

Teacher Class Plan

Hebrews: Lesson #70: Faith to Preserve Your Soul For Sunday, Jan. 25th

Read Heb. 10:39 – 12:4 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: Heb. 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

We’ve been studying now for several classes about the letter written to the Hebrew Christians. Let’s look real quick at our Hebrews poster and think about some things in it. *Review the Hebrews poster.* Today we are studying about faith, and several people of faith that remind us what kind of faith we must have.

The Kind of Faith That Preserves Our Souls

- The Hebrew writer urged his readers to work on having the kind of faith that preserves their souls. That means to take care of your soul, keep it safe like you would something you own. If you have a really nice bike, it wouldn’t be a good idea to just carelessly leave it out by the street. Someone might steal it. You need to put it up where it will be kept safe.
- We need to do the same thing for our souls. We shouldn’t let Satan steal our souls. A strong faith in God will help keep our souls safe from harm.
- Some people claim to believe in God, but their faith isn’t strong and they don’t do what they need to do to be saved. We must have the kind of faith that will help us be saved. In Hebrews chapter 11 we start learning about that saving kind of faith.

What is Faith?

- The first thing the Hebrew writer does is tell us what faith is. Faith is the solid foundation and support that we stand on that makes us sure of our hope. Faith in what God has told us in His Word which gives us the evidence, the proof, of things we cannot see.
- We were not there to see God create the heavens and the earth. We can see that things have been created. They are all so wonderfully made, we know that there had to be a Creator. Faith has to be willing to believe in what it cannot see.
- We can’t see Jesus, but God’s Word tells us about His life. When we have faith in that, we have the evidence that Jesus lives. We can’t see heaven, but God’s Word tells us that it will be given to faithful Christians. If I believe God’s Word then I have the proof I need to be sure about heaven.
- Our **memory verse**, Heb. 11:1 says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” *Hold up the large memory verse card and go over it several times with the class. Try and get them to say it individually.*

Illustrations of the Kind of Faith that Saves Our Souls

- *This is quite a bit of information so we can't afford to get too bogged down on any one person. The key thoughts are...*
 - *They acted by faith.*
 - *They trusted what God said. ,*
 - *Several cases involved following God about "unseen things. Faith itself is the evidence of things not seen (vs. 1), Noah prepared an ark because he was warned of things not seen (vs. 7), Abraham went to a place not seen before by him (vs. 8), Moses served the invisible God (vs. 27).*
 - *Often it involved difficult choices. Abraham left his home (vs. 8) and offered Isaac (vs. 17). Moses chose to suffer affliction with God's people rather than have the pleasures of sin in Egypt (vs. 25).*
 - *Always they believed enough to obey God.*
- The writer of Hebrews shows us several examples of what he means about faith that will save your soul.
 - Abel's faith offered the kind of sacrifice God wanted.
 - Enoch's faith led him walk with God and live in a way that pleased God.
 - Noah's faith did exactly what God told him to do about building an ark and that let him and his family to be saved.
 - Abraham's faith obeyed God when He told him to leave his home for a land he had not seen.
 - Sarah's faith allowed her to trust God's promise about the birth of Isaac. Even though she had never been able to have children and had gotten too old to ever have a child, she still did finally give birth to him.
 - Abraham's faith led him to obey God in a difficult command. God had asked him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice and Abraham was willing to follow what God said.
 - All the patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had the kind of faith that was looking for a heavenly city. Their faith made them live their lives for heaven. Another "better thing" needs to be added to our list of **better things in Hebrews**. *Point out the poster to them.* Christ's heavenly city is better than earthly cities.
 - Joseph had such a strong faith that God would going to let the Israelites leave Egypt for the promised land, that he told them to take his coffin with them and bury it when they got there.
 - The faith of Moses' parents caused them to save their son's life even though Pharaoh had commanded all the male children to be killed.
 - Moses' faith caused him to choose being with God's people rather than the sinful life he could have had with the Egyptians.
 - The children of Israel had enough faith to follow God's commands about the Passover and put blood on their doorposts so that they would be saved.
 - In their faith, the children of Israel followed what God said to do at Jericho. They marched around the city as God commanded and the walls fell down.
 - Faith in God led Rahab to hide the spies that came into Jericho, and she was spared because of that.

- We read about the faith of a lot of other people in the Old Testament like some of the great people during the days of the Judges, and great kings like David, and great prophets of God, too.
- Some of those people did some amazing things by faith. They won battles, they were kept from being eaten by lions, they raised the dead.
- But others who had great faith had to make great sacrifices. Some didn't have homes, some were beaten and imprisoned, some were even killed violently. Still their faith kept them faithful to God.
- All these wonderful Bible examples show us what its like to live by faith and be faithful to what God commands us. Their lives are like a cloud of witness that surrounds us and encourages us to always stay faithful to God.

Let's Finish Our Race

- Living the Christian life is kind of like running a long race.
- All around us are these great people of faith who are cheering for us. There examples say that we can finish our race like they did.
- To run well we can't have anything that weights us down, like sin.
- As we go on in our race, we may get tired and discouraged, but we have to keep running all the way to the end.
- When we get weary, let's look at Jesus. He is waiting for us at the finish line. He has already run His race. His race took Him through the cross, but He kept right on running and made it to God.

Bible Quiz: Be sure to review the quiz questions with the class.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

10:39 But we are not one of those who draw back into destruction, rather we have the kind of faith that holds onto our souls and keeps them safe.

What is Faith?

11:1 Now faith is the solid foundation and support that we stand on that makes us sure of our hope. It is the evidence, the proof, of things that cannot be seen.

2 For God has testified and recorded for us His witness of the people of ancient times in regard to their faith.

Faith in Creation

3 Faith lets us understand that the worlds were prepared, arranged and completed by the words God spoke, and that leads us to the understanding that what God made (these things we can see) all came from a force unseen – the power of what He spoke. Faith, then, believes in the unseen.

Abel's Faith

4 Faith was the reason Abel's sacrifice was greater than Cain's offering to God. God gave His recorded witness about those gifts offered in faith testifying that Abel was righteous. And though Abel is dead, that witness still speaks.

Enoch's Faith

5 Faith was the reason Enoch was taken from the earth into heaven, so that he would not see death. As the Scripture said, "He was not for God took Him." But we know that his faith was the reason he was taken up, because before he was taken the testimony was given that He pleased God.

6 But without faith we would not be able to please God at all, because anyone who draws near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.

Noah's Faith

7 Faith was the reason that Noah, who was warned by God about things that could not yet be seen, reacted to that warning with reverence and prepared the Ark that resulted in his household being saved. Through this the world was judged, but Noah inherited the kind of righteousness which comes as a result of faith.

Abraham's Faith.

8 Faith was the reason that Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out into a place which would be received as an inheritance. He went out not know where he was going.

9 Faith was the reason he lived as a foreigner in the land promised to him as if he were in a foreign land. While there he dwelt only in tents with Isaac and Jacob who would become heirs with Abraham of that same promise.

10 Now Abraham lived in tents in that promised land as a foreigner because he was looking for the City that has a real foundation under it, the City whose designer and constructor is God.

Sarah's Faith

11 Faith is also the reason that Sarah herself received the power to bear a child even though her age was beyond that time of life, because she considered God to be faithful in what He promised.

12 And because of all that, a child was fathered from one man (who was already dead as far as having children was concerned) and from all this came descendents as numerous as the stars in heaven, and as hard to number as the grains of sand on the seashore.

The Patriarch's Faith

13 Now Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob all died in faith. None of them ever possessed the Promised Land that God said He would give to their descendents. But they could see those promises off in the future, and were convinced they were true and welcomed the idea that they would come to pass. So, though they were happy for the future generations that would inherit the promised land, they were content to confess that they were foreigners (people who really lived somewhere else, but were in another land for awhile).

14-15 Now those who say things like that are showing that they are seeking a country. And really if they were thinking about that country they came from, they would have had time to return.

16 But the country they wanted was a greater one, a heavenly one. Because of this God is not ashamed to be called their God for He has prepared them a city.

Abraham's Faith in Regard to Isaac

17 Faith is also the reason that Abraham, when he was tested, offered Isaac. Abraham, the very one God made the promise of a son to, was willing to sacrifice offer his only son.

18 It was this very son that God promised Abraham about that "in Isaac your descendents will be called."

19 As Abraham considered God's command to offer Isaac in light of God's promise to give descendents through Isaac, Abraham thought that God would be able raise the dead. And figuratively speaking, Abraham did receive his son back.

Isaac's, Jacob's, and Joseph's Faith About God's Promises

20 Faith in the promises of God was the reason Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau about things to come.

21 Faith in the promises of God was the reason Jacob, when the end of his life came, blessed both the sons of Joseph concerning their inheritance in the promised land. Jacob believed in God's promises so strongly that he once had wrestled with an angel demanding a blessing. The angel gave him the name "Israel", but he also dislocated Jacob's hip and from then on Jacob limped, worshipping God resting on a staff.

22 Faith in the promises of God was the reason Joseph, at the end of his life, reminded the children of Israel of God's promise of the exodus from Egypt and that God would bring them to the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Joseph believed so strongly that God would fulfill that promise, that he made the children of Israel take an oath to carry his bones with them when that time came.

The Faith of Moses' Parents

23 Faith was the reason Moses' parents refused to be afraid of Pharaoh's order to have the male Israelite children killed. When Moses was born they hid him for three months because they saw that he was beautiful to God.

Moses' Faith

24 Faith was the reason that Moses, when he was grown, denied himself the right to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

25 And even more, he chose to be with God's people even though it meant being treated badly along with them. He chose to do all this instead of staying in Egypt to live a sinful lifestyle that would bring him only temporary pleasure.

26 Moses thought that going through the kind of insults and mistreatment Christ went through was greater riches than anything Egypt had to offer, for he had set his attention to how he would be repaid by God.

27 Faith was the reason he left Egypt without being afraid of Pharaoh's wrath. Moses endured his difficulties by seeing the unseen.

The Faith of the Children of Israel

28 Faith was the reason the children of Israel kept the Passover. Blood was sprinkled on the doorposts of the houses so that when destruction came on the firstborn, it would not touch them.

29 Faith was the reason they crossed on through the Red Sea, even walking on dry land. But when the Egyptians tried to do that, they were drowned.

30 Faith was the reason the walls of Jericho fell down, after Israel had marched around it for seven days as God commanded.

Rahab's Faith

31 Faith was the reason that Rahab the harlot, because she had taken in the spies with peace, did not perish with the rest of Jericho who refused to believe.

The Great Faith of People in the Old Testament

32 What more can I say? For time won't allow me to tell about the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and also Samuel and other prophets.

33-36 Faith was the reason these were able to conquer kingdoms, work righteous acts, obtain promises, shut the mouths of lions, extinguished the power of fire, escaped the blade of the sword, became strong in weakness, became mighty in battle, turned back foreign armies, and women had their dead restored to life.

But faith was also the reason others refused to give up their faith and be delivered even though they were being tortured. Others went through the trial of having people mock them and make fun of them, but some were even more severely treated, being beaten with whips, or even worse put in chains and in prisons. Some were stoned, some had their bodies sawed apart, some endured temptation as they were killed with a sword.

37-38 Forced to leave their homes and wander, they no longer had nice clothing, but resorted to clothing themselves with goat and sheep skins, lacking the necessities of life, in distress, and treated badly. They went off into deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the ground; these are people of whom this world was not worthy

39 The faith of such people was the reason that God recorded His witness of their lives. And yet none of these Old Testament people of faith ever lived to receive the promises that the Gospel age has brought.

40 God has provided greater things for us so that they could not reach their goal without us.

This Cloud of Witnesses

12:1 So all these whose faith has led them to endure through difficulties and make great sacrifices and trust God through it all, have become like a huge cloud surrounding us that witnesses to the kind of faith that endures. With their example always before us, let's run our own race. Let's make sure that we lay aside anything that would cause us to give up our race -- anything that weights us down or any sin that surround us. And then with endurance, let's run the race that lies ahead of us.

Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

2 And let's also be motivated to keep running our race by fixing our eyes on Jesus, who led and completed the race of faith. Because He looked at the joy set before Him, Jesus endured the cross and treated the shame He had to go through like it was nothing, and then sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 We should think about Him who endured sinners who were so hostile in their opposition toward him, so that we will not get tired and weak in spirit.

4 You may have suffered many things, but so far your struggle against sin has never caused you to shed any blood.