

DAY 33 FRIDAY

HEBREWS 11:1-16 A FAITH TO BE LIVED

¹ Now faith 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.

³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. ⁴ By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

⁷ By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. ⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

¹¹ By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹² And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. ¹⁴ People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Here we are presented with a practical faith that is defined in terms of a response to the God-hostile nature of the world. It begins with the intellectual assent that God's word is true, but then goes beyond assent to action in the world and reaction to the world. Once we accept God's word as true, we demonstrate our acceptance by living lives that are obedient to God's expressed will, and lives that depend upon and reveal the power of God.

The Christian life is like encountering a rope bridge that disappears from view in the fog about 35 feet off the proximal edge and stretches across a bottomless chasm. You have been given God's word that the bridge goes all the way across. The promised safe arrival on the other side is your hope. Our faith believes that word and motivates us to step out and walk into the fog on the rope of his word. There is no greater act of faith and no greater witness to the glory of God, than the believer acting upon the promise without the object of that promise being in sight.

O Holy Spirit, without your inspiration I could neither know the truth of your word nor be able to even desire to live in obedience to God. Grow my faith that I might persevere every day in my journey toward your unseen promises. Give me the hope that will radiate from my life into the lives of all with whom I come into contact, so that they too might be attracted to you. Amen.