

# Hebrews 11:23-31 // The Faith Of The Exodus Generation

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[ 0 : 00 ] This evening's reading can be found in Hebrews 11 starting at verse 23 and you'll find that on page 1210 in the church bibles if you'd like to turn that follow along.

! Hebrews 11 starting at verse 23 through to 31. By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born.

Because they saw he was no ordinary child and they were not afraid of the king's edict. By faith Moses when he had grown up refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

He chose to be ill-treated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt.

Because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt. Not fearing the king's anger. He persevered because he saw him who is invisible.

[ 1 : 09 ] By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood. So that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land.

But when the Egyptians tried to do so they were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after the army had marched round them for seven days. By faith the prostitute Rahab because she welcomed the spies was not killed with those who were disobedient.

Thanks very much Andrew. So we are continuing in this series in the letter to the Hebrews.

Or Hebrews depends what you want to call it. Where the whole thrust of this letter. If you've not been with us this is a minor catch up. It's been to try and encourage this group of people.

This new congregation. About what it means to stand firm in their faith. To stand firm in their life.

And one of the ways the letter does this. The author starts to compare Jesus to all these things that this group of people would have looked to.

[ 2 : 18 ] For identity, for meaning and for purpose and safety in their past. Which are all very Jewish things. Hence the name of the letter. And so he keeps comparing Jesus to all these different things.

And he says Jesus in chapters 1 and 2 is God's word. Therefore better than the angels and the law. He says in chapter 3 and 4. That Jesus is the bringer of the new creation.

And a better rest. Therefore better than Moses who we're going to look at tonight. And the promised land that God's people were promised. In chapters 5 to 7. Jesus is the eternal priest.

Bringing full reconciliation with God. Better than any intermediate or Old Testament priest. And in chapters 8 to 10. That Jesus is the perfect sacrifice.

Bringing a new covenant. A new relationship between man and God. Better than anything the Old Covenant could have done. And this isn't just better in the sense that if Jesus was in a fight with these things.

[ 3 : 19 ] Nine out of ten times he'd win. It's that he's ultimate. He's fulfilled these things. They're complete. They're new realities. And because of that. He's encouraging the readers.

And therefore encouraging us tonight. To not abandon Jesus. But to have faith. Always. Regardless of what life looks like. And in Hebrews 11. Where we've been for the past few weeks.

The author holds out all these different examples of what faithfulness looks like. But if you actually look at the lives closely of the people who are held up. Particularly some of the ones we're going to look at tonight.

These people are not like clean polished heroes. They're complicated men and women who make questionable decisions. Fail in real ways. Yet they're held up to us as examples of what faith looks like.

And I think one of the reasons that is the case. Is because what defines these people we look at. Is not perfection. But faith in God in the middle of pressure.

[ 4 : 16 ] That's what endurance means. It's not about our perfection. It's about who is God in the middle of the situations we find ourselves. And how in response of faith is to trust who he is.

And how he describes not just us. But reality. That matters because Hebrews is written to a group of people. Who are not cruising through life. It's written to a church who are exhausted.

Who are worn down. Who are tempted to give up on faith altogether. This letter if you read it all. Is intense public pastoral advice.

Not just on how to live better. But to point to the source of life itself. God. And at each point the writer wants them. To be the kind of people. Who can deal with the brutal realities of life and faith.

That's kind of a question. Hanging over all of Hebrews is. Is it possible to keep following Jesus.

When life starts to feel costly. Faith starts to feel frustrating and challenging.

[ 5 : 15 ] The answer. Unsurprisingly the Hebrews gives is yes. But only if you see. That Jesus has no equals. Compared to all the other options. And so this letter is written to help people.

To stand firm. To endure. To have resilience. It's written to help them to see. How it's possible to be men and women. Who that when life starts to feel shaky. They do not crumble or are overwhelmed. Which I think is something deep down.

Every single human being wants. That when life starts to feel overwhelming. What's the secret to be able to stand. And not be overwhelmed to the point. Where you don't know what to do anymore.

And for most of tonight.

We are going to be looking at the life of Moses. And the faith of the Exodus generation. Now that covers five books of the Old Testament. Everything from the end of Genesis.

Right through to the end of Joshua. Which don't worry. We're not going to do an overview of all those things. Piece by piece. But if you've never read about the examples of faith. And the stories of God's goodness. I'd encourage you.

[ 6 : 13 ] If you've never read them before. To sit and read those books. So maybe if you. They're quite daunting books. Just find somebody. And read it with them. And start here. And look at how God deals. And engages with his people.

So. There's an outline in the sheet. If you want to follow those points. We're going to work through four principles tonight. I think you see of what faith looks like. In this section of scripture. I'm going to pray.

And then we'll head into these. Verses about Moses and his life. Father God. I thank you. That when we gather. We gather.

Not just in our own strength. And in our own minds. But with the promise. That when we are gathered. You are with us. So therefore. Father would you help me to speak well.

Of your son. And help us to hear and see. The reality of who you are. As father. Son. And Holy Spirit. Amen. So firstly. Faith means.

[ 7 : 09 ] Choosing. And obeying. So we read in. Verse 23 and 24. Of Hebrews 11. By faith. Moses' parents hid him. For three months.

After he was born. Because they saw he was no ordinary child. And they were not afraid of the king's edict. The king's edict. Was that all the Hebrew children. Were to be killed. Because he was afraid of them.

By faith. Moses. When he had grown up. Refused to be known. As the son of Pharaoh's daughter. So the story goes. In Exodus. That Moses. Was born as a Jewish boy.

As a baby. And he was adopted. By Pharaoh's daughter. After being hidden. By his parents. Because of an edict. The king had given. Of his fear. Of how numerous. God's people were becoming.

To all the children. To be dying. And so Moses' childhood. And young life. Meant he grew up. In the court of Pharaoh. He grew up. With access. To the most incredible. Power. He had access.

[ 8 : 06 ] To training. He had access. To wealth. If you were Moses. And you were looking. At the common reality. Of the people of God. Your life. Was on a very different trajectory. You were on the road. To probably success.

As a prince in Egypt. But we're told. Part of faith. Means Moses chooses. Not to identify. That way. Because Moses has grown up.

In a context. Where as I said. Pharaoh is scared. Of the people of God. Because they're becoming. So numerous. So he begins to exploit them. He makes them into slaves. He works them hard. He eventually starts to kill them.

Being Egyptian. And being Jewish. Were not culturally compatible. In Moses's time. Times had changed. Since his ancestor Joseph. When he was in charge. And those two things. Happened to sit. Beside each other. But actually. Moses found himself. In a moment of time. Where success. In the world he lived in. And to be identified. With the people of God. Did not sit easily. [ 9 : 00 ] And as Exodus tells us. This is already beginning. His faith. Is worked out. In how he identifies. And who he chooses to be. Exodus 2 verse 11.

So these verses. Aren't going to come up on the screen. But I'll read them. They are verbatim. From the ESV. If you don't trust me. He went out. To where his own people were. And watched them. At their hard labor. He's seen an Egyptian.

Beating a Hebrew. One of his own people. Hebrews. Sorry. Exodus 2. Really from the beginning. You see that Moses. Starts to identify. With his people.

Although he's being brought up. In the court of Pharaoh. He chooses. And identifies. With his heart. Of where his people are. Moses could either. Have been a leader in Egypt. Or in Israel.

But he has to choose. He has to choose. Where he identifies. And this is not a passive thing. It's a deliberate thing. Because faith is always a choice. About where the kind of people.

[ 9 : 55 ] We are becoming. It's never just an internal reality. It's something that moves. And makes us choose to identify. And we're always faced with that choice. If you follow God. You're always faced with the choice. Of who are the kind of people.

You're going to become. Who are the people. You identify with. And Moses has to make that choice. And it's an incredible picture of faith. Because if you know the story of Exodus. God hasn't really come on the scene yet.

To Moses. There's been no burning bush. There's no written law. Yet Moses identifies. With the people of God. Even though it will put him. In a collision course. With the riches.

And power of Egypt. He puts himself. Alongside people. Who are punished. And who have nothing. But. If you know the story of Moses. It's not some romanticized path to glory.

That he heads on. The story Exodus tells us. Is that Moses comes out. And I'm sweeping over a lot. Of the Old Testament narrative here. He comes out. He sees a taskmaster. Beating a Hebrew slave.

[ 10 : 51 ] Which is like a. Kind of working class site manager. And he's like. He sees an injustice. Against one of his people. And so he kills the Egyptian. Now. Exodus. Highly suggests.

Particularly in verse 12. That Moses knows. He should not have done that. Because it tells us. Moses essentially looks around. And hides the body. Now. You don't usually do something like that. If you think you've done the right thing. And then next day.

It tells us. That Moses comes out again. And he sees two Israelites fighting. And he says to them. In chapter 2. 14. And why are you fighting? And. One of the two guys.

That is fighting said. Who made you judge. And ruler over us? Are you going to kill us. The same way. You killed the Egyptian yesterday? Now. The answer to that question. Is actually at that point. Nobody had made.

Moses the leader. He will become their leader. But that hasn't happened yet. And Moses. In the kind of working out. Who he is. And choosing. In this moment. Has this. He is the heart. Of somebody who has faith.

[ 11 : 48 ] Yeah. He has this impulse. And kills someone. He has the right instinct. But the wrong methods. He has the heart of God. But some of the habits. Of Egypt. And as a result.

He finds himself in a position. Where he is rejected. By his own people. And on the run from Pharaoh. And he heads off. Into the wilderness. As Exodus tells us. Now.

This moment. If you were there. At the time. Would have felt like. An absolute failure. To anyone watching. It would might have felt like. At the age of 40. We're told. Moses heads into the desert. For 40 years. This young leader. Whose people. Need him. Who's highly trained. Makes this. Decision. And he finds himself.

Out in the wilderness. Yet. Faith. Although that moment. Feels like failure. Faith. If dictated by Moses. And the people. Would have potentially. Ended there.

[ 12 : 41 ] But faith. In a God. Who has all of Moses's life. All of who he is. Actually. Does not waste. That wilderness. God is preparing. Moses. He's changing him.

Because these moments. Of choosing. To continually choose. Sometimes. My experience. Will lead us into moments. That feel like. Quite confusing. And maybe you feel. In a bit of like. A wilderness. Yet that is not.

The end. Of the story of faith. From Moses. In the wilderness. God is humbling him. Teaching him. To depend on him. And making him into someone new. Somebody who will obey. And listen. And obedience. Is the other principle. That Hebrews. Puts forward here. So Moses. Gets to 80 years old. And then God. Shows up.

In the burning bush. This is more of a paraphrase. And says. I have a job for you. To this 80 year old man. Out in the desert. With a group of nobodies. And God says to him. Three things.

[ 13 : 38 ] Three things. Confront Pharaoh. The most powerful man. In the world. And say to him. I'm about to take your entire free labor force from you. Secondly. Free and lead these people.

Broken by generations of slavery. Who also have no economic resources. Even though they will continually fight you. And lead. And be pursued by the greatest army. That is known at the time. And thirdly. Lead them to a promised land. And I will lead you. And guide you. And Moses. At the age of 80. Does it. He returns to Egypt. Through God's word.

God's word to him. That must have felt. Absurd at the time. At that age. To head back. But he's obedient. To God. And the choosing of who we are.

The choosing of aligning ourselves as God's people. Is always worked out. By the obedience to who God says he is. And what he tells us to do. Moses goes back to Egypt. And verse 25 tells us.

[ 14 : 35 ] In doing so. He chose to be ill treated. Along with the people of God. Rather than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. Because real faith isn't just choosing once.

It's choosing again. And again. And again. To identify with the God who tells us. Who we are to be. And how to live in the world. Based on his word to us. Based on his promises to us.

Based on his commands to us. Obedience. Is the action of living out. What God has said. About who we are. And what life looks like. And obedience in the scriptures.

Is following for us today. Is following Jesus as Lord. As he continually says. Will you follow me? You follow me and I. Into what it means to advance the kingdom of God.

And this is so much more than just simple behavioral modification. It means kind of often choosing to identify with Christ. Even though it might lead to being ill treated.

[ 15 : 31 ] And following it obediently as to where that leads. I've been reading Matt Chandler. I don't know if you know Matt Chandler's new book about becoming like Jesus. And he says in the opening chapter. When I first became a Christian.

I thought there were only three major sins that I would need to fight against. Partying. Lusting after girls. And punching people in the face. And if I could do this. I'd be on par with the apostles and prophets.

I certainly didn't understand how profoundly deep the work Jesus wanted to do in me was. Or how ruthlessly he pursued me. I didn't know that Jesus wanted my heart. My motivation.

My mind. All of who we are. That is what obedience is. And not just choosing in the sense of an intellectual choice. But how it affects our lives and moves.

And that is faith. It is this concept of choosing to align ourselves with God and his kingdom. And an obedience moving forward in action in the world. Obedience to Jesus shapes us into who we're becoming.

[ 16 : 29 ] Because he is the one we're obedient to. Not the pressures around about us. And in doing so. It holds up these other examples of how did Moses do something like that.

How did Moses become this kind of man. And we see some of that in verses 26 and 27. Where faith means regarding and persevering. So each point in his life.

Moses. Even whether it looked like failure or confronting power. Continues we're told to grow in faith. Hebrews tells us he does this in verse 26.

He regarded the disgrace for the sake of Christ as a greater value than the treasures of Egypt. Because he was looking ahead to his reward. Now the word regarded there is not the best translation.

It's more like he assessed. He weighed up. It's a calculation word the Bible uses here. It's the same word the apostle Paul uses in Philippians 3.8. Where he says, What is more I considered.

[17:28] It's the same word. Everything lost because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For whose sake I have lost all things. I consider, again, them garbage that I may gain Christ.

So what Moses tells us he does is that he assessed. He thought about it. He looked at the treasures of Egypt. And he looked at the reward that he would have with God.

And he assessed the two. He weighed them against each other. And he thought through and decided that the disgrace he would have from being faithful to God was far more valuable than any treasure of Egypt.

Now, I don't know what the treasures of Egypt were like. But I'm guessing to be a prince in the most powerful empire in the world, you could have access to probably quite a lot of treasure. And he looked at that. He didn't just look at it as a concept.

He experienced it. He knew what it was like. Yet there was something about the reward of God that was far greater. And verse 25, which we just read, one of the things that helps me think about how did he do that, it says he, verse 25, describes the pleasures of sin as fleeting.

[18:34] And I really appreciate the honesty of that verse. It doesn't say they're not pleasurable. If they weren't pleasurable, you probably would be drawn to them. But they are fleeting. They are temporary. There's something about it that inherently does not last and is in contrast to this reward that is so much greater.

Because I don't know about you, but I think for me that one of the greatest aims, I think, in the culture at the moment is the pursuit of pleasure. Like it is the main thing to do with your life. Just pursue pleasure. Pursue pleasure.

Pursue pleasure. If you can maximize pleasure and lower pain, you will flourish. That's the good life. That's what Freud thought. That's the thing I think has infected how we all think. The faith of Moses is the exact contrast to that way of thinking.

He looks at the pleasure of the world and says, that is nothing compared to the reward of what it means to know God. The contrast that the biblical writers often use, particularly in the Psalms, is this idea of being people who are blessed.

Pleasure. I know there's proper psychologists in this church. I'm not a proper one. It's the kind of fleeting dopamine rush. It's like chasing the next hit. You can get it, but it doesn't last.

[19:44] You always want more. It leaves you wanting more. And that's why sin is so addictive. It never fills a gap. It doesn't say the gap isn't there, but it always leaves you wanting more.

That's how the algorithm in Instagram gets you every morning. It catches your attention. You want more, you want more, you want more. You become enslaved to this kind of stuff. The fleeting pleasure of sin is never enough.

The reward of who God is, in contrast, is something very different. It's about contentment and meaning and peace. Not because it's something we get from within ourselves, but it's something given to us by the person of God.

Psalms 16 verse 11 says, You, which is God, make known to me the path of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Moses' ways, he regards and decides, God is better than any fleeting pleasure. Not easier, not more comfortable, better.

[20:44] Because every single one of us have a center. Every single human being on the planet has a center. The kind of thing they love the most to give them meaning and identity and worth. And God is not against pleasurable things.

Don't hear what I'm not saying. It's not like, well, anything good must be wrong. But when they become the ultimate thing, they will become the thing that gives you resilience or not. And you're only as resilient or you can only endure as much as the thing you love the most.

The thing you put your meaning and purpose from in. And if the thing I love the most is vulnerable, then I am vulnerable. But if my reward, if our reward is God himself, the thing that I love the most can never pass away, then I too can never pass away.

If the thing you love the most lasts forever, as God does, then you too last forever. If you use anything but God, who is the infinite source of value, then you will be shikable.

To persevere means to know that the reward is something that is so fixed, so powerful, so good, so beautiful, that it can never pass away.

[ 21 : 50 ] It will transcend any pleasure, any richness. And that allows Moses, which we read in the next verse, to also be a kind of person who perseveres.

By faith he left Egypt for the second time, not fearing the king's anger. He perseveres because he saw him who is the invisible God, who is invisible.

To persevere, to have endurance, means to keep going, even though the situation seems tough.

Which for Moses is leaving Egypt the second time, after all the plagues, chased by an army.

It says he does not fear the king. Now I don't think this is supposed to be like Moses at this point in his life, he's just gritting his teeth, some cynical, hardened old man who's seen enough.

Like a lot of guys in like Western films, he's just seen so much, so he can do whatever he likes.

Biblical perseverance is the ability to, in the midst of whatever you're facing, to rely on the goodness and character of God, as opposed to your own strength, your own ability just to endure, because you happen to have learned enough stuff.

[ 22 : 57 ] It's very different from something like stoicism. So stoicism is the, which I think is again really popular at the moment, is the ability that you can just control enough of your life, and then you will not show any distress, and you just tough it out.

That is not the Christian faith. The Christian faith is that we have resilience when we stand firm because of who God is. So even in the midst of fear, not the absence of it, in the midst of doubt, not the absence of it, we don't look to ourselves just to become stronger, but we look to God, who is the center of reality, and tells us therefore who he is, and what he is like.

Persevering for Moses is possible, not because life got easier. Moses' life is about to head into the desert again, with all these people, but he perseveres because he's seeing him who is invisible.

And I think that means he trained himself to remember who God is, even when circumstances said otherwise. Moses holds on to what God said, he holds on to what God is like.

And for us, what does that look like today? Well, firstly, Moses held on to the invisible God, but God makes himself visible to the Christian in the life of Christ.

[ 24 : 11 ] We don't just look at Jesus as a nice set of stories, but we look at Jesus as God incarnate. We have records of what and who God is like today because of the way Jesus lived his life.

We have the promises of God. I'd encourage you to like, one of the way we hold on to the invisible God today is you look at the promises of who God says he is. There's over 7,000 of them in the scripture that I read about this week.

And like to see what nature of who God is and what it's like, we hold on to the invisible God because he reveals himself consistently to who he says he is like in the life of Jesus, but also in the promises, his character and promises.

And that's the kind of thing that helps us to persevere. When I feel the anxiety of life, my temptation is to ignore it, talk about it for ages, think about an action plan, try a few of them, and then it doesn't really work.

Yeah, I think the starting point should, then I might then come to God. I think that's the complete, just to be honest, that's the complete wrong way of how I think you persevere in life. I think I started with the reality of this is what God is like.

[ 25 : 19 ] This is who he is. I look to him and in the midst of my reality, he tells me what life is like and who he is also. Faith, we're going to read next, also means we have to therefore remember and know who God is.

In verse 28, we're told, by faith Moses kept the Passover and the application of blood so the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

So for the people of God, the pinnacle of seeing this invisible God in the Exodus generation was the Passover and the Passover meal. The Passover is the critical event at the center of Exodus where God delivers his people from slavery in Egypt and from the judgment of death.

It does both these things at the same time. And Moses is told by God in the middle of this big evacuation to sit down and have a meal before God carries out his promises.

And what they are told to do is take blood from the lamb and put it over their doorposts. And in doing so, God says in Exodus 12, when I see the blood, I will pass over you and no destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

[ 26 : 43 ] And that is what they experience. And they move off from Passover. They are freed from slavery, but they are also freed from death. And then the Passover meal becomes something that

people of God are commanded to do to remember what God is like and to remember how their forefathers escaped slavery, but also to remember what God has done for them.

Now for the original reader of this letter and for us, that points us, that language points us to Jesus, our Passover lamb, whose blood is put on the frame of the cross.

Because Jesus is our greater Moses. Jesus himself is somebody who left a far greater palace than Moses did of Pharaoh. He leaves the right hand of God.

He is somebody who came to his own people and like Moses was rejected, but in a far more deeper and profound way than Moses was. His own people killed him. And somebody whose apparent failure and death on the cross and rejection seemed like destruction, but instead led to the greatest triumph in history, the resurrection from the dead.

The Passover lamb isn't just something they remember because it was a nice thing in their past. It actually told them who God is and what he has done. It's the center of what it means to have faith.

[ 28 : 04 ] It's not just to remember as a one-off event, because it remembers because it invites us into a new reality. One they could not ever have achieved by themselves. One me and you can never achieve by ourself.

Peace with God. Peace and reconciliation with the Father of all things. And just remembering that Jesus has risen to bring new life and has defeated death and sin.

It changes everything. It becomes the engine of faith. It's not just part of faith. It's the source of faith. The remembering and looking back in all circumstances in order to look forward.

So when we see Jesus who endured all things and was faithful, that means he's always faithful in everything, including to me and you, especially when we are unfaithful to God.

Jesus remains faithful to us and does not reject those who return to him. This is the fuel of obedience. I think if you learn that obedience is some and faith are never showing weakness and just be really strong and prove to God you're good all the time.

[ 29 : 07 ] I think that's the opposite of faith. Faith is the coming of the weakness of who I am and realizing I come to a faithful Christ who gives himself for me and says, follow me. And as I do so, you will choose.

You'll have to obey. But you have to do that by regarding and thinking through the pleasures of sin in front of you by considering and remembering and persevering and holding on.

When we see the wisdom of God on the cross in a way Moses never could. So there's moments that seem like everything is not really working and why would I continue to walk in faith? Because it feels too difficult.

There's moments where we have the fullness of the picture of the coming kingdom of God and the promises of where we're headed. The source of faith is not our willpower or ability to stoically just power through but instead to remember the Lamb of God who dies and rises so that each one of us may be in a new relationship with God.

And I think as we come to a close here we're going to like really batter through three verses in Hebrews here. One of the things that Hebrews 11 is doing I think is the rest of the chapter is a series of these like punchy little events in the history of God's people.

[ 30 : 29 ] And I think these stories are supposed to generate hope and celebration as you read them. Andrew's got next week which we don't even know the names of some of the people who Hebrews are putting forward.

But it puts forward these stories and they start to become like this and this and this. Because part of the way our faith is built is we tell stories of faith. We tell stories about what faith looks like both in the past and that's why having things like biographies that, sorry I can't remember your name but the ten of you guy was holding up earlier it's supposed to build our faith.

Sometimes I think what we do is we read these kind of comparisons and think oh I'm nothing like that. That's not supposed to be the point of faith. Faith is supposed to point us to God and see this is the God of what he's like. Imagine what it looked like for you and me to live alongside that God. And they build hope because hope essentially is wanting a better future. And so sometimes faith means the ability to look around at life and think I just don't think this is the way things are meant to be.

You probably all have friends and family members who think that at some point. I just don't feel this is the way things are meant to be. I think the scriptures would turn around and be like yes you're right this is not the way things are meant to be.

[ 31 : 44 ] Creation is headed somewhere because God's claimed a people and a place for himself and he's taking it somewhere. And that's the Red Sea incident at verse 29. You have the people of God at the Red Sea and we're told in verse 29 by faith the people passed through the Red Sea as in dry land but when the Egyptians tried to do so they were drowned.

As God's people fled Egypt the greatest army of all time was behind them. The Red Sea was ahead of them with no weapons no strength I'd imagine the temptation to surrender must have been overwhelming.

Must have felt like trapped between fear and impossibility yet they relied on God's word to Moses because they'd seen God act. they knew what God was like and so faith by faith the people passed through the Red Sea onto dry land moving towards a promised future.

Then you have Jericho in verse 30 by faith the walls of Jericho fell were now into Joshua after the army had marched around them for seven days. I often think the whole incident so Jericho is a big powerful city the kind of bandit of God's people are kind of together it makes it quite clear in Joshua that they don't really have any weapons or anything and they have to take on this huge city I think it's the most bizarre story one of the most bizarre stories in the Old Testament because then God says essentially gather the marching band that's what you're going to do and march around this city and they do it.

Why would they have done something like that unless they knew what God was like and who he is and God delivers them he delivers a victory to them and I think that's partly because faith decisions that will lead you to make in life would seem really odd they'll seem really counterintuitive they will not make sense to a lot of people yet if they're about who God is and where he's leading us into then that's the reality you follow I feel like every six months I have to have a classic conversation with a lot of my mates explaining the Christian view of why you don't just sleep around I mean I've been having this conversation with these guys for 30 years and their whole thing is just like yeah but who would really know who would you really hurt I'm like if that's your framework if that's a pleasure framework for reality yeah of course you could do that but faith takes you to make decisions that sometimes seem totally out of kilter but for a reward set ahead of you and that reward is God himself and then lastly Rahab

[ 34 : 11 ] I mean again the coming verses you're going to have King David and all these forerunners but you get instead before all that this prostitute in the city of Jericho who's not even one of the people of God at this point yet she shows favour to these spies and she's held out to us as an example of faith and imagine for some of the earliest readers they might have been like wow why is she in here but she says in Joshua 2 the Lord your God is God out in heaven above and on earth below something about Rahab knows who God is she's heard about him she's like yeah this city might be really powerful but it's not following God there's something she knows instinctively about the nature of God and she responds to that because faith isn't about how strongly we feel it's about its source and for Rahab and Israel that was God acting in history just as our faith rests on the historical reality of Jesus Christ and when we read these things I think it's supposed to stir our story these stories

I think it's supposed to stir our heart and build our faith as you hear of kingdoms conquered and death defeated and a God at work in history it brings meaning to what our lives look like today and tomorrow when you go to work or go to university and you might be in a job you don't like or you have conflict with family members and that might feel like your own reality but by faith what does it mean to be not just people who choose to identify with God because he has first chosen us to obey and follow that through you can only do that if you regard and you actually weigh up in your heart that means people who tell stories of faith to one another faith stories aren't just all the success stories faith stories could be if I sat and told Greg actually here's how the fleeting pleasures of Glasgow I guess are weighing on my heart right now and it's a challenge to pursue the reward of God that's a faith story but it feels like you're in the wilderness and you're like I'm not sure what God is up to and it's a struggle to follow him and to tell those stories are faith stories because they're pointing to God in the midst of our own lives to hold on to God when everything else feels like it's shaky will be given a perseverance and endurance that nothing in all of creation can give and the primary way we do that is by remembering the Lamb who gives himself and is faithful even when me and you are not

Greg's going to come up with a band and we're going to sing in response to the faith of our forefathers but what it means therefore to have faith in the King of Heaven himself so I'm going to

pray and there's a band come up God I pray and ask that in your mercy and your goodness through the gift of your spirit that when we think of examples of faith we're thinking of people who look to you in all situations in life whether it led to freedom whether it led to confusion but ultimately it always leads to you a God who doesn't just reveal himself in history but acts in history and takes us somewhere new through the death life and resurrection of your son so would you help us to be men and women then all situations by faith can lift our eyes and consider the invisible God who makes himself visible through your son  
I ask that in Jesus name Amen let's stand and sing to respond Thank you.