Faith That Endures

**Hebrews 10:35-36 (KJV)** Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

*(ESV)* Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised

**Hebrews 12:1 (KJV)** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

*(ESV)* Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

**Intro**

Florence Chadwick was the daughter of a San Diego police officer.
- She grew up on the beach and fell in love with the water.
  - Very early in her life it became evident that Chadwick excelled at endurance swimming.
  - Although she started competitive swimming at age 6, her first victory was in a 2 ½ mile rough water swim at the age of ten, where she placed 4th.
  - A year later she won first place in a six mile rough water race.
- Endurance swimming is a unique kind of competition, requiring special abilities and a mental and physical perseverance far beyond what is required of shorter distance swimmers.
  - It requires athletes to keep good form, technique, and concentration for many hours.
  - Most marathon swimmers swim between 60 and 70 strokes a minute.
  - Therefore, a 10-hour swim would require 42,000 strokes, and a 14-hour swim would require 58,000 strokes, which is an incredible feat.
  - There are also hazards unique to open-water, long-distance ocean swimming, the swimmer must navigate through a pitch black night, often dealing with thick fog, enduring swarms of jellyfish and be constantly vigilant about the possible presence of sharks.

Chadwick first made history in her crossing of the English Channel.
- The Channel swim was considered to be the greatest challenge available to swimmers in her day.
  - The fact that less than seven percent [of those] who attempt to swim across the English Channel complete the 23 mile trip is a testament to the difficulty of the task.
  - On August 8, 1950, after training for two years, Chadwick set a world record for the crossing, swimming from France to England in 13 hours and 20 minutes.
On September 11, 1951, Chadwick made a historic return trip and swam back.

Despite dense fog and strong headwinds, she prevailed through a 16 hour and 22 minute ordeal and became the first woman to swim the Channel both ways—from France to England as well as from England to France.

Almost a year later she attempted to set another record by becoming the first woman to swim 21 miles across the Catalina Channel on the California coast.

She made her first attempt on July 4th, 1952.

The weather was dreadful that day.

The ocean was ice cold, the fog was so thick that she could hardly see the support boats that followed her, and sharks prowled the water around her.

Several times, her support crew used rifles to drive away the sharks.

While Americans watched on television, she swam for hours, pressing on and on through the fog.

Her mother and her trainer, who were in one of the support boats, encouraged her to keep going.

However, after 15 hours and 55 minutes, still unable to see any significant distance through the fog, she succumbed to the circumstances and ended the attempt, asking her support crew to pull her from the water.

What she didn’t realize, when she finally tossed in the towel, was that she was less than a mile from the other shore.

She was incredibly close to completing the task but, because she couldn’t see through the dense fog, she had no idea how close she was.

After the failed attempt, she told a reporter that, if only she could have seen the other shore, she could have completed the swim.

But, while pressing through the fog, unable to see the goal, she became overwhelmed by the sense that she wasn’t making any progress at all.

The final goal was out of sight, but the thick fog, the rough seas and the prowling sharks were very evident.

In an uncharacteristic moment of weakness, she allowed that which was seen to overwhelm that which was, as of yet, unseen—losing sight of the goal, she surrendered to her circumstances.

With over 20 rough miles behind her, she gave up with only a half mile left to go.

Endurance Needed
When Paul wrote his letter to the Hebrews, he did so in an effort to confront those that were abandoning Christianity to return to the ordinances of Judaism.

The volume that resulted from that endeavor is, undeniably, one of the most richly profound books in the New Testament.

Paul, recognizing his audience as being well established in the law, presented an argument drawn from the prevalent themes that run throughout the whole of scripture.
Notes by Pastor Tony McCall

Faith That Endures

• These Hebrew believers had, in many ways, the same problem that Florence Chadwick had.
  o They started out well, but over time their faith began to waiver as they were tempted to give up before they completed the course.
  o Their problem was that they found it easier to embrace the ordinances of a faith that they could see and touch.
  o The tabernacle, in all of its glory and splendor, was still standing.
  o The ordinances of the Old Covenant were still in place and they represented a very real and tangible approach to God.
  o The things that they could see were so much more real to them than the things that they could not see.
  o This New Covenant contains a better promise, a better tabernacle, a better high priest, and a better reward, but all of that remains unseen.
  o None of it is physical and tangible, it is a promise that is not of this world, a reward that is eternal, and a faith that operates in the realm of the unseen.
  o This was the heart of their struggle.
• The writer of Hebrews admonishes the Hebrews not to return to the Old Covenant but to hold fast to the New and Better Covenant.
  o He presents an extraordinary argument through the course of the book that is just as applicable to us, today, as it was to the Hebrews then.
  o Our struggles may be different, our temptations to turn back are not the same,
    ▪ we don’t have the Old Tabernacle to contend with,
    ▪ but the truth remains that there exists today the same temptation to allow the very real obstacles and stumbling blocks of this life to overwhelm our faith
    ▪ and cause us to stop short of the promise of God.

Faith

The heart of Paul’s argument is a dissertation on faith.

• The best-known portion of the book of Hebrews is the often-quoted chapter on faith.
  o The eleventh chapter of Hebrews presents the premise that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.
  o The purpose of the chapter is to demonstrate that faith operates in the realm of that which is hoped for, that which is, as of yet, still unseen.
  o This is in direct conflict with our very real tendency to place our faith in things that we can see and touch.
  o So, through the record of Hebrews 11 the writer demonstrates how the heroes of Hebrew history possessed a faith that was not founded in the present but was constantly reaching for that which was not seen.
• Paul presents a perfect argument for a future tense kind of faith that is fully invested in that which exists only in the realm of hope.
It is this forward-looking aspect of faith that I have referred to, in the past, as forward facing faith.

It is this indomitable force in the heart of a man that neither gets bogged down in the present nor anchors itself to the past but rather looks forward to the future with longing and desire for something more than what it now has.

While holding fast to the foundations of past blessing and past experience, it presses through the difficulties of the present and reaches for the promise of the future.

Faith peers into tomorrow in an effort to catch a glimpse of promises fulfilled.

It is a hope that strains beyond what it can see in an effort to grasp that which it has only hoped for.

Hebrews 11 is a testimony to the power of forward facing faith.

However, it is the context of that testimony that makes it so powerful.

It is presented as the evidence for an exhortation that begins at the end of Chapter 10 and continues at the beginning of Chapter 12.

Hebrews 11 defines the faith that is presented at the end of the preceding chapter and is to be acted upon at the beginning of the following chapter.

In latter verses of Hebrews 10 one finds an exhortation that, according to Bible scholars, express the central theme of the whole book.

Beginning with verse 32 the writer presents to us a people that once had great faith but now are in danger of casting away their faith and wasting their lives.

These are people that once were enlightened, once received a revelation of truth and once embraced the future tense promises of God.

However, we discover them in an entirely different context.

Now they are weary, now they are overwhelmed, now they a struggling under the heavy weight of the trials and troubles that have besieged them.

Once they stood fast, once they held firm, once they endured storms and tragedies, but now they have finally come to the place where their faith is wavering and the very real challenges of their present circumstances threaten to completely overpower them.

If we were honest this afternoon, each of us would have to admit that we have felt just like they felt.

There are times when the darkness of the valley comes crashing in upon us, times when trouble and tragedy completely engulf us, times when circumstances and difficulties threaten to overwhelm us.

During those times it sometimes seems that it would be easy to simply give in to the realities of this life, to toss in the towel and give up on hopes and dreams that we have only seen through the lens of faith.

How many people have given up on the promises of God, in the midst of some difficult battle?
How many folks have cast away their faith in a futile effort to remain afloat in the stormy seas of this life?
How many ministries have been lost, dreams crushed and hopes vanquished because people became completely overwhelmed by what they could see, by what seemed so real, while they relinquished their grasp on the dreams and callings of God?
How many have settled for the substance of this life while forsaking a better reward that exists only in the realm of hope and faith?
This is the reality to which the book of Hebrews speaks.
It is a message of hope to those that are on the verge of forsaking the things that they have been promised in order to obtain the things that they can see.

The writer’s admonition, to those that are embroiled in this struggle is succinct but powerful.
Admonishing them not to throw away their confidence in the promises of God he tells them exactly what they need.
The KJV translates verse 36 this way, “For ye have need of patience…”
The Greek word for patience is hypomones, which conveys the meaning of “patient endurance.”
It involves overcoming difficulties and withstanding pressures.
The writer, by using this word, is emphasizing the tenacity of patience that endures hardships and trials.
The ESV translates the same word as endurance saying, “For you have need of endurance…”
This is the point upon which Hebrews 11 is founded: You need endurance!
You need a faith that will weather the storms of this life.
You need a faith that will refuse to become grounded in the present reality but will extend itself with earnest expectation towards a promise that has not yet been received.
A faith that will strive and strain to break free from the present struggles and hardships, you need a faith that will endure!

Those that possess an enduring faith will not shrink back, the writer says, instead they will endure -- believing to the saving of their soul.
This is the faith that the writer of Hebrews is defining and giving testimony of in chapter 11, it is an enduring faith that is fully invested in things not seen.
It’s a faith that defies what we can see, what we do know, and what our limited understanding tells us.
It is a faith that rises above the present circumstance and compels us to a future destination that can not be seen with physical eyes.
This is what the enshrouding fog of our pressing storm tries to rob us of.
Hell understands that, if we can see the destination clearly, we will continue to press until we get there.
So the affairs of this present world endeavor to cloud our vision of another world.
Hardships and heartaches demand our attention, forcing us to focus on what we can see while enticing us to relinquish our grip on what we cannot see.

**Things Hoped For**

Florence Chadwick wasn’t defeated by her own inabilities or physical weakness, she wasn’t defeated by the length or difficulty of the swim, she was, by her own admission, defeated because she couldn’t see the destination.

- She lost sight of the reward.
  - This is the condition that these verses address.
  - Sometimes, if we aren’t careful we will lose sight of the promise that lies at the end of this journey.
  - We lose sight of heaven, we lose sight of eternity, and we lose sight of things that God has promised us.
  - If we aren’t careful, our present struggles will rob us of our confidence in a better promise that exists somewhere in the pages of our tomorrows.
  - In the face of that struggle, the thing that will sustain your soul is an enduring faith.
  - Make no mistake about it, I’m not talking about a vague hope that is founded on wishful thinking.
  - I’m talking about a settled belief in the things that have been promised but have not yet been seen.
  - Biblical faith is not a delusional stab in the dark.
  - Rather biblical faith is based on a confidence in the promises of God.
  - It is a settled belief that God will do what He said He would do, that His promises are yea and amen, that His word endures forever and never returns to Him void!
  - It is that confidence that gives faith its enduring quality.
- This is the message of Hebrews 11, faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.
  - The Hebrew’s greatest struggle was the tendency to embrace the things that they could see.
  - Their biggest problem was that the things that couldn’t be seen were in danger of being supplanted by the things that could be seen.
  - The present reality was on the verge of completely overcoming their future hope.
  - **So the writer says, you need endurance!**
  - You need to settle the issue of faith in your heart and you need to determine to hold onto your hopes and your promises at any cost.
  - Hebrews eleven is all about reminding us of the true nature of faith.
  - It’s all about confident obedience to God’s word, in spite of circumstances or consequences.
  - It’s all about believing in what cannot be seen and ignoring what is plainly visible.
- Faith enables us to grasp what we have not seen, through faith we stand upon a foundation that others cannot see.
o Faith causes our future hopes to become present tense.
o It causes our current realities to be subjugated to our desire for the
goal of an eternal promise.
o It is the enduring nature of faith that will keep us through every trial
and carry us past every obstacle.
o Perhaps this is why Paul said in Romans 8:24-25,
  ▪ "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope:
    for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope
    for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."
  ▪ There’s that same Greek word patience, or endurance, again.
o What Paul is saying is that faith is hope that dismisses what it sees
and strives for what exists only in the realm of the unseen and then,
with endurance, strives for the promise.
o Faith is all about what can’t be seen.
o It operates in the realm of that which is hoped for.
o It is so easy to become so involved in what we can see and what we
can understand that we begin to place our faith in people, institutions
and tangible things.
o But that’s not faith at all.
o Faith doesn’t operate in the realm of what can be seen.
o Faith embraces what cannot be seen.
o Faith is fully invested in that which is only hoped for.
o Faith believes what it doesn’t see and discounts what it does see.

**Renew Your Confidence**

This afternoon I have come to this pulpit with a desire to encourages somebody not
to lose your grip on your confidence in God’s promises but rather to renew your
faith in your reward.

• You need endurance!
  o There’s a reason why Jesus said in Matthew 24:13 that "he that shall
    endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."
  o Because you need endurance!
  o You need to grasp the reality of faith.
  o You need to push through the distractions of your present struggle
    and catch a glimpse of your promised reward.
  o Some of us need to get heaven in view.
  o Some of us need to remember that God isn’t finished with us yet.
  o Some of us need to renew our confidence and our hope in a promise of
    God that says that the latter rain shall be greater than the former.
  o Some of us need to reinvest ourselves in a promise that says that he,
    who goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come
    again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him!
  o Your confidence in the promises of God is the source of your faith.
  o And it is the wellspring from which your endurance flows.
• There’s a good reason why the New Testament writers, in the midst of much
persecution and heartache, speak so often of their longing for heaven.
o Because it is their confidence in that future reward that provides them with the endurance to prevail over their current trials.

o I want you to understand that, if you are going to make it through this world and make heaven your home, you are going to have to focus your vision on your faith and set your sights on the promises of God.

o This is the source of your endurance.

o This is the faith that saves your soul.

o This is why Hebrews 3:6 tells us that if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end then we will obtain our reward.

o Somebody needs to renew your confidence in the hope that sustains you!

Florence Chadwick waited two months before she tried again to swim the 21 miles across the Catalina Channel.

• On her second attempt the fog was just as dense as the first time.

• The weather was again unfavorable.

• The conditions were again harsh and unforgiving.

• But something was different this time around.

• With a confidence born of an understanding that was gained in her failed attempt, Chadwick reached the California shore in a record shattering 13 hours, 47 minutes and 55 seconds.

• When asked what made the difference, Chadwick smiled and said that she made it because she kept a mental image of the shoreline in her mind while she swam and, though the fog was thick and the way was difficult, she never lost sight of the opposite shore.

• As long as she could see, she could make it!

The Race

Let me tell you something about living for God.

• This life is a race.

  o This isn’t a short jog down the track.

  o This is a long distance, endurance race.

  o If you plan to succeed in this race, you need the endurance that is born from faith!

  o If you plan to make heaven your home one day, you need that faithful endurance that springs from an unshakable hope in the promises of God.

• This is why the writer of Hebrews, after he presents the persuasive testimony of chapter 11, picks back up the theme of endurance.

  o Pointing to the evidence of faith just provided, calling the faithful a great could of witnesses, he admonishes us to lay aside every weight and sin which do easily besets us and run with patience, or endurance, the race that is set before us.

  o The message is simple, the only way to run this race is with the endurance that is born of a forward facing faith.
The only way to triumph over life’s current struggles and difficulties is to be fully invested in a promise that exists somewhere in the realm of hope and things unseen.

Just like Chadwick, on her record breaking swim, get a vision of the destination in her mind that compelled her forward through the fog and past the obstacles, those of us that long to make heaven our home must get a vision of glory firmly planted in our minds and realize that this is what we are striving for.

The fog doesn’t matter anymore, the only thing that matters is reaching the other shore.

The trials don’t matter anymore, the only thing that matters is making heaven my home.

The obstacles and discomforts don’t matter any more the only thing that matters is seeing the promise of God come to pass.

Somebody needs to get a vision of revival and fix it in the center of your view.

Somebody needs to renew their confidence in their promise and settle it in their heart and mind.

This world with all of its trial and tribulation doesn’t matter anymore.

These struggles are only temporary and these tragedies are only momentary discomforts.

The only thing that really matters is getting a grasp on the promise of God.

This is why Paul can say in Phillipians 3:13-14 “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Because he understood that the endurance that propels us through this present life and to our future reward is founded in a confident faith that reaches forth unto things which are still before us and presses towards a mark that has not yet been obtained.

You need endurance.

You need a confidence in the promises of God.

You need a hope that is born of faith that reaches forth to the things of God, which are still before you!

You need a forward facing faith.

Close

In Hebrews 12:2 the writer, after having listed the faithful through the ages gives the ultimate testimony of the power of forward facing faith.

He admonishes us to turn our attention to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.

“Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.”

Did you catch that?

The pain, horror, and shame of the cross was made endurable for Jesus b the future hope of a joy that was yet before him but had not yet been realized.
• It was the hope of a future joy that compelled him to endure the cross!
• He is our ultimate example.
• He is the author and finisher of our faith.
• He too, found endurance, through forward facing faith, faith in his own word, faith in his own promise, faith in what he was about to accomplish!

• Today I realize that some of you have been struggling with the troubles and trials of this life.
  • I am keenly aware of how circumstances and situations arise and endeavor to rob us of our hope and our faith.
  • You need endurance and the only way to get it is through the exercise of forward facing faith.
  • Let me encourage you, today, to lift your eyes from your circumstances for a moment and look forward to the promise that is yet before you.
  • Perhaps you need to get a glimpse of heaven.
  • Perhaps you need to get a glimpse of a personal promise.
  • Perhaps you need to get a glimpse of revival.
  • Whatever it is you need to get a vision that is inspired by that which can only be seen through hope.
  • And with that vision in mind, you need to make up your mind, just like Florence Chadwick, that the only thing that matters is pressing on until you reach the mark.
  • This is the source of your confidence.
  • This is faith that endures.
  • This afternoon, somebody needs to invest yourself in a faith that endures this world, a faith that will carry you all the way to heaven.
  • Somebody needs to claim again the promises of God in your life.
  • Reestablish your confidence in the promises of God!