**Greater Than All - wk 19 – Faith Road Trip – Pt 6**

**The GPS says we are there - the end of ch 11 (Hang in… cat posters)**

**Hebrews = Don’t give up but grow up! True faith perseveres.**

**Hebrews 11:1 Now faith (Trust in God) is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for. (Hall of Faith!) 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God…**

**Biblical Faith - is a supernatural trust and assurance in what God says even if you don’t see it or understand it.**

**Not a force, positive thinking, absence of fear / doubt.**

**Faith is Trusting God enough to do what he says.**

**Heb 11 highlight reels - Able, Abe, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Rahab - examples of people who kept faith…**

**Hebrews 11:32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, (farmer who boldly destroyed false idols and used miraculously by God to defeat a wicked army) Barak, (judge who stepped out and rallied 10,000 men after Deborah’s encouragement in the LORD) Samson (used by God to judge and defeat the Canaanites) and Jephthah, (trusted God to do the impossible) about David (great warrior King who slew goliath and built a great nation)**

**Each of these have something in common – they were great people of faith - and also great people of failure.**

**\*\* By faith some were victorious despite their past circumstances**

**Past failures are not indicators of our future faith stories**

**They really blew it: Gideon struggled w/ idol worship, Jephthah kept it a foolish vow and, Samson struggled w/ women and alcohol, David committed adultery and murder. But yet commended for their faith**

**Our past does not disqualify us from God using those in faith.**

* **Faith is measured by our brokenness not our perfection**

**God uses the weak and humble to accomplish his great purpose.**

**You don’t have to be perfect to make into God “Hall of faith”**

**Everything we do for the LORD is with a sinner’s reach. That is why faith is so important and why we need Jesus. That God would love & use me, a crooked stick to make a straight line.**

**By faith we run to the cross and find his mercy not our merit.**

**Our past says failure, Jesus says in weakness I am made strong.**

**Heb 11:32b …and Samuel and the prophets, (they lead Israel in the face of fear and opposition) 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, (David, Joshua, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah) administered justice, (Elijah, Elisha, the prophets) and gained what was promised; (Caleb, Gideon, Barak) who shut the mouths of lions, (prophet Daniel) 34 quenched the fury of the flames, (Shadrach Meshach, and Abednego) and escaped the edge of the sword; (David, Moses, Elijah) whose weakness was turned to strength; (Abe, Sarah, Gideon, Ester, Samson) and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. (David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joshua) 35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. (like Zarephath)**

**\*\* By faith some were victorious over their circumstances**

**They stood in faith and never let go of the God of the impossible. They saw miracles & wonders - saw God’s hand work in their life and others.**

* **Faith is measured by its submission to God not its odds of success**

**They faced the odds that seemed impossible.**

**Gideon – faced 120,000 with 300 men / Barak faced 900 chariots / Samson (1 man) took out 3000 men at one time, the boy David took down a giant. That is what God can do through faith in HIM.**

**Don’t worry about the odds - pros and cons list don’t mean anything if God has clearly spoken on the issue.**

**These are the stories we like to read and preach on, that make the headlines. Sign me up! I’ll have faith and see great things!**

**(But it goes one…) Heb 11:35b There were others who were tortured, (beaten) refusing to be released (refusing to deny the LORD) so that they might gain an even better resurrection. 36 Some faced jeers (mocked) and flogging, (Ezekiel) and even chains and imprisonment. (like Joseph, Micaiah, Jeremiah, Zedekiah, Daniel) 37 They were put to death by stoning; (painful slow way to die – like Zechariah and Jeremiah) they were sawed in two; (like Isaiah) they were killed by the sword. (Zachariah – 85 priests murdered by Doeg, King Saul’s servant – Jezebel kills dozens of prophets and priests) They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, (hiding) destitute, persecuted and mistreated - 38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. (like David, Elijah, Obadiah, and others) 39 These were all commended for their faith… (they had great amazing faith!)**

**\*\* By faith some were victorious under their circumstances**

**Displayed amazing fervent faith – never giving up on the LORD - and they encountered - incredible pain, suffering, and heartache.**

**They were not a result of a lack of faith, but because of their faith. They had the same Faith – but had different outcomes**

* **Faith is measured by its endurance not its results**

**You can’t faith yourself into healing and prosperity – or into a happy marriage and a long life. Faith endures regardless.**

**A faith that is willing to accept whatever God leads you through.**

**Heb 11:6 – without this kind of faith it is impossible to please God.**

**We exercise faith not for handouts & happiness, but because we trust God is good and he is working our good for His glory.**

**We are encouraged to pray, petition, request, and ask of God. We do this by faith. But we also accept what God wills by faith too.**

**(This echoes the last chap) Hebrews 10:32 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. 33 Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. 34 You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. (Eternal reward) 35 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. (But not in this life)**

**By Faith in Christ, We Trust God When Things Go Well**

**By Faith in Christ, We Trust God When Everything Falls Apart**

**Hebrews 11:6** **But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is (LORD of all), and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

**God is sovereign = good, faithful, and in control – we believe this by faith. Know this, God is good no matter what happens!!**

**Thinking at what they endured with faith looking forward - how much more – can we not let discouragement defeat us – when we look back to the cross of Christ with faith!**

**Hebrews 11:39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, (the fulfillment of the Messiah – Jesus! They preached it, lived it, believed it, many died for it - Messiah is coming! Continuing through trials - they never saw Him arrive) 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.**

**We were given the joy and privilege to see the amazing work of Jesus to redeem and restore - completed.**

**They saw in part, glimpse, shadow, copy, reflection - we see clearly. Jesus the Messiah! They looked forward we look back!**

**…so that only together with us would they be made perfect. (Complete, finished)**

**From Adam to Ted, we are in this together! United by faith! Every person who never quit the LORD are united as family.**

* **Faith is measured by our obedience not the outcome**

**They were counted as ones of great faith because they obeyed the word of God, no matter where it took them or happened.**

**The outcome for some was disastrous and horrific – but they obeyed. Would you? Will you?**

**They saw the promise, spoke of him, pointed to him, modeled him - their faith was a map that guided not a power that rescued.**

**Reality is in most cased we don’t need more faith we need more obedience. We have the map (Bible) will we follow it?**

**We look back and see and hear about these amazing men and women who did not quit… what do we do with this?**

**Hebrews 12:1** **Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us…**

**What do we do? We follow in the footsteps of faithful men and women. We don’t quit, we don’t turn around, we don’t go back… we run forward! (Next week)**

**2 Things Never Taught in Sunday School**

1. **Learn to embrace suffering - Don’t hide or run from trials**

**There will be times when the lion’s mouth will be shut and other times when it will devour us. We must be ready for wherever God leads.**

**We spend our life avoiding trials, suffering, consequences…**

**If there is a way to avoid pain, only a fool wouldn’t take it – but sometimes it is right where our faith leads us.**

**Don’t be afraid to run to the trials and embrace the suffering. \*The mindset of the hall of faith and the NT followers of Jesus.**

**John 15:18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. 21 They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.**

**You can run – but you cannot hide from trouble and suffering. No one is immune to trouble and trials. Truth is - God will allow you to have more than you can handle… dependency is on God.**

**If can't move my couch out of house - does that mean I should not have a couch – no - it means I need help.**

**John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”**

**In America it’s funny when people say it’s so hard to be a Christian. I can’t help but think of Hebrews 11 (or 2 Cor 11:23-28 Paul’s life) and hundreds of thousands around the world who are imprisoned, tortured, and murdered because of the stand they make for Christ. “But that person rolled their eyes, I am alone on a Friday, they talked about me.” I am so sorry - but where you sawed in half?**

**1 Peter 4:12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.**

**Listen, you got this! Remember the crowd of witnesses cheering us on! If they can do it by faith, so can you! Don’t give up!!**

**Deep, abiding faith in God is one that continues when we are strong and when we are weak; when we conquer and when we are defeated!**

**Paul responding to trails says - Rom 8:31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (If we face torture, famine, persecution, hardship… he says in all these thing – God never leaves us) 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**

**How in the world are we more than a conqueror when hardship comes out way?**

1. **By faith we understand that is this life somethings don’t always work out in the short run, and sometimes not even the long run.**

**\*\*\* Our circumstances are not indicators of God’s favor or blessings. But you know what is – salvation. The cross.**

**That is why Hebrews constantly reminds us that we have a better future and it’s not in this life - Heb 11:35b There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection.**

**The kingdom of heaven is our real hope!**

**We may live to be 100 – we may die young. We may never face true persecution, or we might be tortured unto death.**

**Some had a miracle in this life some the miracle was the kingdom of heaven and a better resurrection.**

**In Christ – this life is the worst it gets. (It only gets better)**

**Without Christ – this is the best you’ll ever get**

**The heart of the chapter - Never forget - faith is not a force, a spiritual law, wishful thinking, taking risks, or the absence of fear or doubting. Faith is trusting in Jesus, following his word and not giving up!**

**Jesus is the fulfillment and the object of our faith**