

INTRO

'By Faith' part two. Last Sunday, **Nathan preached** on the God given gift of Faith whereby virtue of **it** we alone **are able** to please God. Today we pick up in this chapter..**chapter 11**..in verses **17-40**. Here the author directs his readers attention to the **emphasis** of '**By Faith**' to show **what is 'seen' in the lives** of those with TRUE SAVING FAITH...**those who do not shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. These, with Faith, walk by Faith**...**FIRMLY** looking ahead to that which is **not yet seen** of which **our hope is assured of in Christ** who is the OBJECT OF OUR FAITH. Having this **full assurance of Faith** the **writer of Hebrews**, desiring to get these Christians **firmly clinging to Christ to the end**, LOOKS BACK at **examples of those** with the **'same'** saving Faith to **prepare them** for the LIFE OF Faith.

Though we don't know what lies ahead as we seek this **HOMELAND** that awaits when Christ's returns....**IT IS helpful to be aware** of what the LIFE OF Faith looks like. **Not that** we are able to **predict** anything...**but to not be** caught off guard,.. TO rather **BE prepared** and **ready**...and ALSO to examine oneself,... TO **BE vigilant** that you are indeed.. **ABIDING** in the Faith, **firm to the end**.

Much like the **EMBARKMENT** of a quest. To be **aware** and **prepared in heart** of the **challenges one** is to face **in reaching the end** of your **QUEST**. Those make some of the best stories don't they? A **QUEST? The Incredible Journey** comes to mind as a Classic likely known here by all. Remember those three unlikely pets (a **Labrador Retriever**, a **Bull Terrier** and a **Siamese cat**) who by instinct traveled over **300 miles together** through the Canadian wilderness to return **home**. A journey met by many obstacles all along the way. They were set firm on making it home and doing so together. **I recall some of the emotions I experienced** in the final scene of that classic movie when I watched it as a child. Overwhelming joy that they did **in fact make it home**...all of them...though the story did allow a hint of sadness as the oldest pet of the three...**the bull terrier 'Bodger'** is delayed in making his appearance on **the hilltop they run down** from to greet their owners... Do you remember that scene? The boy in the family intently looking on...**hoping to see his beloved Bodger** show his face like the other two did...and when he does, they run towards each other with great eagerness to embrace and actually sort of collide when they do..which caused me to laugh some. And then the final emotion **I recall is a feeling of sadness over the fact** that the family had **NO IDEA**...no idea of what they all went through. They knew they traveled far and that it was against all odds that they actually made it home...hence the '**Incredible Journey**'. But none of the experiences were able to be shared. The pets, whether in the book or movie, were given personalities by which the audience got to know them and **track along with their experiences** in a very personal way. The **labrador's fierce** determination to continue on. **Bodger's bravery** exhibited on multiple occasions and **Tao**, the Siamese cat, his loyal companionship to the other two,...**so loyal he actually had a great dislike** of other cats....**THAT'S FUNNY**...He also was often being the one providing food for them all since he was most equipped for hunting. **All their acts were commendable**...each one of them **in their own way**. But their owners knew none of it. They were just glad to see them...thankful they made it home

safe. But none of the **courageous acts** and **challenges endured** along the journey could be shared and therefore **COMMENDED** for.

Well, **those who have gone before us**...those who have DIED in the SAME Faith we share....are **great examples** OF COMMENDABLE FAITH that we have the **benefit** to look back on,,...**as we look ahead to the 'same' HOMELAND they greeted and embraced from a far**. The author is desirous to impart the same **encouragement** from the **scriptures** that HE HAS received...**TO the church**, that **they ALSO** (*along with him*) **may be strengthened** in their FAITH and be READY, Self **Examining** Christians who **endure well** with commendable Faith **firm to the end**.

Commendable Faith - Faith exercised...'**observed**' in the lives of the **saints gone before us** IS commendable *because* it **magnifies** the WORTH of **Christ**. IT MAGNIFIES THE WORTH OF CHRIST...who **fulfilled all God's promises** in which they, **saints of old**, **greeted and embraced from afar** though **Christ had not yet** come. **So we** ourselves, **who see the fulfillment** of God's promises **in Christ**, **greet and embrace them also** as we wait **in faith** till his return when it's **fully realized**.

Faith in action is commendable both **then** and **now**. Therefore, **commending a fellow believer's faith seen manifested** In their life is an appropriate encouragement to give..... "*Your Faith is Commendable*". **We ought to share** that with **one another** when it's witnessed **to encourage** and STIR UP more of the same...**in them** and **in ourselves**. "*It is impossible to please God without Faith*"....*so naturally*, when **Christ exalting Faith** is clearly **exhibited**, IT RIGHTLY *ought* to be commended...that it would...**multiply**.

Before us this morning are **several examples of just that**. CHRIST EXALTING FAITH IN ACTION. **Chronologically** the author shares the **testimonies of Faith in action** of those who have gone before us. **Testimonies of several individuals** we know from the BIBLE who are **very flawed** and **committed** many SINFUL ACTS...**each one of them**...Among the LINE UP we have **deception**, **murder**, **adultery**, **prostitution**, **stubbornness**, **arrogance**, **wavering** and so on...I mean, come on..**Sampson**...really? **Yep**, he's in there among **other company** WE CAN relate to.. *can't we?* As **redeemed sinners** ourselves. OF COURSE we can. **I for one am thankful** the Bible doesn't **conceal these realities** of those **in the faith** who have gone before us. **It makes it so very real**. But each of them...**each were** commended *through their Faith*. You see it was FAITH that made them who they were..**as it is with us**. Without Faith being **present in their lives** they would NOT have the **testimony**...the CHRIST exalting **faith in action** testimony given....and **nor** would we.

We'll see this **pictured** as we course through the text **in 7 distinct** observations from the examples provided.

Examples of commendable Faith

BODY

1.) Those with **Christ exalting Faith** are **TESTED** by God and count it a JOY. (verses 17-19)

We've seen this before in our course through Hebrews right?...**we ought not to be caught off guard by this.**

God TESTS the genuineness of your faith for the Praise, Glory and Honor of Jesus Christ. (1Peter 1:6-9) (James 1:2-3)

Abraham is NO exception..let's read the summarized account. (*read from Bible*)

Abraham...*in the very act*..alter made....WOOD **placed** and **ready** to BURN...his ADULT **son** *through whom* God promised all the **covenantal promises** would come is **bound tight** and BRACING himself to **be pierced**...*sacrificed* by his dad, WHOM HE knows **loves** him *greatly*...but **in obedience** to God's instruction...**is above him** with BLADE in hand...**actively** progressing towards his VITALS to **take his life**. That is an UNTHINKABLE moment. One **can't imagine** NOR does one want to **even try** what that moment felt like for BOTH **Abraham** and **Isaac**. *It wasn't until* Abraham was **in the very act** did the ANGEL call out to him...LOUDLY speaking his name twice...

Abraham..ABRAHAM!... which denotes Abraham's **sincerity** in following through with the **slaughter** of his son as God told him to do *for the purpose to TEST Abraham to see and know whether Abraham feared God or not*. Abraham's actions revealed that **he did**. The account in (Genesis 22:5) leave no doubt of his **confident Faith** in God...for once they arrived at the place chosen by God in the **land of Moriah** to offer His son,..he told the **young men who journeyed** with them to "*Stay here with the donkey: I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.*" Just as the author notes in (verse 19) that "*Abraham considered that God was even able to raise him (ISAAC) from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back*"...**meaning**, ...same as Abraham expressed to the young men with him **while at the time** NOT knowing that God would **intervene** in the FINAL **moment**, he told the young men that he AND his son **would return**. So **while** he was saying so to these young men...**in his mind**..his son **was as good** as DEAD...*just like he* and Sarah were in **their ability** to have children of whom God **promised** they would according to His **word**. ABRAHAM **trusted** God at his word. **He trusted** God who shown Himself to be **Faithful** and **Trustworthy** IN keeping His word. **Abraham** was TESTED by God and is **commended** for his FAITH. **Christ exalting FAITH IN ACTION whole heartily TRUSTS** God at His word **at all cost**. DEFYING what the **finite..logical mind** would **reason**. **Commendable faith understands this as a loving act of God and therefore counts it a joy as James says to do.**

(James 1:2-3) "*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*" On this TOPIC our **community group** was **helped further** in *right thinking* by (Psalm 119:140) "*Your promise is well tried, and your servant LOVES IT!*" **Your servant loves it! Only through the EYES of Christ exalting Faith** can the **child of God** EMBRACE with JOY the *various trials* and **testing** of your FAITH for **it births** in your LIFE and displays for **watching eyes** the SUPREME **worth of Christ**. Abraham's testimony here serves as a **commendable example** of which we HOPE to have **exhibited** in our lives. - AMEN?

2.) Those with **Christ exalting Faith** have a **Future Hope** and **Heartfelt Worship** (verses 20-22) *read from your Bible*

Isaac, Jacob and **Joseph** are **commended** for their FAITH for *displaying clear evidence* that they were **looking ahead**. Their EYES were **set on the hope** they had **within them**. FIRMLY FIXED on **God's promises**. FUTURE **blessing** is **spoken** over their **grandchildren** and **instructions are given** regarding **Joseph's BONES** to be moved from **Egypt to the land** promised by God which **greatly predicates** or AFFIRMS their **confidence** in GOD'S PROMISES of which their **hope lies**. When they **looked into** the FUTURE....**all** that they **saw was established** on the HOPE given to them by **God**. His promised word.

Likewise, **when we look** into the FUTURE and **daily order OUR WAY in accordance**...is it formulated by the HOPE we have in **Christ**...*or*...IS IT by something **otherwise**? Are decisions within your home formulated by the **gospel**? These are tough questions...but **necessary to questions TO ASK**..**questions I ask myself for myself**, for MY WIFE and **children**. ? **What is the ultimate goal desired to be achieved and for what purpose**? What DRIVES my **decisions** and for **who's recognition**? Is it to **promote Christ**...or myself or someone else? Is my **Future Hope GOSPEL** formulated or is there some **other hidden agenda** present?...**hidden to myself even**, that I've **cloaked** with the GOSPEL to **conceal the true essence** of what formulates the plans of my heart..that which drives my **SELF Kingdom Pursuit**. **Needful questions to examine oneself with**. Often TIMES such questions don't divert how I **order my way**, don't alter my course, *though they most certainly may and do at times*, but **predominantly**.. these sort of questions rather **quickly dismantle** any **selfish ambition** that would be **creeping in** to have me **sinfully feed**. **For Selfish Ambitions are NEVER fully satisfied - it always hungers** to be fed **more and more** and it's **appetite craves** only on thing - SIN. For OUR good and for GOD'S glory...we need to **expose such vileness** that it may be **confessed**, **repented of** - **Removed from our lives**.

OUR **hope in Christ** and his **coming Kingdom** OUGHT to hold the **COMMANDING** position as to what formulates the plans of our hearts and **drives our daily decisions**.

Richly present within this **future hope** is **Heartfelt Worship**. (2b) This picture of Jacob **bowing in worship** over the **head of his staff** while **blessing each** of the sons of Joseph..**his grandchildren**.... *blessing* them **according to his future hope**. The TEXT states **plainly** that he was DYING. This is a **man who's hours**...NOT DAYS...but **hours** are numbered. So **weak** and **feeble** that he is **unable** to **stand without the support** of his STAFF. **I work** in an environment where I see this every day. The **wasting away body**. I instruct my patients to lie down on the bed upon their left side to be properly positioned for the ultrasound of their heart. Without question...for the elderly...which is whom I most see...this is the most painful part of the procedure. Going from upright to supine and then at the end of the test..back to the upright position. Often times there is this pause they do while assessing the necessary transition before them. Deep breath...bracing themselves for the certain pain that awaits. Likewise **Jacob**, nearly blind from old age, **painfully positioned** himself to **bless his grandchildren** according to his **future hope in God**.... DID SO.. **bowing** his head over

his staff in worship. *In worship.* The Bible is FULL of **expressions of worship** from SONG and DANCE to celebratory **festivals** as a **rightful expression of worship to God**. MUSIC played *skillfully* to the LORD. (**Psalm 68:24-26, Psalm 150:4**) “Your procession is seen, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary - the singers in front, the musicians last, between them virgins playing tambourines: Bless God in the great congregation, the Lord, O you who are of Israel’s fountain!” Whenever the **people of Isreal** *moved in procession* the FRONT and BACK end of the march was lined with **singing, music and dancing**. *Talk about grabbing the attention of those whom they passed by as they went.* **These people really worship** their God. WOW. Even **King David** got into this **act of worship** in his **Chonies** when the ARK was **brought back to Jerusalem** after **defeating** the **Philistines** and regaining possession of the ark. **King David, in his linen ephod, danced before the Lord with all his might.** With **all his might** it says in (**2 Samuel 6**) This **sort of dancing** requires a tremendous amount of physical exertion. **Our family is vividly reminded of this every time we watch White Christmas.** Choreographed dancing routines shown in that movie **unarguably require high levels** of fitness (*especially the guy who held the permagrin throughout...How did he do that?!* I don't think he EVER TOOK a breath. **Amazing level of fitness!.... and..., if done to the Lord, is a genuine expression of heart felt worship.** Well, **no less worship** than an **elderly, dying man bowing his head** over his STAFF in worship. **How can those be equal worship?** Because the **Bible clearly tells** us that **God is concerned** with the HEART. **Outward expressions, be what they may, are of no benefit if the HEART is not engaged.** Whether we be in the **prime of our youth** and **ABLE to put into action** the **FULL strengths** of the **faculties** God has given us (*which is fitting to do so*)... **OR if our power to express** our JOY and GLADNESS in the Lord **be weakened** by **AGE, sickness or disability**...*where ever you fall...*our **WORSHIP must be HEARTFELT.** “**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.**” (**Mark 12:30**) **Heartfelt worship faithfully accompanies** our **future hope** and together are commended as **CHRIST exalting FAITH.**

3.) Fear of God and not man MANIFESTS Christ exalting Faith (verse 23) read from you Bible

Mose’s **parents acted in faith** out of a **FEAR** of God and **NOT** man. Their **actions** placed them **directly in opposition** to the King’s **EDICT...which meant, if discovered, they would be put to death..PERIOD. No trial....OR multiple appeals to prolong the inevitable..but rather certain execution under order of the King for acting it in direct violation** to his **clearly spoken DECREE....his mandate.** Commanding all his people that “**Every male child born to the Hebrews are to be cast - thrown into the Nile river....put to death....**” Pharaoh’s **CRUEL and WICKED plan** to keep the **Jewish** population at **BAY. Mose’s parents, fully aware** of the consequences *if discovered, acted out of* the **FEAR** of God and **NOT** of man, **hiding** their infant son for **3 months** before God **Sovereignly orchestrated** the **circumstances** for **MOSES** to be **adopted by Pharaohs** daughter and **NURSED** by his **very own mother**... which has **profound Irony. Imagine this though. Hiding a new born child for 3 months. Not a simple task.** **HOW many dreadful moments** did they **encounter** of being **nearly discovered** by the **Egyptians** who **regularly sought** out any **newborns to put to death,....which would**

result in the parents demise as well. Several, I believe, would NOT be an overstatement. Acting in the fear of God rather than MAN usually results in such difficulties. When was the last time you acted in the fear of God rather than man? Most likely not to the threat of your life...BUT perhaps it resulted in being shunned by fellow employees at work OR by your relatives. Maybe it resulted in a lacking whereas acting in the fear of man would have brought an increase. Whatever comes to mind for each of us...the overarching consideration is....Am I acting out of a fear of God OR of man? (Psalm 118:6) "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 111:10) "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.." Another healthy question to place before ourselves. Am I regularly acting out of the fear of the Lord? Doing so...is acting in commendable Faith.

4.) Another example of commendable Faith - Pursuing God chiefly (verse 24-26)
read from you Bible

Few were positioned as Moses was to live a life in the pursuit of earthly pleasure. Adopted into the household of Pharaoh and ALL the privileges that accompany that status. POWER, authority, MATERIAL wealth, choice of wives, LIFE OF EASE, and security. LIVE TO PLAY. To experience the MOST of the pleasures in this LIFE. All freely available to him...at his carefree DISPOSAL....and at the age of his prime he FORSOOK THEM ALL. Who does that apart from miraculous Faith AT WORK?... No one! The world seeks these things... I'm pulled by them tremendously...WHO ISN'T? But when TRUE FAITH is active, it exposes their fading glory...their emptiness apart from CHRIST. One may attain any one, if not all of these earthly pleasures...but they are transient...they are but a moment (fleeting) here now and then gone tomorrow. They DO NOT last.

Clearly, from scripture, we are instructed to steward well, to invest, to conduct our affairs WISELY in the fear of God which may certainly BRING great possessions and a seeming security in ones establishment.... House is paid off.. or maybe multiple houses are and rental income is received for them. A sincere Christian may hold a position of great authority and MANY therefore rely on them for a JOB ..provision for their family and so forth. This is all TRUE and GOOD and praise God for faithful believers who bring much blessing to a PEOPLE by godly stewardship. We see this in the life of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and David among others in the Bible who held positions of great authority and wealth whereby many were BLESSED. (Proverbs 29:2) "When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan." Amen?...Amen!

But we are to be on guard as to what holds our affections. (Psalm 62:10) "Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them." Mose's actions revealed where his affections lied. It was clear that he saw the FUTILITY of his current course of LIFE...that it was empty apart from following God. BY FAITH Moses had "his mind set on things that are above and not on things that are on the earth." (Colossians 3:2) If holding onto all these treasures of Egypt meant forsaking the wealth of CHRIST...then the choice was clear. His REWARD IS in heaven...seen through the EYES of Christ exalting Faith, HE chose rather to be

mistreated *than to enjoy* the **fleeting pleasures** of SIN. **Paul himself** *learned the secret* of this **satisfaction** in **Christ alone**. Writing to the **Philippian church**,...*from prison mind you*. He says (**Philippians 4:11-13**) "...I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him (**Christ**) who strengthens me." Same as Moses, **Paul's reward was Christ alone**. Nothing compared to it. **Christ is all that mattered** to him. *Are we able to say the same? My immediate answer is YES!... followed by an honest I desire it to be but I know much learning is required here. To which I am thankful, knowing that I (we fellow christian) have a Father in heaven who will train us up accordingly. He knows us perfectly and knows what fleeting pleasures of sin tempt us. YES, let's not forget that SIN is pleasurable...if it wasn't, how would we be tempted by it? So whether it be the pride of life, the desire of the eyes or a fleshly craving (1John 2:16) our sinful nature has great appeal to sin and therefore sin tempts us. But our Holy, Loving Father knows this all so well and is faithful NOT TO permit us to be tempted beyond our ability, but with the temptation he will provide the way of escape, that we may be able to endure it." And permit me to say as a RESULT...we learn from it. Same as Paul learned contentment and complete satisfaction in Christ in EVERY and ALL circumstances. We likewise can progress in our FAITH to forsake ANY and ALL things that would compete with our CHEIF pursuit of God ALONE.*

Commendable Faith pursues God chiefly. Everything else is secondary and may come and go as the Lord pleases.

5.) Faithful Obedience. Faithful **Obedience** is *another commendable act* of FAITH. (**verses 27-30**) *read from Bible*

Faithful **Acts of Obedience**. In each example given the **people act - OBEY GOD - in Faith**...NOT seeing what was to come...**but nevertheless acted as instructed** by God - **Trusting him. MOSES, as instructed by God, LEFT or FORSOOK Egypt, NOT fearing the anger** of the KING. **Now perhaps** you are **reading through Exodus** in **conjunction with our study through Hebrews** and you **recall that Moses WAS afraid** of Pharaoh when it **became known** to him that **his murder of the Egyptian was not hidden**. Though he **looked around** to make sure the **coast was clear** to KILL the man...**news got out** anyway. (**Exodus 2:15**) **clearly states** that Pharaoh, **learning of the incident, sought to kill Moses because of it, but Moses fled for his life to the land of Midian to escape**. He **left Egypt, FEARFUL of his life**. **Then, after** about **40yrs of living** a different life (*ONE of a shepherd*), **removed from Egypt..in every sense**, ...Moses THEN encounters God at the **burning bush**. "...**as seeing Him who is invisible**." Though **not instantly**, he does **ultimately faithfully obey** God's **instructions** to RETURN..**go back to Egypt** to TELL Pharaoh to let God's people go. The PEOPLE **Pharaoh has been accustom to his entire life** to be at his disposal as SLAVES...**expanding the greatness** of Egypt of which he RULES and REINS over. **MOSES goes back** from which he originally LEFT in FEAR. **He goes back to what? To leave again**. But *this time*, NOT in the **fear of Pharaoh's anger with his tail between his legs AS BEFORE**, but in **Defiance** against Pharaoh. **To forsake Egypt** and NOT just himself BUT ALL of Israel. **MOSES, moved by reverent fear of God, acted in**

obedient faith, enduring the challenges along the way as seeing him who is invisible who gave him charge to go to Pharaoh and demand God's people to be released. **Moses did so**, NOT **relenting**, though **Pharaoh *showed* his ANGER....multiplying the daily** workload for the Israelites to which **removed** the people from being **at his back in support**. He **remained faithfully obedient**. Listen to **this brief account** at the time when **Pharaoh and his army HOTLY pursue** the Israelites to destroy them. (**Exodus 14:8b-14**) "...and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out **defiantly**. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon. When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. **Feared greatly**...And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, 'Is it because (*now listen*) Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? **What have you done to us in bringing us OUT** of Egypt? **Is not** (*catch this*) **Is not this** what we said to you *in Egypt*: 'Leave...us...alone!...Leave us alone Moses..that we may serve the Egyptians?' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." **Could the people be anymore NOT in his corner? Listen to Moses answer**...as one enduring, seeing him who is invisible....**Moses says** "Fear not (*there it is*)...Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent (*the obedience*)."**Fear not**. Moses, NOT **being afraid** of the KING, **returned to Egypt to leave again, but this time.. remaining faithfully obedient**...RETURNED to **leave Egypt** in **DEFIANCE** with **all the people**.

In **faithful obedience**, he **ALSO kept** the **passover**, sprinkling the **blood on the door** as instructed by God, **BEFORE..the Lord struck every first born in Egypt of both man and beast**. **Shortly after, the people brought out from slavery in Egypt, step forward**, seeing the **water on both sides standing up as a heap**, they crossed the Red Sea as on dry land as God told them to do while the Egyptians in hot pursuit to destroy them, attempting to do the same...were drowned. **God's people,.. OBEYING God's instruction** given to **Joshua,.. encircled Jericho for seven days...NOT knowing what God would do**. **Through their obedient Faith** God **FLEXED Mightily once again** and the walls **came tumbling down**. **Faithful Obedience** **SUCH AS this is commendable**. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not yet seen."**Faithfully obeying** God, though our **physical eyes** give **reason to doubt** **MAGNIFIES the worth of Christ** and **IS therefore commendable**. Trust and Obey The **Psalmist** in (115:9-11) **writes** "O Israel, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield. You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield."**You could easily add.... O church..O household of FAITH...O Christian...O child of God, TRUST in the Lord! He is your help and your shield..... Life brings** circumstances to which **we are in need** of **HELP and protection**. Here is where the **obedience of Faith** can be displayed to all nations...to the **watching world** around you who,... **to varying degrees**, is **AWARE** of your circumstances and **witness actions** done **by you in Faith** for the **sake of his name**...the name of **Jesus Christ**. (**Romans 1:5, 16:26**) This **profoundly testifies** to

the **supreme worth of Christ** in YOUR LIFE and is therefore indeed **most commendable**. The GLORIES of Christ cannot but help **shine forth** by **such obedience**. How do we approach these 'world is watching' opportunities? Are our **hearts exposed** and **poured** out to God as **He leads us** to **courageous faithful obedience** to Him **OR do we grumble** and **dispute**? I believe **we all would agree** that this is the **bread and butter** of the **world we live...to grumble,..to complain...to ARGUE. We are among it every day.** FORTUNATELY it **hasn't penetrated** our HOUSE. **Strangely enough** when **Grace** and I came upon **Philippians 4** during our weekly study together which says "Do all things without grumbling or disputing that you may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation among whom you shine as lights in the world." When we came upon that verse...I found **no reason** to write it on the **large chalkboard** in the downstairs room of our house so that it's **before us daily**. I found **no reason** to commit it to **memory** and encourage my **family to do** the same. **Marcy** and I have found **no reason** to TELL our children at **various times** to go downstairs and **read the verse** on the chalkboard **out loud** so that **they can hear their own voice** SPEAK **God's word** that it **may penetrate their** HEARTS and MINDS. **No reason at all.....ARE YOU KIDDING ME!?** **Of course we did...**and of course **everyone one of those actions were done** and are **being done**. Even if I don't **act in such way**, I certainly feel the rising tension within to do so. **Hence the Bible** verse just shared to speak **that correcting truth** over MYSELF. Our **world complains..grumbles**, OUR world **disputes..argues** with **one another**.

How **magnificent the worth of Christ** *SHINES FORTH* when **Faithful Obedience** is seen. **Such Faith is commendable**.

6.) Commendable Faith bolsters GOOD WORKS (verse 31) read from your Bible RAHAB...a harlot - or **prostitute,..is given notable recognition here**. **James also speaks** of her in his epistle (**James 2:24-26**) Where he argues how **genuine faith** is **validated** by good works. **Good works** DON'T **earn faith** OR **produce faith** *but rather* GOOD WORKS are the **FRUIT** of **genuine faith**. The **outpouring** of **saving faith** in **one's life**. Following his use of **Abraham** as an example regarding **Faith** and **Works..** JAMES adds **another one** for EMPHASIS..James writes(**James 2:24-25**) "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, **so also** FAITH apart from works is dead." Or you could say "**Not real.**"

Rahab, a prostitute **conducting her affairs** among **all the other inhabitants** of the city of **Jericho**. The **first city** WEST of the **Jordan** which would be **destroyed** by the National Israel who **would be taking possession** of the land **promised to them** by God. Not **assimilating** with the **people already in** the promise land....**but destroying them...**WIPING them **out completely** as God instructed the **Israelites to do**, promising also that **He will be with them** IN BATTLE,.. *assuring* the VICTORY. **A good 40 years** has passed since their **redemption out** of slavery in **Egypt...**and **word has been circulating** about this people...**most specifically** what **their God** has done for them. WORD has **reached Jericho...** and RAHAB *who lives in Jericho, on account of the testimony given*, BELIEVES..**comes to faith**. To our knowledge, she has NOT

witnessed anything personally. **She has only heard** the REPORT...but **that's sufficient for her to come to faith**. LISTEN to **her profession (Joshua 2:10-11)** "For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the **Lord your God, HE IS...God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.**"

She hears, along with everyone else in the city, the testimony of this people of God and 'on' 'their' 'testimony'..SHE believes...comes to faith. I find that striking. We... every individual christian has an undeniable testimony to SHARE and ought to be SHARED within the church and with those whom God would give opportunity for us to share the gospel with. But we also have a testimony as a CHURCH BODY.

That's why we are to **BELONG** to a **church body** and **not attend a church service**. We are **members of one another... FITTED and joined together BY God who equips us uniquely for the sole purpose to build one another UP in the LOVE of Christ. We as a church body HAVE a testimony....And that testimony CAN BE very effective in God's HANDS to propagate the gospel...to ADVANCE his Kingdom**. There is this people...they are **humble, KIND, generous, LOVING, Joyful, THOUGHTFUL, Thankful, a FAITHFUL and Steadfast people continually....through ALL life's ups and downs. and What is NUTS also is that they are SO diverse on SO many levels YET united in the Love of JESUS whom they worship. THIS IS NOT NORMAL. It's supernatural - IT'S GOD, It's the Gospel,. They humbly submit to one another. Areas where they disagree...they can discuss them together, NOT in anger, but with a mutual desire to have God work a MOLDING and SHAPING of their thinking to be more lined up to the mind of Christ - To equally be more fully conformed to the word of God. WHO DOES THIS? This is out of this world. It's RADICAL, It's Christianity. - May this be more and more so Pillar's testimony as a body of believers.**

The faith of Rahad, persuaded BY the testimony of God's people, ENACTED in her outward, VISIBLE, tangible, undeniable good works for the BENEFIT of God's people and for the glory of His Name.

Such acts of Faith are commendable.

7.) And the **Seventh example of commendable faith** we'll draw from (**verses 32-38**)
read

How about that **for a finish of walking** through this HALL OF FAITH chapter of **Hebrews..if you will?** The examples are **exceedingly great**. We've only **touched on a few** the author selects from scripture,... and of **great impact** those few are. **BUT If you are hungry** for more..**there's more** the author says. **Time prevents going to further detail. Search the scriptures..MAKE IT YOUR life practice in pursuing God. JESUS himself instructed the disciples,...while walking with them** on the road to a village outside of Jerusalem (**Luke 24:27**) after he **was resurrected** from the dead...**that all scripture testifies about him and the very faith that unites His people to him....which SHINES brightly through all the ages** proclaiming the excellencies of His name. His

undeniable...Supreme Worth. 'LEARN OF IT' the author pleads, BE impacted by it that your FAITH would testify the same.

There is a noteworthy distinction seen in his concise wrapping up of examples of commendable faith. Notice the first run of examples have a Wow factor of 'VICTORY'...'who through FAITH conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power fire 'WOW', escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, (pretty sweet...right) put foreign armies to flight...(that's what I'm talking about)..Women received back their dead by resurrection (another BIG WOW factor)...but catch this now...this distinguishable shift in the middle of (verse 35). Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they may rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two (say what? YES it says that),... sawn in two....they were killed with the sword (ugh). There is a WOW there but it's..it's a different kind of WOW..one that causes me to be uncomfortable in my seat. They went out about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated - of whom the world was not worthy- (of whom the world was not worthy) wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Of whom the world is not worthy they suffered under the world's hand that they may rise again to a better life. CHRIST EXALTING FAITH endures suffering and affliction many times at the hand of the world who is NOT WORTHY of them. The world who mocks them and mistreats them. If this is the case, WHY? why is the good news preached to them? If they are not worthy of us, WHY GO at lengths to share the good news of JESUS CHRIST to them who in return mistreat us, harm us, kill us? Why not avoid the world where ever we can? Because in the midst of them there are those of God's who are lost who need to hear the message of Christ whereby FAITH comes so that they will come into the fold...be apart of the flock...the household of the living God. BROTHERS and SISTERS who we ourselves were like in times past, without hope/dead in our SINS... till someone cared enough to share the gospel by which salvation came.

Also, it is to affirm the evidence of the worlds conDEMNation. The GOSPEL message is preached to them...they are without excuse. They hear it and they reject it...reject God's way of Salvation. One of my favorite verses that articulates this TRUTH is (2 Corinthians 2:14-17). "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we (the church..christian) we ARE the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and..AND..among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death (those who are perishing) to the other a fragrance from life to life (those who are being saved). Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ." And LASTLY,.. but most importantly...and already eluded to in the verse just quoted...the BIBLE commands us to do so. "Go therefore and make disciples...Preach the word in season and out of season...TESTIFY...and in doing so...in living this out..AFFLICTIONS will come..you will endure suffering. The CONDEMNED world WILL NOT like you and treat you accordingly.

Commendable Faith understands this, accepts it as the norm **and believes**, IN THE FACE of it,... God's promise that (**Psalm 34:19**) "**Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them from them all.**" **From them all.** ALL, meaning in **this life** as He would **sovereignly direct events** around your life **for you** to be **protected, spared, helped, rescued** OR..... if it would be ACCORDING to **his will** that you would suffer and die for the sake of the name of Christ, in which case **you are in the presence** of the **Lord Jesus (Philippians 1:21-23)**. **Either way you will be delivered..PERIOD....**

That is **commendable Faith**. HOLDING on **all through life**; never letting go.

CONCLUSION

All these, the author says in (**verse 39**) **All these examples** of those gone before us with **commendable faith**, though they were commended **for their faith**, did **not receive** what WAS PROMISED, (**verse 40**) since God had **provided something better** for US, (**us meaning them then and us now...those under the old covenant 'the Law' looking ahead and greeting from afar the promises received from God in which Christ fulfilled and us under the new 'Covenant of Grace' who from the vantage point of the cross seeing Christ's consummation of God's promises look ahead along with them**) that **we together** will be **made perfect**, NOT APART, be **we together**...THEM then and US now will **partake together** on that **final Day** (*capital D*) when **Christ returns**...the **same sinless perfection**, resurrected **glorified bodies** God has **promised** IN and THROUGH His **Son Jesus Christ** OUR **Great High Priest** by whom WE MAY, *with reverence*, **but confidently** DRAW **boldly near** to the **Living God**. **The all consuming fire. The great I AM.**

May we not look back **with satisfaction** on our own **past acts of commendable faith** and REST in them, **that would cause us** to become **immobilized** in OUR FAITH. **We rather are to be...** **thankful** to God for **such GRACE evidenced** in our lives... and therefore FURTHER **motivated ..greatly inspired** BY THEM to **press on** for MORE that we **may live ongoing commendable lives** of FAITH that **loudly testify** the SUPREME THE WORTH of **Christ Jesus** the **very object** of our Faith. PRAY -

Family

Table Talk



December 3, 2017

Sing!

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
o come ye, o come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the
King of angels:

(Chorus)

O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in
exultation:
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven
above!
Glory to God, all glory in the
highest:

(Chorus)

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this
happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh
appearing.



Advent Reading...

Isaiah 9:1-7

Genesis 12:2-3

Isaiah 53

Zechariah 9:9

Psalms 2

Hebrews 1:1-8

Genesis 3:14-15; Romans 16:20

This week's Scripture Memory -
Hebrews 11:1-2

In the first week of Advent, we remember the prophecies spoken about Jesus, that a Savior would come to pay for our sins and bring us back into relationship with God. This speaks to us of God's sovereignty, that he is the Ruler over all creation and accomplishes his will. As he determined to glorify himself through sending his Son to die and redeem mankind from bondage to sin and death, so he has done. Our readings in this first week of Advent look at the prophecies spoken and fulfilled about Jesus.