

27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them. 29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. 31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

We're crowding the end of the chapter in our mini-series on Faith. But we've had a rich time. At least I have, and I hope you have also as we've stopped to consider what exactly does the Bible mean when it says in Hebrews 10:38 immediately prior to this discussion of faith in chapter 11; *But My righteous one will live by faith; and if he shrinks back, I will take no pleasure in him."*

That's a quote from the old testament, this idea is not new. Habakkuk 2:4 *Look at the proud one; His soul is not upright--But the righteous will live by his faith--*

What is faith, and what does it mean to "*live by faith*"?

In 1977, some of us were alive, and I recall what fun it was, we did it several times, to go to the most advanced theatres in Los Angeles and watch Star Wars.

Technology was just taking it's first baby steps, and the music and the sounds in those big theatres were a new experience to a lot of us. Huge big surround sound. You could feel it thumping you.

Now the kids have all got better systems in their rice rockets that

they cruise the boulevards with, but then it was spectacular.

And Lucas had chosen great musical themes to match the new technology. Great philharmonic orchestrations. It was all fun. One of the perks I left behind when I bailed on southern California and fled to Nevada.

Luke Skywalker was accomplishing impossible things by something unseen, called "**the force**". It made for great theatre and wondrous imaginings. He was winning impossible battles for good against evil.

Let me be clear. Those were vain imaginings. Theatre. And in fact I often think things like that and also our current distraction with all of the comic book super hero's may be a ploy of Satan. A strategy.

Phony things that cheapen the word of God that has real things that are so very similar. It cheapens the real because we become somehow de-sensitized to the fact that the miracles in this book actually really did happen. It wasn't a Hollywood effect.

Real ordinary people did amazing miracles that aren't fiction. Seeing similar things on Hollywood screens somehow cheapens what are actual facts. We know Lucas was bringing imagination to life, and we read about Moses and somehow it doesn't seem so fantastic.

But before there was Hollywood or anything like it, the author of this letter to the Hebrews was struggling to address a problem in the church of God among the Hebrew people.

The church had become complacent and dull. And people were leaving the faith, returning to their former religious system of a

constricted works righteousness, no God needed. No Jesus needed.

That becomes the theme of this book. And the warnings come like waves in chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and finally the most severe warning in chapter 10 just before he launches into this chapter about what real faith looks like. 2:1-4; 3:12-14 4:1,2,11 5:11-14 6:4-12 10:19-31

In the ancient Hebrew church as well as the current church there is the strange mixture of real people of real faith, mixed with others who are just there for the ride, but don't finish. They walk away. Their faith wasn't the real thing. Those folks won't be in heaven.

The author of Hebrews says, here's what evidence of real faith looks like. God uses His people who belong to Him to accomplish the impossible. And it isn't Luke Skywalker. It isn't Hollywood, or "the force". It isn't vain imaginings. God accomplishes real works for His glory with people who have real faith.

The world is looking at the church. Now more than ever in our cultural moment. And they know what Hollywood looks. They know what fake and make believe look like. And they know when something real that only God could do happens.

Mostly, the world isn't impressed. Far too much Hollywood baloney. Few too many instances of God using quiet people who don't want to be in any spotlight, to accomplish miracles for His glory.

This author says, this is what faith looks like. Ordinary people doing extraordinary things that they couldn't have ever accomplished on their own, but they believed in God, and He caused them to happen through them. For His glory. Always for the glory of God.

That's a pretty high bar. Or is it? Do you have to part the Red Sea in order to be in this list? Or is it simpler than that, yet not simple at all.

Could we say that people of faith, the kind of faith this author is showing us in this chapter, are ordinary people who believe in God and who have said in some manner, I belong to you, you purchased me with your blood, and I am a doulos, a slave, ready and able to do whatever it is you have designed and wish for your slave to accomplish.

Often, I think, that just looks like someone who prays, God it's impossible for me to love this person, this jerk in the same room, and would you please pour out your love in my heart, so I can.

Little things. The daily reminder to yourself that you are not your own. You have been purchased out of this world with an immeasurably high price. Your body and soul and spirit belong to God, and you are to be at His service. First. Everything else, all the necessary stuff, comes second.

We should always be examining ourselves and asking the question this writer of Hebrews is trying to answer for us. Do I have this kind of faith? Can I say, by faith, God accomplished this thing or that thing, for His glory, through me, and things that I have no power to accomplish, happened.

Sometimes that's just a mom with a 3, 5, and 6 year old that hears a loud crash and prays, Lord, help me not to kill them.

If we are christians, all of our lives should be bathed in His grace working through us, interacting with this world around us. We are the salt that interacts with Satan's world around us where we live,

and preserves it, and gives it some Godly flavor.

Faith is that very real force that accomplishes God's will in the spiritual realms, in this fallen world. Faith working through ordinary people who belong to God, accomplishes miracles. And no, you don't have to part the Red Sea, but Moses did, and it wasn't him that did it.

27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

Take a moment and consider with me the reason most work for God does not get done. I simply never happens. Why? Fear. Moses leads God's people to the edge of the promised land and they don't go in. They wander in the desert for an entire generation until all the "shrink backers" are gone. Proverbs 29:25 and 26 state the case in crystal clear terms.

25 The fear of man is a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD will be set securely on high. 26 Many seek the ruler's favor, but a man receives justice from the LORD....

Moses was in a tough spot. We cringe to think about it. Pharaoh at this time in history is quite literally the most powerful man on earth.

Moses on the other hand, has walked away from privilege to identify with the people of God's promises. He has killed an Egyptian. He fled to Midian and had become a tender of flocks.

That's a great fall by this world's standards. You were a prince, but now you're a refugee in another land herding sheep. For 40 years. A dirt poor shepherd, in hiding.

And God says, Moses, you're my man and I want you to march right into Pharoah's presence and tell him, these people don't belong to you, they belong to God, and He has sent me to lead them out of Egypt.

That's right, you heard me. Go to the palace. Have an audience with the most powerful man in the world. Tell him I sent you to lead my people out of Egypt.

Yeah, those people. The ones who are Pharoah's slaves that are building him the wonders of the world. The ones his economy is built on. Let them go. They don't belong to you. They're mine. We'll need to leave as soon as possible.

Moses is in a tough spot. That might be a cause of concern; right?

Your first thought would be, I'll never get to the *let my people go* part because my head won't be on my body long enough to say that. The fear of man.

But let me put this in perspective for you. Jesus commented on this very thing. Matt. 10:28 *"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*

Nobody said this was going to be easy. If you're sitting there thinking, "I didn't sign up for stress." I signed up for ease. Comfort.

Moses weighed his options in the balance, I'm sure. Go in to Pharoah. Lose head. Don't go in to Pharoah, lose head, and soul.

But apparently according to this verse we're studying, Moses took that logic a step further. Again, something Jesus taught that

applies to this situation.

Luke 21:17 And you will be hated by everyone because of My name. 18 Yet not even a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your patient endurance, you will gain your souls....

You can go in to Pharoah and make God's demands, and he is powerless to touch you. Not one hair will perish.

27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

The secret to being fearless is to be assured that you are exactly where God has ordered your steps. Not one hair will perish, unless He allows it.

Sometimes, as we'll see in some of the verses coming up, sometimes it might be God's will for you to get sawn in two. Even then, all man can do is kill your body.

Moses was fearless because he kept his spiritual eyes on Him who is unseen. Moses was in Pharaoh's presence, making God's demands, looking right through Pharaoh and seeing God who is infinitely more powerful than Pharaoh. By faith . . .

28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

See the word them at the very end of vs. 28. Now faith has moved from the singular, Moses, to the plural; them

We've skipped over a lot of the story to arrive here. Moses goes into Pharaoh and makes God's demands known, and Pharaoh says; I don't know the Lord. Not only am I not going to do it, I'm going

to make the hebrews lives odious. Miserable.

He took their straw for the bricks for the pyramids away. Make the same amount of bricks, but go get your own straw. That might have been something like a 30% increase in work, to get the same product.

And the hebrew people blamed that on Moses. Great Moses. We're still here. And our workload went from 12 hours a day to 15. Thanks for nothing.

But we have 20-20 hindsight. We can read the story and we learn that God orchestrated everything that would happen next for His own glory. And we also read that God hardened Pharoahs heart for the same purpose. To glorify Him.

Plagues. More plagues. Nasty unimaginable plagues. But what happens to the children of Israel. Apparently their faith grew as they watched their God at work, freeing them.

And thus when Moses told them about God's final plague, the firstborn in every household in Egypt, not just firstborn humans, but firstborn animals too.

The hebrew people believed Moses. When Moses explained to them about the angel of death, passing over people who kept the passover, they believed, and God, working through Moses, caused a great miracle.

The instructions were to be exactly followed. The timing and preparation. The splattering of blood on the door posts. All of it would have seemed so bizarre to the world.

It requires faith to obey God's commands when the on-looking

world does not believe that God is, but they do believe you've lost your senses.

Finally; 29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

Moses leads the children of Israel into the most perfect ambush position ever conceived.

Pharaoh's armies are in hot pursuit. Moses is leading the children out, and with the Egyptians almost overtaking them, they are at a body of water. They're sitting ducks, to coin a phrase. No place to go, and can't turn back and Egypt is almost on them.

Nothing but certain death. If you're the rest of the world. But if you are God's own possession, suddenly there is a wall of water on either side of you, but you're running through the Red sea on dry land.

You come out the other side, and the Egyptians are in the middle, and suddenly those walls collapse.

Faith in God caused the sea to part. God causes miracles for His people who trust Him and obediently march into situations that the world would call impossible.

What does any of this have to do with us? What is the application here? Is this just fun stuff to read about the old testament saints but doesn't really have much application today?

Somebody made up that illustrative story about Jesus, when He ascended into heaven and all of the holy angels worshipped Him and then one of them said, OK, what's next, how will you

implement what you've accomplished so the world will know?

And Jesus answers, I left 11 men there. And the angel looked down on that mess and said, ummmm, what's plan B? And Jesus said, there is no plan B.

Folks, we are it. The baton in this relay race has been handed off to us. We have the same responsibility to pass the good news of redemption on to those around us who will tell others also, as they did.

You know that joke we like to say to each other when it's something an orangutan could do and we fail. "You had one job!"

This world is a war zone. A usurper, Satan, has gained control and rules here. Jesus is returning soon to depose Satan and set up His rule.

But until that time, He has people here who He has purchased out of this world who live under His authority, and He has tasked them with telling others;

There is forgiveness available. You can escape Satan's world and be owned by Jesus. He will forgive all of the sin that previously made you His enemy. That's good news. Really good news.

What are you doing, by faith, that is making inroads into Satan's territory, taking away from his kingdom and gaining for Jesus'?

WE have one job. Tell others about the good news that Jesus has made a way of escape from Satan's perishing world. You can come out of this condemned place and belong to Him. You can have life eternally with the God of creation.

We do that in a thousand ways. Last month a lot of folks in this church worked very hard in very hot weather to raise money to send a whole bunch of children to a Bible camp so they could hear about Jesus, some of them for the very first time.

God worked His miracles. Twice as much money was raised as they originally thought. Then God did more miracles and so many kids from here went to the camp, the money still wasn't enough, even though doubled.

What are we doing that's writing the addendum to Hebrews 11. By faith, this person or that person from Tonopah Community Church did this thing or that thing and God combined with them to accomplish this miracle or that miracle. We have the baton. It's our time to run in this race.