

# FAITH THAT PLEASES GOD AND OVERCOMES THE WORLD - 2

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## INTRODUCTION:

### **A. Illustration: This weekend people across our nation are celebrating “Memorial Day”**

1. Memorial Day stands as a day of remembrance for all those who have served in our military – Especially those who paid the ultimate price! (High price of freedom)
2. Hebrews 11 stands as a more important type of memorial: A memorial to faith!
  - a. We noted previously that Hebrews 11 was not just written to impress us with how great some men were in their faith – But to teach us about faith
  - b. It's a memorial of sorts to the type of faith that pleases God & overcomes the world
3. It is certain that our faith in God & our commitment to Him will be tested! (**I Pet. 1:6-7**)
  - a. Times that are extremely difficult, loss of loved ones, things Satan throws at us, etc
  - b. Whether or not our faith is real, strong, and our own will be made evident

### **B. Last week we began learning what this kind of faith looked like: How it...**

1. Believes in and pursues, or seeks after, God:
  - a. Real acceptance of the existence of God will mean that one lives according to his knowledge of God → Many say they believe in God, do they really?
  - b. This type of faith diligently seeks to know God better, to be found in God, and for God to be found in us – It seeks to have fellowship with God
  - c. We to please God & serve Him knowing He is a good God, a God who rewards!
2. How it embraces the promises of God as reality:
  - a. These people the Hebrew writer speaks of believed that what God said He would do – That he was able to do it and would fulfill it
  - b. These promises they held dear to their hearts & their lives were conducted with a focus on them – It's the same trust in God's promises we need today!

### **C. Now let's learn more about the kind of faith that pleases God & overcomes the world...**

## I. IT IS A FAITH THAT VALUES THE SPIRITUAL OVER THE PHYSICAL:

### **A. For Moses the eternal was both more real & more valuable than the temporal: (vs. 23-28)**

1. His own people, God's children, were more important than His Egyptian family:
  - a. Being Hebrew by birth, as Moses became an adult he had a choice: Continue as one of Pharaoh's house or leave that behind to join God's people
  - b. We might think that was an easy decision; however, remember that God's people were then slaves to the Egyptians were suffering greatly as a result
  - c. Because his spiritual family was more valuable to him than his earthly family in Pharaoh's household, he willingly made the decision to suffer with them!
2. He considered the pleasures living in sin would bring as being only temporary!
  - a. He grew up in Pharaoh's house as one of his own family! He would have had opportunity to enjoy great pleasures – Many things that would be wrong
  - b. Moses understood that going against Pharaoh and leaving that household would mean affliction, that he'd suffer – But he willingly took those ramifications on!
  - c. He viewed the things he'd experience in Pharaoh's house as “passing,” or temporary → He understood they'd only provide short-lived happiness!
3. He saw the glories of Heaven as more valuable than any treasures Egypt could offer!
  - a. He had much earthly greatness awaiting him! (**Acts 7:21-22**) → Moses grew up as one of Pharaoh's own grandsons & excelled beyond most other Egyptians
  - b. Egypt was the most powerful kingdom in the world! We know a little about how wealthy it was from its remains! All of this was at Moses' disposal!
  - c. Notice it says that he saw that the reproach of Christ was greater → This likely has reference to how he was willing to suffer affliction as a Hebrew and did it understanding the promise of Jesus Christ (*He too embraced the promises!*)

- e. So Moses forsook Egypt → He cut ties with his earthly relationship for the spiritual
- 4. He saw God as being more real and power than Pharaoh ever could be!
  - a. Even though Moses knew that Pharaoh had wanted to kill him for his decision, Moses comes back and has a “showdown” with Pharaoh!
  - b. He stood boldly before the most powerful king in the known world and made strong demands that he knew Pharaoh would not like!
  - c. How he do this? He knew God was more powerful than Pharaoh ever could be!
  - d. Through faith he SAW God who was invisible! God was more real than Pharaoh!
- 5. Moses had what we could call “An eternal perspective” (**Heb. 11:1**)
  - a. He saw people, things, & events in their relation to the big picture – Eternity!
  - b. What was real and valuable to Moses was not what he could experience through his physical senses, but what he knew through faith!

**B. Two more cases where things were seen much differently through the eyes of faith:**

- 1. Israel focused on the spiritual instead of physical in battles with other nations (**vs. 29-30**)
  - a. This seemingly “helpless” nation of slaves were being chased by a great and likely well-trained Egyptian army → Yet they still followed God in leaving Egypt
  - b. As they went to take over Jericho (another mighty city) they did so as God commanded → Without any swords or spears!
  - c. They went & faced their opposition armed with their faith in God and spiritual might!
- 2. Rahab the harlot, though a Gentile by birth, also had faith in God’s might! (**vs. 31**)
  - a. Here she was living in one of the greatest cities protected by a huge wall, yet she had faith in God and his power! (**Joshua 2:9-13**)
  - b. She exhibited her faith by risking her life by hiding the spies from the king!
  - c. She, like Moses, forsook her earthly relationships & feared God more than the king
  - d. Because of her faith in God and willingness to risk her own life for it, she was saved and eventually became a part of the lineage of Jesus Christ!
- 3. Like Moses, the children of Israel and Rahab had a vision in which the spiritual was more real and more valuable than the physical

**C. The type of faith that pleases God values the spiritual over the physical:**

- 1. I’m reminded of how Paul gave up the physical in order to gain the spiritual (**Phil. 3:7-11**)
  - a. Like with Moses, Paul had great earthly benefits riding on his earthly relationships
  - b. He was one of the leading young men in the Pharisaical world and had a bright future in it – One day he might have even taken Gamaliel’s place!
  - c. He had a physical family among the Jewish people that he had a great loved for
  - d. Yet all of these were loss (KJV says DUNG!) → They were physical and temporary – So he gave them up for the spiritual and eternal!
- 2. Christians should be a people who put things into their real perspective – An eternal perspective (**2 Cor. 4:16-18**)
  - a. Herein lies our greatest danger! The world being visible has captured our attention and the other world being invisible is frequently not considered!
  - b. Focusing on the eternal puts the passing pleasures of sin, the trials that we face, and the suffering we may go through in its proper perspective
- 3. What is it that we value the most? What is it that is the greatest reality?
  - a. Do we value the temporary pleasures of earth more or spiritual things?
  - b. Are we so comfortable here that it becomes our home, where we want to be, or do we have a true longing for Heaven?
  - c. Do the rewards of Heaven really mean more to us than the temporary happiness that we can experience through sin?
- 4. **Illustration:** Which is bigger, the moon or stars? Depends on which you are closest to!

**II. IT IS A FAITH THAT IS SELF-SACRIFICIAL:**

**A. As the Hebrew writer closes, he writes of those who withstood the trials of faith: (vs 32-37)**

- 1. It’s interesting that the names of the majority of people in Hebrews 11 are unknown!

- a. We could spend all morning trying to establish who each of these statements is talking about, but I am afraid we'd completely miss the point!
- b. While their names are unknown the sacrifices they were willing to make because of their faith in God are known and still inspire us today!
2. Examples of people who were willing to stand faithful – Even in the face of death!
  - a. Think about Esther who, in faith, laid her life on the line for her Jewish brethren with the attitude of “If I die, I die!” (**Esther 4:16**)
  - b. The faith of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shows us the courage of faith that refuses to compromise even when facing death!
  - c. In the New Testament we read of the faith of men like Peter, John, Paul, Stephen
3. Think for a moment about the great power such faith had in their lives: (**Rev. 12:11**)
  - a. It didn't matter what someone threatened to do to them or take away from them because they were committed to being faithful to the end
  - b. Because of their commitment, their service to God meant more to them than anything else – Would be reflected in their zeal, their love, and their lives
  - c. When they developed this kind faith – Nothing could pull them away from the Lord!
4. A wonderful testimony of their faith (**Vs. 38-39**)
  - a. When God considers people whose faith means this much to them He says the world did not deserve to have such great people of faith!
  - b. Such a great statement shows that their faith overcame the world and their good testimony shows that they were pleasing unto the Lord
  - c. In a world of ungodliness, idolatry, immorality, and greed these were a people who feared God, were full of faith, courageous, and prayed often
  - d. Since the world doesn't understand their faith, they persecute them! (**1 Peter 4:4**)

**B. Could it be said of us that the world is not worthy? Do we have a self-sacrificing faith?**

1. Jesus never “sugar-coated” the fact that His disciples would have to make sacrifices for their faith and their relationship with Him (**Matthew 16:24-26**)
  - a. Some might say, “Yes, but we don't face death today for our faith!” We may not here; however, some in other countries do! What if you were there?
  - b. We need to ask ourselves – Is there anything, including my own life, that if Satan made me choose between that and my faith, I would abandon my faith?
  - c. It may be that I never have to die physically for my faith, or that I never have to give up my family for the faith, however, I must be willing to if that day comes!
2. Satan and the world tries to shift our focus using things they know we enjoy!
  - a. Ball games get scheduled during hours of worship... They know when we worship!
  - b. Business hours get extended or activities get scheduled that we know we are not supposed to participate in – But our jobs are important, right?
  - c. There is pressure with school events that would take us away from worship times and activities that Christians shouldn't engage in – Popularity on the line!
3. This kind of faith not only gives us the strength to overcome the battles that we fight from without, but also the courage to face the battles from within! (**Hebrews 12:2-4**)
  - a. It is not an easy thing to overcome our own battles: Battles with temptations, our personal trials, and even depression are serious wars that we face!
  - b. If our faith does not mean enough to us that'd we'd make sacrifices for it, then when we face personal struggles we won't give anything up to overcome them!
  - c. Sometimes struggles are only overcome by sacrificing! (**Mark 9:47**)
4. **Illustration:** As we close this point, consider the words to “Faith Of Our Fathers”

**CONCLUSION:** Hebrews 11 presents us with wonderful examples of people whose faith was pleasing to God and who, by their faith overcame the world. It's the same kind of faith each one of us needs if we are to do the same! Our faith not only believes in & seeks after God and embraces His promises as reality, but also values the eternal of the temporal and is self-sacrificial. Understanding these things... (**Hebrews 12:1-2**)