

Faith W.O.R.S.H.I.P s

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[0 : 00] Now let's turn in our Bibles to the passage of Scripture which we read in the letter to the Hebrews chapter 11 and by with God's help we'll try and concentrate while I wonder if there are a lot in the whole chapter we'll try and we'll just read again verse 1.

Hebrews chapter 11 verse 1. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. The word faith, the word faith is only twice in the whole of the Old Testament from Genesis right through to Malachi the word faith only appears twice. But if the word faith is only mentioned twice the concept, the concept of faith pervades the whole of the Old Testament. That's precisely what Hebrews 11 is about. We read it by faith able, by faith enough, by faith not, by faith Abraham, by faith Moses. It's all about how the Old

Testament Patriarchs lived by faith even though the word is only twice in the whole of the Old Testament. Now this first verse of Hebrews 11, it's not so much a definition of what faith is, it's much more a description of what faith looks like when it is at work.

When you saw Noah working by faith, building the ark by faith, what it did look like as you saw Moses do the wonders he did by faith, what it did look like when he was acting by faith. That's really what we have here. In fact, I would have entitled this message, the experiences of living by faith. And in this chapter, if this one chapter of the Bible teaches us anything, surely it teaches us that faith is not merely a one-off experience at the beginning of our Christian lives. It is actually a lifelong exercise which the Christian performs as he follows God. If this passage teaches us anything, that's what it teaches us. Now I've got several different things, a little bit of a hot spot in the way, about what faith looks like as it's at work, but I've tried to compile them all under the Nomenic, the word Worship. Faith washes. I'll take the first letter, W, faith washes. If you go right back to the beginning to Abraham when he was asked to offer up Isaac, do you remember when he went to Mount Moriah? Do you remember when he left there, he took

Isaac and him with him, and he took his sargent with him, and he took his donkey with him, and of course he took the wood, the rope, the knife. Do you remember what he said to the servant when he left them at the side of the road and says, we're going up there?

[4 : 49] What did he say? He said, then Abraham said to, sorry, I said young man, young men, to the young men, stay here with the donkey. I and the boy will go over there up the hill and worship, and worship. What was he doing with the donkey? What was he doing with the knife? Worship, God. And worship is what you and I were made for. When is a fish happiest?

When it's swimming about in the water. That's what it was made for. When is the bird happiest?

When it's flying about. That's what it was made for. Fish were made to swim. Berets were made to fly. Human beings, human beings, human beings made for what? To worship God. What a long time you and I take to learn we are our happiest when we're worshipping God. What a mess sin has made of humankind. We don't know why we were made. We don't even know that the one we were made to worship, we don't know, for sure, if he exists. What a mess sin has made of the human race. The word worship is what we were born for, as I've said. It's actually an Anglo-Saxon word, which means value. The word worship is a derivative of the word worship, but worship and ship. Worship means God is worth worshipping. What value do you put on God? Is God worth giving up something for? Worship has that connotation. We value

God. And if we're people of faith, our faith makes us worship. Remember, worship, you hear people, they go away from church and say, oh, I got nothing there. I got nothing there.

Listen, worshipping is giving something to God, not getting something from. Now, God does give us things. We do get things from God, but that's not what worship is about. Worship is about how much we value God. What do we think he's worth giving? Is he worth giving two hours a week to, four hours a week to? Is he worth giving up a night for? What value do we put on God? We were made to worship God. If we're people of faith, we worship God.

[8 : 15] First letter, W, worship. Second letter is the letter O. Faith not only worships, but faith obeys. Abraham obeyed God. Verse eight, by faith Abraham obeyed. Faith obeys. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as 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 them of the same price. Abraham believed God when he didn't know where God was taking him. How's your faith? I asked myself, how's my faith? Has God got to explain to me everything what he's doing in my life before I obey him? Abraham obeyed God when he did not know what

God was doing to him. When he said, get out from your father's house and go to the, he did nowhere, but he obeyed. What a lesson that is. God promised Abraham he'd give him a son when he was a hundred and his wife was ninety-nine. But he believed God when he didn't know how God could do it. How could God do it for my wife his past child bearing age?

But he believed what he didn't know how God did it. He obeyed when Abraham didn't know where God was taking him to. Abraham obeyed God when he didn't know, when he didn't know when the promise would be fulfilled. He could have said, okay God, I'll go, I'll take this journey into the wilderness. I just want to know how long? One year? Two years? How long Lord? Has God got to tell us? Has he got to tell you? Has he got to tell me precisely every detail before we worship him? Our Bible is teaching us tonight. Faith obeys when you don't know how, when you don't know where, when you don't know where, and you don't even know why. Abraham, so God asked Abraham to kill his son and he didn't know why. He didn't know why. Why did he take Isaac? Now isn't it interesting what verse is it? 18, 19, yeah.

By faith Abraham when he was tested offered up Isaac and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up, he's done in the very act of whom it was said through Isaac shall your offspring be named. On the last verse we read which was verse 19, he considered that God was able to raise him from the dead from which figuratively speaking he did receive him back. You see Abraham is going up that mountain with his son and he's got a massive problem. Now of course he would have the problem. Am I going to sharpen the knife? I suppose the sharper it is he would have said to himself the less pain will be in my son as I put the knife through his heart. Do I tie the rope tightly around him so he won't get round? All these questions of course we would have exercised them. But verses 17 and 18 and 19 tell us there was one thing bugging them going up that mountain. The main thing that was bugging the Muslims. How is God going to keep his promise that from Isaac there will be a nation coming out of him? He promised me that. I waited a long long time when I was a hundred to wait for my son. I got him and now he tells me to kill him.

How can God keep his promise of a whole nation coming from Isaac? When he's to die, what age was he? Forgotten? 12? 17? I can't remember. But isn't it interesting what kept him going up that mountain? He thought he solved it but he got it wrong. He said I know how to do it. Verse 19. He considered or reckoned that God was able to raise him up from the dead. Oh, he said that's how God's going to do it. I'm going to kill him. He's going to die but he'll get up from the dead. He was wrong. Now listen, sometimes when you and I try to think of how God's going to work, we get it wrong. But we must obey. Really the lesson is don't try and help God solve his problems. He's got his way. We just obey.

[14:11] Faith worships. Secondly, faith obeys. Third letter, the letter R. Faith refuses things that are perfectly legitimate in themselves. Sometimes God asks us, when God tests us, is our faith in him? Are you prepared to refuse things that in themselves are perfectly legitimate?

Verse 24. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, here's the letter, the word refused. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Now do you realize what's happening there? Do you realize what's all involved in that? He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. You see, Pharaoh, Pharaoh had no sons. He only had daughters and the daughters were childless. So who's the next Pharaoh? Who's the next Pharaoh? Moses. Moses.

What an honor. But Moses is, no, can't take it, can't accept it. Boy, I wouldn't like to have been around Pharaoh the day Moses did not take in a dad. I can't. It's not what God made me for. You know what worries me? Exercises me that if I was Moses, if I was Moses then I'd be afraid that I would say, oh Lord, how wonderful of you. You're making me the next Pharaoh. I'll pass all the laws in the land according to your commandments.

How make this nation God-fearing? I'll be the Pharaoh. Oh, wonderful God, wonderful. How God works mightily by Providence. I'm frightened. That's what I would say. That Moses is far more godly than me. He knew why God brought him into the world. It was to deliver Israel out of Egypt, not to transform Egypt, but to bring them out of Egypt. What a godly man he was. Now, there would have been nothing wrong whatsoever of Moses had become the next Pharaoh and had enacted God's laws in the land, but it wasn't what God wanted him to do. It wasn't what God raised him up for. Now, I don't know how God revealed it to him, but he revealed it to him that he was raised up to deliver. Well, what do

I mean? I don't know. God told him at the bush to deliver them out of Egypt, not to transform the nation. Faith sometimes has to say no to what in itself is perfectly legitimate.

[17 : 56] How's your faith? How's your faith doing? This is really challenging stuff. Isn't it wonderful that when we fail tests, God doesn't throw us on the ash heap. He still loves us and he still forgives us. He tests us and we fail some tests. We fail some tests, but he still loves us. He never gives us up. He never casts us off. What a wonderful God the Christian God is. Faith worships. Faith obeys. Third letter R refuses. Faith refuses. Fourth letter, the letter S. Faith suffers. Verses 35 and 37. They were stoned. They were sawn in two, by the way. Who was sawn in two? It's not recorded in scripture, but according to secularism, it has a reference to Isaiah. Apparently, they cut a hollow in a tree and put Isaiah in that hollow tree trunk and sawed right through it. Isaiah. They were stoned.

They were sawn in two. They were killed with a sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated, from 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. I've read 37 to 39. It's dead 35 to 37. 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. Some were tortured, not accepting release or deliverance, whatever you want to call it. They were tortured. The torture could have stopped if they would just say, okay, I'll stop worshipping God, but they suffered it.

God sometimes asks us to do that, to suffer for our faith. I have been truly humbled and massacred by getting an email on one occasion from the Suffering Church. And in the email, they said, please tell your congregation not to pray for our release or deliverance. Instead, ask them to pray that we will remain faithful to Christ. That humbled me so much. That humbled me so much, challenged me so much. What would I really, if I had a sufferer pain for my Christianity, would I not ask you to pray that this will stop? And an email, tell them to pray we'll be faithful. Do they love Christ? Do they love Christ? Oh, they do.

How it puts them to shame. And you might ask, well, why so much suffering? You know, it's an amazing study. In the Bible, so often, so often in the Bible, you have suffering and glory together. Do you know why God puts some people through so much suffering? Some Christians through so much suffering because he's got so much glory waiting for them. God works through suffering. And do you know this? I always remember hearing it as a young Christian.

Be very, very careful before you ask God to increase your faith. Why? Because faith is increased by suffering for him. It's all in the Bible. W-O-R-S-H. Holiness, if you've got faith, you're holy. Heavenly. By faith, Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the Sandals' Fathers, or choosing, choosing the choice, he chose rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. And he considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt. See the coffers of Egypt? They could all have been Moses. They could all have been Moses. But he chose, he chose to suffer reproach for the name of Christ. Isn't that something? He considered the reproach of Christ. Moses, you see, even then, even away then, even then, they could see God, see Christ. That's amazing.

[24 : 32] He chose rather to be mistreated rather than enjoy a night out with the boys. Holiness, righteousness, godliness, living by faith. And we might rightly ask, look, how did he manage to do that? Well, I think the answer is really in verse 27. By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king. How angry Pharaoh must have been when Moses said not taking it. I know you brought me up. I know you've been good, but I'm not taking the throne. That must have hurt Pharaoh. Must have been angry. But our Bible tells us he was not being afraid of the anger of the king for because he endured as seen him who is invisible. Isn't that something? Isn't that something? Seen him who is invisible. Man.

What kind of language have we got? Seen him who's invisible. Can you see God? Can you see Christ? Can you see Jesus on the throne? This morning we read the whole chapter of Romans in verse 20. It said, Romans 1 verse 20, God's invisible attributes, his invisible attributes are clearly seen. What do you make of that? Invisible attributes, clearly seen, are clearly perceived. That's God. But can you see it? That's faith. Faith sees the invisible. That's what kept him going. That's how he endured. That's how he could stand before Pharaoh and say, sorry, not taking the throne. He saw him who's invisible. He saw another person sitting on another throne. He saw Christ. He saw Christ. He considered or approached for Christ as greater wealth than the coffers in Egypt. Wonderful, isn't it? Glorious.

See the problem with us today, we want our heaven here. Now, we've got to learn to wait.

Wait. It's natural to want our heaven now, but we have to wait for heaven later. Oh, heaven will be far, far better, far, far more glorious than you can imagine. But you have to wait for it. You have to wait for it down here. That kit Moses going, that kit Noah going, that kit Abraham going, that kit Abel going. Faith worships, faith obeys, faith refuses, faith suffers, faith heavenly holiness, faith imitates, let that I imitates. Subconsciously, subconsciously we copy those we admire. We do it subconsciously. Now, realising that I remember there was a student amongst us and it was as clear as the sun in the noondays sky that this student was Mivikin, one of the popular ministers in the denomination.

Ruchelt came one time. The subject came up and he spoke about it. He said, isn't it terrible? It's awful people doing that. Fancy imitating someone like that. Ruchelt, that was our duty to say, hey, wait a minute. We all agree. We never, we also have ever met and spoken about it. You will imitate us also. And he was absolutely amazed. Absolutely amazed. He did not believe us. He thought we'd all turned against him. He didn't believe he was imitating somebody. It's a natural thing. We mimic those we admire. Well, Abraham and Moses saw Christ's day and mimicked him. They imitated him without realising it. Acts 11, 26, a wonderful verse, I think. One of my favourite verses. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. I think that's an amazing verse. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Two things amazed me about that. First of all, far as I know,

[29 : 57] Christ was never in Antioch. Not I know of. And secondly, it was ten years after his death before disciples were called Christians. Ten years afterwards. That they could identify their behaviour with this man Christ that lived ten years ago and was crucified ten years ago. They imitated him. They had the same principles, the same policies, the same lifestyle. I suppose they called it the same hang-ups. The same hang-ups. Faith subconsciously imitates. We imitate those we love, those we admire, those we are following. Don't we say, you are what you eat. You are what you read. You are who you listen to. Don't we say that? You become like what you worship. What are you eating? What are you reading?

What are you listening to? Who are you following? Who are you worshipping? It comes out. The disciples first called Christians in Antioch. It was the world they gave him the title.

It wasn't other Christians. It was the world they gave him that title. They saw the similarity. Last letter, the letter P. Faith perseveres. Verse 27, 2737, by faith he left Egypt not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured. Faith endures. Faith perseveres.

As Jesus himself said, he that perseveres to the end shall be saved. Now, I think this is quite an important thing because I used to think, and I really ought not to project my feelings onto you, but I used to think, if I've got true faith and I see a problem coming, all I've got to do if I've got true faith, all I've got to do is pray hard and if I pray properly and hard enough, the problem will go away. Is that what Hebrews 11 teaches us? It teaches us the very opposite. True we read, by faith some escaped the edge of the sword. It does say that, but two verses further on it says, by faith some were slain by the sword. Their prayer was unanswered, but they still remain faithful. I'm following

Christ. I'm doing what's right. That's faith. Faith perseveres. Faith is not for dodging problems. God in his mercy might grant deliverance from time to time, but we're taught in Hebrews 11, faith for his enduring problems, going through problems so that in the midst of the problem, you say, even though I'm suffering this, I am following Christ. I love Christ.

[33 : 36] I'm going to continue by him. Faith worships. Just two things in conclusion. The life of faith, obviously, is not always easy. We've got to learn that. Who said faith is easy?

Christ didn't. He said, in this world you'll have problems. In this world it will be hard. In this world you'll have tribulations. That will be of good cheer. I've overcome the problem. The life of faith is not easy, but listen. The life of faith is always, always well worth it. Okay? Last word to any that may be here is not a Christian. If you're here tonight and you are not a Christian, your faith is not in Jesus. Will you be very, very careful to not make the same mistake as the Egyptians did in verse 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. You see, maybe you're here and you say, oh, I'm not a Christian, but I'll just copy the Christians. I'll just do exactly what they're doing. Why did the

Egyptians drown and the Israelites didn't? Well, the verse tells you that Israelites did it by faith. The Egyptians just went through the motions. My friend, you can't go through the motions. You must have faith in Christ. You must trust Him. You must believe Him.

You copy a Christian. Give your life to Christ. Confess your sins to Jesus. Depend upon Him. Take Him at His word and trust Him. And by faith in Him, it might be said of you, what was said here of these patriarchs, who lived by faith in the invisible Christ. May God, the Holy Spirit, make His word effectual to every one of us. Let's just bow our heads.

Our Father, we just pray that you would take the things of Christ and make them ours tonight, here in this place. Be still upon us this faith, which saves the soul. Keep us in your love. Keep us in your fear. Wash all our sins away, for we pray only and all. In the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

[37 : 13] We'll conclude our service of worship by singing from Psalm 18 on page 221. That's the Psalter, page 221. Psalm 18 verses 31 to 36. Who but the Lord is God. By He who is a rock and stay, it is God that girdeth me with strength and perfect makes my way down to verse 36.

And in my way, my steps now hast enlarged under me, but I go safely, and my feet are kept from sliding free. Psalm 18 verses 31 to 36.

Who but the Lord is God but He who is a rock and stay, it is God that girdeth me with strength and perfect makes my way. He makes my feet with dust behind, set me on my high visit. Mine hath to warrant all my art. Break those all still in pieces. The shield of my soul. The vision of me is so. Thy right hand tell me of a day. Thy kindness made me grow.

And in my way, my steps now hast enlarged under me, but I go safely, and my feet are kept from sliding free. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.