

Faithfulness Commends Righteousness

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he **still speaks**.

- In verse 2 we were told that faith provided a “commendation” for those in the Old Testament who had faith. Now we are given an example. “Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous.” Why was Cain commended as righteous? Because of his faith, God considered Abraham to be righteous (Genesis 15:6). “By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.” Evidently, Cain’s sacrifice was not offered by faith in God. Cain’s murderous response is proof that his faith in God was not what it should have been. Yet, even though Abel was murdered long ago, his sacrifice “still speaks” as proof of his faithfulness to God.

Faithfulness Pleases God

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having **pleased God**.

- Enoch was raised up to heaven by God without Enoch needing to experience physical death. This also was because of his faith revealed by his faithful actions which “pleased God”.
- Enoch’s ascension to heaven provide a prophetic foreshadowing of what will happen to believers who are alive on earth when Jesus returns. They will immediately be with Jesus in heaven, without experiencing physical death.

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he **exists** and that he rewards those who seek him.

- Faith is absolutely necessary. Without it a person cannot please God. This is because a human being will never seek to please God if he or she doesn’t believe that God “exists,” and also believes that God “rewards those who seek him.”
- A non-believer is unable to put God first in all that they do and say because they have no reason to.

Righteousness Comes by Faith

⁷ By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

- Noah was told what God was going to do and did what God commanded him to do. Because he built the ark his family was saved from the devastation of the flood. His faith made him “an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith”.
- When God tells His people what He is going to do, and they believe Him, they also will become heirs “of the righteousness that comes by faith.”
- No human being can know the future, but we can know what God has revealed about the future. We can know it with confidence.

Obedience Comes by Faith

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. [Hebrews 11:8-12](#) (ESV)

- By faith Abraham was able to go to the land his descendants would one day inherit, even before Abraham had ever seen that land.
- Those who are in Christ also are given an inheritance of a land they cannot see.

Faithful Saints Need Only God’s Promises of a Better Home

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire **a better country, that is, a heavenly one**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. [Hebrews 11:13-16](#) (ESV)

- When Abraham and Sarah died, they had not received the land God would grant to their descendants.
- Those who believe in Jesus will one day receive an inheritance of a “better country, that is a heavenly one”.

Faithful Saints Know God Will Be Faithful

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. ²⁰ By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. ²¹ By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. [Hebrews 11:17–22](#) (ESV)

- When God tested Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his long-awaited son, Isaac, Abraham continued to trust that God would fulfill his promise to make Isaac his heir. He thought God might raise Isaac from the dead.
- Isaac and Jacob passed on God's blessing to their sons because they had faith that God's promise to Abraham would be upheld. God would not withdraw His promise.

Faithful Saints Obey God in the Face of Rejection

²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. [Hebrews 11:23–28](#) (ESV)

- Moses grew up in the palace of the greatest king on earth at that time, yet he preferred God's blessings more desirable than Pharaoh's wealth.
- Those who believe in Jesus may face rejection, but those with faith will prefer belonging to Jesus over belonging to those who oppose Jesus.

Faithful Saints Will Be Victorious by God's Act of Saving Them

²⁹ By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. [Hebrews 11:29–31](#) (ESV)

- God saved the Israelites escaping bondage in Egypt from Pharaoh's army by causing them to be drowned when the waters of the Red Sea fell in on them.
- God provided victory for the Israelites when they defeated Jericho by marching around it for seven days.
- Rahab showed her faith in God by welcoming the Jewish spies.
- The victory Jesus showed when He rose from the dead will be shared by all who believe in Him.

By Faith God's People Receive God's Unending Grace

³² And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. ³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. ³⁹ And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. [Hebrews 11:32–38](#) (ESV)

- You can look at the chart to study more about how God's people have often had to suffer for their faith in God.
- The suffering of God's people will one day vanish, and something far better awaits those who believe in Jesus.

OT person of faith	Reference in Hebrews 11	Reference in OT
Abel	11:4	Genesis 4
Enoch	11:5	Gen. 5:18–24
Noah	11:7	Gen. 5:29–10:32
Abraham	11:8-19	Genesis 12–25; etc.
Sarah	11:11	Genesis 12–23; Isa. 51:2
Isaac	11:17-22	Genesis 17–35; etc.
Jacob	11:21	Genesis 25–50; etc.
Joseph	11:21-22	Genesis 37–50; etc.
Moses	11:23-28	Ex. 2:10 and throughout the Pentateuch; etc.
Rahab	11:31	Josh. 2:1, 3; 6:17–25
Gideon	11:32	Judges 6–8
Barak	11:32	Judges 4–5
Samson	11:32	Judges 13–16
Jephthah	11:32	Judges 11–12; 1 Sam. 12:11
David	11:32	Ruth 4; 1–2 Samuel; etc.

Faithful Saints Believed Even Though They Didn't Know about Jesus' Gracious Salvation

³⁹ And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

- The saints of the Old Testament had a promise, but not a fulfillment.
- Jesus' death and resurrection fulfilled the promises of God.
- Those who believe in Jesus are still waiting to receive the full blessing He has promised.

Jesus Was Most Faithful of All – Stay Focused on Him

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. ⁴ In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. Hebrews 12:1–2 (ESV)

- There can be no better example of faithfulness than the life of Jesus Christ.
- His example lays out a path to follow, for every believer.
- Believers must always, at all times, stay focused on what Jesus did for them.
- Those who are in Jesus may suffer, but as long as they are on this earth, they have not suffered to the point of dying.

Faith is mysterious. It is a gift that God gives to every one of His people. Why God chooses certain people to have faith is a mystery. How God puts faith into the hearts of His people is also mysterious.

Obedience is not mysterious. Jesus said that those who love Him will keep his commandments (John 14:15 & 21). Faith in Jesus goes hand in hand with love for Jesus. Faith produces obedience as well. Obedience can be seen by a person's actions. Whenever people truly love Jesus, it shows in their actions and words. It will be seen by everyone. It will also be seen when those who believe in Jesus have love for each other. Jesus said that his people would be known by their love (John 13:35).

Hebrews 11:1–12:4

D F A I T H T A K E N A
S C O M M E N D E D A M
H O R G N I K E S E D C
E N I T F R V R I S G A
A S G P L I V E M U E A
V I H E E C B F O F G S
E D T C T E B F R E N I
N E E C C L K O P R I S
D R O A E P K N L E V S
U I U S F O E E E W A O
R S S O R E E E A A H R
E E K A E P S S S R M C
D N A L P L D I E D R B

Now **faith** is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not **seen**. For by it the **people** of old **received** their **commendation**. By **faith** we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is **seen** was not **made** out of things that are visible. By **faith** Abel **offered** to God a more **acceptable** sacrifice than Cain, through which he was **commended** as **righteous**, God **commending** him by **accepting** his gifts. And through his **faith**, though he **died**, he still **speaks**. By **faith** Enoch was **taken** up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, **because** God had **taken** him. Now before he was **taken** he was **commended** as **having pleased** God. And without **faith** it is impossible to **please** him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he **rewards** those who **seek** him. By **faith** Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an **heir** of the **righteousness** that comes by **faith**. By **faith** Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to **receive** as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By **faith** he went to **live** in the **land of promise**, as in a foreign **land**, **living** in tents with **Isaac** and Jacob, **heirs** with him of the same **promise**. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. By **faith** Sarah herself **received** power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she **considered** him **faithful** who had **promised**. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of **heaven** and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. These all **died in faith**, not **having received** the things **promised**, but **having seen** them and greeted them from afar, and **having** acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For **people** who **speak** thus make it clear that they are **seeking** a homeland. If they had been thinking of that **land** from which they had gone out, they would **have** had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a **heavenly one**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. By **faith** Abraham, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac**, and he who had **received**

the **promises** was in the act of **offering** up his only son, of whom it was said, “Through **Isaac** shall your offspring be named.” He **considered** that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively **speaking**, he did **receive** him back. By **faith** **Isaac** invoked future **blessings** on Jacob and Esau. By **faith** Jacob, when **dying**, **blessed** each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. By **faith** Joseph, at the end of his life, **made** mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones. By **faith** Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, **because** they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the **king’s** edict. By **faith** Moses, when he was grown up, **refused** to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the **people** of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He **considered** the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the **reward**. By **faith** he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the **king**, for he **endured** as seeing him who is invisible. By **faith** he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. By **faith** the **people** **crossed** the Red Sea as on dry **land**, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. By **faith** the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. By **faith** Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, **because** she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through **faith** conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained **promises**, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were **made** strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women **received** back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, **refusing to accept** release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though **commended** through their **faith**, did not **receive** what was **promised**, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be **made perfect**. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with **endurance** the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and **perfecter** of our **faith**, who for the joy that was set before him **endured** the **cross**, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. **Consider** him who **endured** from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you **have** not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

(ESV)