God’s existence…
* Even the demons believe in God and they shudder.
* It is also about believing all that God has revealed about who He is through the Scriptures…One God, three persons, the Creator of the heavens and earth, Man’s creator, Holy and unchanging.
* Second, we understand that God rewards those who seek Him…
* The greatest reward being the promise of eternal life with Him in Heaven for those who place their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.
* Or in other words that we are convinced of the promises of God.
* Thus we can all have a confident assurance of things hoped for in the same was as the author has shown us…

**IV. Five Personal Examples of those who exercised faith (vv. 3-12)**

* One last pause before we get to our first example
* Hebrews provides a blanket statement regarding faith in that which is unseen…

**Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.**

* No one beyond God was present to see creation happen…
* Thus every theory regarding the origin of the world, the solar system, the galaxy, the universe and then the origin of mankind…
* It all takes faith.
* Science cannot provide proof…even Big Bang Theories and calculations can only walk back to moments after creation, notb the actual origin.
* Evolution cannot prove how mankind came to be – there are only theories, theories with large holes and without definitive proof.
* Thus before our first example – we see creation as evidence towards faith…
* That which is seen, made from nothing
* In the Beginning – God created
* There is no experiment you can run to recreate…it required God
* At Faith we believe that God created the world in 7 days.
* Some may disagree
* But we walk by faith, not sight
* God is pleased when we rightly give Him credit for all that He has made…
* That includes mankind…and the specific examples of Faith we have before us today…

**Example #1: Abel (v. 4)**

* We will begin in Genesis chapter 4, looking at the sons of Adam and Eve.

**Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.**

* With each example, let me sum it up while visually while I explain…

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| **Faithful Person** | **OT Passage** | **How they exercised faith** | **Significance** |
| Abel | Genesis 4:1-16 | Abel offered a sacrifice according to the Lord’s instructions. | His example of faith still speaks. |

* Without preaching a whole sermon
* What happened with Cain and Abel?
* Cain was a tiller of the ground and Abel was a keeper of the flocks
* They each presented an offering to the Lord
* God accepted Abel’s offering, but had no regard for Cain’s
* We do not know the specifics of why God accepted Abel’s but not Cain’s
* Scripture does not make that specific answer clear
* But what we can know
* God accepted Abel’s offering and not Cain’s
* The implication is that God had communicated to them what God desired in an offering
* Abel had exercised faith by choosing to offer to God based on God’s instructions and had faith that God would reward those who seek Him
* And Cain’s true heart came out as he not only failed to follow God’s instructions, but chose to kill his brother.
* but even in death, righteous Abel’s voice still speaks
* He lived and acted by faith
* And left an example for us to follow.
* Then how does this impact our lives…
* God has given us, through His Word, everything we need for life and godliness.
* God has given us instructions for our lives
* Are you good with those instructions? Or do you fight back and choose your own way?
* Do we try to find a way to make God’s Word say what we want it to say? Or do we have faith that God’s way is best
* If the Bible says it – I will believe it
* If the Bible says it – I will choose to do it.
* Can we honestly say that we live based on that statement?
* This week, take some time in prayer and ask God to show you any places in your life that you are not living according to your faith…

* Our second example – maybe a little less famous…

**Example #2: Enoch (v. 5)**

**Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.**

* There are only a few verses in Genesis 5, but that does not minimize the example…

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| **Faithful Person** | **OT Passage** | **How they exercised faith** | **Significance** |
| Enoch | Genesis 5:21-24 | He walked with and pleased God for 300 years. | The Lord took him. |

* We learn in Gen 5 that Enoch lived for 365 years…
* In those days, that seems like a short life compared to others
* But that is because God took him up to heaven without experiencing the pain of death
* Notice what Jude says about Enoch to help see why the Lord was pleased with him…

**Jude 14-15 *It was* also about these men *that* Enoch, *in* the seventh *generation* from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones,15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”**

* It seems that the Lord was pleased with his willingness to warn his friends about the coming judgment.
* Rather than let them work it out for themselves and remain silent, Enoch warns them.

* Throughout human history, the Lord has allowed people to speak for him
* and sometimes receive a warm welcome
* While others are met with resistance and harsh treatment
* We cannot know how we will be received.
* But what we can say is that the Lord is pleased when we stand firm even amongst evil, when we hold fast our confession of hope and we share the gospel calling others to repentance.
* As we look at our example in Enoch
* Are we equally committed?
* Parents
* Is teaching your children about Jesus at the top of your priority list?
* If you asked your kids – What would they say?
* Do they know they have to make their own decision? Not ride your coattails?
* Is there someone in your life who has professed faith in Jesus, but they live their life as though they do not need him?
* Are we speaking up and warning them about holding fast to their confession
* If we have friends who do not believe?
* When was the last time you reminded them of the stakes?
* When was the last time you reminded them
* The Lord is coming to execute judgment upon all,
* and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way,
* and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.
* Then we get to…

**Example #3: Noah (v. 7)**

* We may all remember learning about Noah as a child –
* Today we want to see him as an Example of Faith…

**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.**

* Noah’s story is amazing when you consider the context…

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| **Faithful Person** | **OT Passage** | **How they exercised faith** | **Significance** |
| Noah | Genesis 6:8-9:29 | Noah walked with God. By Faith he followed the Lord’s instructions to build the ark. | Part of salvation history |

* Noah was already 500 years old
* He had been walking with God despite the wickedness of the world around him
* Now God gives him a task – one that by all rights, makes no sense
* The Lord tells him to build an ark
* A monumental project that would take 100 years to complete
* While his neighbors, his suppliers, others would be ridiculing him as he warned them of the coming destruction
* And by faith - he persevered
* Completing the task, he would condemn the world for their unbelief.

* By faith, we have instructions to live by as well
* Instructions that call us out to live a life as unique as Noah standing apart from the wickedness of this world
* Are we willing to go against the crowd because we are following Jesus?
* Are you willing to do the Lord’s will even if it sounds a little crazy.
* I thought God was a little crazy about 8 years ago.
* I was a 30 year Naval Officer who had spent his life driving submarines.
* It sounded crazy to be a Community Center director and help plant a new church in the Northend of Lafayette
* Folks sometimes you need to be a little crazy of you are going to accomplish God’s plan.
* He may not ask you to build an ark
* But don’t be afraid to live by Faith in taking that next crazy step for Jesus…
* Maybe that is to join the church –
* Do you see it as crazy to step in a serve at the Northend,
* Children’s ministry – crazy?
* Men – is it your goal to be a deacon?  If not, why not?
* Then consider how long it took Noah…
* …
* Are you willing to commit for the long haul
* Noah is a faith lesson in perseverance
* How about in your marriage –
* You have bee fighting for years…
* My life is not changing
* My wife is not changing
* I can only see one option…
* By faith – I ask, Is there another?
* Why is it not an option to persevere in Faith
* that God has a promise that He will fulfill in and through you.
* Learning to live the long-game is sometimes an important part of our spiritual life.

* Then, the example we may recognize the most…

**Example #4: Abraham (vv. 8-10)**

* There are multiple examples of faith with Abraham, so let’s start at the beginning…

**Hebrews 11:8-10 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.**

* There is a lot to unpack here

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| **Faithful Person** | **OT Passage** | **How they exercised faith** | **Significance** |
| Abraham | Genesis 11:26-25:11 | He believed and acted upon what God told him including (1) leaving home without a final destination (2) living as an alien in a land promised to him and (3) looking for the place God built. | It means you don’t know the end result.  Being satisfied with less in the will of God  Longing for God’s provision in his time |

* Abraham is included in the Hall of Faith for multiple reasons.
* It all began with the move from Ur amongst the Chaldeans
* When his father died in Haran, the Lord said to Abram
* Leave everything you know, and go and when you get there, I will let you know…
* Over our 30 years in the Navy, we moved alot…but do you know what was common to every move?  I knew where I was being sent?
* I cannot imagine the idea of being told
* Take all that you have
* Go that way, I will tell you when to stop – have faith.
* Then even when they arrived in Canaan,
* They lived as aliens and strangers.
* They still did not establish a permanent home.
* Waiting for further instructions.
* Maybe we can’t imagine the move without a destination
* But I think we can all understand doing something we believe the Lord wants us to do without knowing what will happen.
* For those who are married
* Did you choose your spouse because you believe the Lord would be pleased…
* If not – God can redeem that…
* Either way –you did so not knowing how it would turn out
* It was a choice by faith
* When you take a job – can you know the future?
* We make our choices by faith not knowing what the future holds
* That uncertainty can be uncomfortable…
* Then what do we take from the example of living as an alien in a foreign land…
* When our family moved to Italy, there was very little that I would call comfortable…
* The conveniences of home were gone.
* The ideas about customer service were different
* Even a simple thing like heating your home
* To this day, I still do not understand where our radiators sensed the temperature to decide if they needed to heat the home…no thermostat.
* Sometimes the Lord allows us to be uncomfortable to test our faith and determine out commitment to do his will.
* We give thanks for how God reshaped our family through the trials of living overseas…
* Sometimes it is not about having all of the answers
* But rather faith in knowing that this is the Lord’s Will
* Not his will that we live in Italy –
* But His will that we would be conformed to the image of His Son
* Are you OK with the Lord’s plan even if it means discomfort or uncertainty?

* Our last example

**Example #5: Sarah (vv. 11-12)**

* As if Abram’s moving story was not enough
* God had made a promise that from the start appeared impossible…

**Hebrews 11:11-12 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, *as many descendants* as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.**

* Sarah was not just barren, she was “beyond the proper time of life.” And her husband, even older, “ as good as dead at that…”

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| **Faithful Person** | **OT Passage** | **How they exercised faith** | **Significance** |
| Sarah | Same as above | Sarah believed that God would grant her a son. It was not perfect. Hagar was Sarah’s idea. Abraham could have protected his wife rather than used her. | Isaac is the child of promise. |

* The fact that they would not have been able to have children would have been a tremendous burden on Sarah and a point of shame for the family.
* God made a promise – and he asked them to wait
* 10 years had passed…
* Sarah frustrated and wondering if she was even supposed to be a part of God’s plan gave Abraham her maiden
* That was a horrible plan from every side…
* But even after that - God still praises Sarah for believing because she believed that God was faithful
* She had experienced his protective hand twice when her husband allowed her to be taken into the harem of a king. God delivered her then.
* And she believed he would keep his promise now.
* She had no logic reason to believe that She and Abraham could conceive
* She could only trust in God

* Over and over we have seen the phrase “By Faith…”
* Some things we just don’t get to see in advance
* It is the way it has always been
* Israel was waiting for a Messiah
* And because of a lack of Faith, they missed him
* But we have been shown a Savior
* We have seen Jesus through His witnesses and His Word
* And now we are called by Faith to wait for the rest of His promises to be fulfilled.

* I realize I have spent a lot of time on facts and not as much a specific applications for us
* There is a reason for that…because this text does not tell us specifically what to do…it is descriptive
* The Lord gave us illustrations of people who exercised real faith believing that he is the rewarder of those who seek him.
* Sometimes, what you and I need to do in passages like this is slow down to think and pray. We must let the story soak into our souls so that we have the resolve and resolute confidence to live it out despite the trials and battles for our hearts.
* Sometimes, the Scripture directly calls us to do something.
* Other times, it tells us about something and asks us to work it out, with the Spirit’s help, for ourselves.
* In the weeks ahead, we will apply this faith to the applications that come in chapter 12 that by faith, we may run a race with endurance…
* For today, I pray that we may all rest in these truths, meditate on the concept of faith
* And consider whether I am willing, like Abel, like Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah to live with the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen.
* Where you may see that you have been unwilling to live by faith – choose to repent and draw near to God and plead with him that He would help you to live as a man or woman of Faith

Pray.