

Making Your Life Count- Hebrews 11- Getting Fueled for the Journey

Our encouragement this morning is from this passage in Hebrews is “getting fueled for our journey.”



Question? –

What gets you excited in your life?

What are things that gives you the confidence you need to get through your day?

Maybe it is a note from your spouse.

Or a little hug or kiss from your child.

Maybe it is your coworker who gets you your coffee or bagel.

It can be one of many things that can be done for us or to us to encourage us and give us that shot in the arm to get us through the day.

Question: What about our spiritual journey? What gets us through our weeks or months dealing with the spiritual warfare we encounter?

This is where we will be today in our study in Hebrews. In chapters 11 and the first part of 12 the writer is giving the believers, the early church this shot in the arm towards perseverance and to stay focused in their faith, not to waiver, but to fix their eyes on the prize and that is Jesus,

Before we get into these 2 chapters, let us look at Hebrews. When we jump in a passage in the middle or end of the book, we need to understand context of why it was written. We would call this **“Biblical Hermeneutics”** or the **“Interpretation of Scripture”**

Observation- What does it say?

Interpretation- What does it mean? -**Historical/Cultural-Word meanings/Grammar meanings**

Correlation- How does it fit?

Application- How does it apply?

Illustration: Book report- Mr Kuenzi- Danny Orlis



The Holman Bible Commentary says this: The Book of Hebrews is anonymous in that the name of the author is not mentioned in the book. The original readers knew who the writer was, but he remains unknown to us. Despite the difficulties in determining the author of Hebrews, its majestic picture of Christ commended its contents to the early church.

The writer of Hebrews presented Christ as superior to the Old Testament prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua, and Aaron. He laced magnificent discussions of Christ’s person and work into frightening passages warning against apostasy (1:1–2:4). The superiority of Christ led the writer to appeal for faith (chap. 11), stamina (12:3–11), and good works (13:16).¹

People were leaving the church for 2 reason.

1. Being led astray by false teaching

¹ Lea, T. D. (1998). [The General Letters](#). In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary* (pp. 618–619). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

2. Persecution.

The Teachers Commentary says this

. In chapter 11, we see the role of faith, not only for our own lives but in the lives of believers of every age. In chapter 12 we see the importance of making every effort to move toward the goal of striving for the prize Jesus.

So as we begin reading, the author states wants to give us something to be excited about in our faith. Something to keep us going in our journey of faith.

Hebrews 11:1–2 (NIV) 1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for.

The author starts us back at the beginning of time:

- Creation - vs 3- God's command- By Faith
- Abel - vs 4- Offered the perfect sacrifice/righteous man
- Enoch - vs 5-He was one that pleased God/Take up
- Noah- vs 7-built an Ark of what God says was to come-100-120 years.
- Abraham- vs 8- followed God to the unknown
 - Vs 11-faith due to his and Sarah's age believed to have a son
 - Vs 17-During the test to sacrifice his only son, believed
- Isaac, Jacob, Joseph- vs20-22

The patriarchs mentioned here likewise looked to the future in **faith**. **Isaac**, trusting God to fulfill His promises to Abraham and his descendants, pronounced blessings on his own two sons **Jacob and Esau** regarding **their future**. So, did **Jacob** in regard to **Joseph's sons**, which was for him an act of faith in his old age. The readers too were to maintain their worship right to the end of life, persevering in faith in the future that God had foretold. **Joseph** too, nearing death, expressed confidence that God would in the future deliver **the Israelites from Egypt**. In similar fashion all believers should, in genuine faith, have confidence in the future of God's people²
- Moses's Parents- vs 23- hid their son because he was not ordinary boy.
- Moses- vs 24- refused to grow up as Pharaoh's son to be mistreated as the children of God. Kept the Passover, passed through the Red Sea with Pharaoh on their backs.
- Rahab- vs 31- welcomed the spies and her life and the life of her family was spared.
- Gideon-defeated the Midianite Army with 300 men
- Barak-
- Samson
- Jephthah
- David
- Samuel
- The prophets

Hebrews 11:33–40 (NIV)

33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, **34** quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.

² Hodges, Z. C. (1985). [Hebrews](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 808). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. **36** Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. **37** They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, 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.

39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, **40** since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

The Holman Bible Commentary states

11:39–40. *The promises for which believers eagerly awaited appeared only in Christ. Old Testament saints did not experience the eternal inheritance. Their faith earned for them a remarkable reputation and favor with God. They lived and died in the hope of a fulfillment which none of them saw on earth. The reaping of the benefits did not occur until Christ opened the box of spiritual treasures.*³

I believe what the author was trying to relay to his audience this, “look, we see the fulfillment, we see the hope, we see that Jesus Christ is all the sufficiency that we need. We know our home is secure in Christ, we know our home is heaven.

I know your friends and your family are being persecuted, I know they are losing their life but do not lose hope. Our fathers before us followed God not seeing what was ahead because they had faith believing is something they could not see.

So here is the transition, here is his moment to get the Christians passionate about their faith by putting their focus on our goal and our prize Jesus.

*These Hebrew Christians needed little reminder that they were in a life and death struggle. It makes a big difference in times of trial to remember the price the Savior paid at Calvary: ‘Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.’ He always warned his disciples that they would share his sufferings (John 15:18–21). Indeed, having learned that lesson, the early church even rejoiced in the fellowship of suffering (Acts 5:41).*⁴

Hebrews 12:1–3 (NIV)

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, **2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Witnesses (μαρτύρων) does not mean *spectators*, but those who have borne witness to the truth,

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We are surrounded by the saints of the past in a unique way. It is not that the faithful who have gone before us are spectators to the race we run. Rather, it is a figurative representation and

³ Lea, T. D. (1999). *Hebrews, James* (Vol. 10, p. 206). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁴ Hacking, P. H. (2006). *Opening up Hebrews* (p. 83). Leominster: Day One Publications.

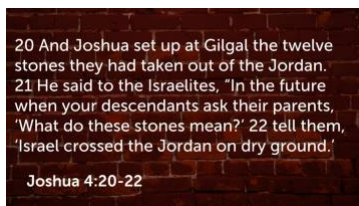
means that we ought to act as if they were in sight and cheering us on to the same victory in the life of faith that they obtained. We are to be inspired by the godly examples these saints set during their lives. These are those whose past lives of faith encourage others to live that way, too. That the cloud is referred to as “great” indicates that millions of believers have gone before us, each bearing witness to the life of faith we now live.

Remembering the Past- Heb 11

There are times in our life, when we need to remember what God has done in our past. Whether it be our salvation or other moments in our life, where we have seen God work whether it be in your life or you saw it in somebody else’s life, Remembering gives us that fuel to continue on this race in our journey of faith.

We see pictures of this in the Old Testament.

Joshua- Stones at Gilgal and in the middle of the Jordan



Joshua 4:20–22 (NIV)

20 And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. **21** He said to the Israelites, “In the future when your descendants ask their parents, ‘What do these stones mean?’ **22** tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’”

Like we were reminded at the Army graduation of those who had gone on before us, we need to be reminded of the faithfulness of our God in the past with his saints. That should give us the strength, encouragement, and focus we need to steady on our faith journey.

What reminders or memorials do you need to set before your eyes each and every day. What is it that will fuel you to continue to live out your faith?

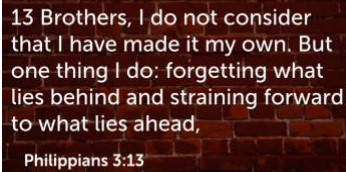
1. **Run the Race- Heb 12:1**

Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)

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,

Putting aside all of our distractions, the sin that hinders us and binds us and keeps us stagnant in our race.

As we remember what God has done for us, we need to continue to push forward in our walk with God. Paul said it this way in Phillipines 3...



13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,
Philippians 3:13

Philippians 3:13 (NIV)

13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,

If there was anyone who had a past that Satan wanted him to remember and that was Paul. He motto was to forget about what you have done in your past but to continue to “strive” forward.

What about you, are you in a point in your life where you have reached a sense of apathy?

- Are you concerned where you are in your faith?
- Do you need that shot in the arm to push you to continue fighting?

May you have lost your zeal, your energy, your desire to move ahead because you have become a real discouragement. Let us lay that all aside put it to rest and run with passion.

Loving God, and loving people

1. Refocus on Jesus- Heb 12:2

Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)

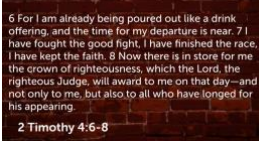
2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Fixing- Greek -to keep thinking about, without having one’s attention distracted— ‘to think about, to fix one’s attention on.’⁵

When we look at that definition of the “fixing” wow, I think we are can say we are distracted from Jesus at times in our life.

Paul gives a beautiful picture of what our mindset should be at the end of our lives or race. Here Paul is getting ready to be killed by Nero. Here is the last words that he told spiritual son Timothy.

¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [*Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 353). New York: United Bible Societies.



6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.
2 Timothy 4:6-8

2 Timothy 4:6–8 (NIV)

6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. **7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. **8** Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Conclusion: So church, what will we be fueled by?

- Remembering the past- What God has done for us and what he has done in your life
- Run the Race- laying aside all distraction/sins and run with passions and energy.
- Refocus on Jesus- Keeping your eyes on the one who gave his life for you.

What do you need to get you fueled for your journey?