WALKING ON WATER
BIBLE CHURCH

FAITH THAT ENDURES

BIBLE STUDY

Hebrews 11:31–40

Pastor Mike Holloway



Hebrews 11:31-40

- 31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.
- 32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:
- 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Hebrews 11:31-40

- 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.
- 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.
- 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

Hebrews 11:31-40

- 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—
- 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.
- 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,
- 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Rahab receives the spies

Hebrews 11:31 • Joshua 2:1–14

> “By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.”

- Rahab sheltered the spies and sent them away safely.
- Her reception of the spies put her allegiance to Israel’s God into action.

Rahab believed what she heard

Joshua 2:8–11

- Jericho had heard of the Red Sea crossing and Israel’s victories east of the Jordan.
- Rahab confessed that the LORD is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.
- The city shared the news and the fear. Rahab responded by placing herself and her household under the spies’ pledge.

Rahab’s faith became visible

Joshua 2:17–21 • 6:22–25 • James 2:25

- Rahab tied the scarlet cord in the window, as the spies instructed.

- When Jericho fell, the spies brought Rahab and her household out safely.

- James points to how she received and sent out the messengers. Her actions showed the faith Hebrews commends.

The list opens up

Hebrews 11:32

> “And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell…”

- Hebrews moves from individual stories to a sweeping list of names and deeds.
- The examples span Israel’s judges, kings, and prophets.

Gideon and Barak

Hebrews 11:32 • Judges 4:4–16 • 7:2–22

- God reduced Gideon’s army to 300 so Israel would give God credit for the victory over Midian.
- Barak went with Deborah and led Israel against Sisera, whose army had 900 iron chariots.
- Both needed courage to act on God’s word when the odds looked unfavorable.

Samson and Jephthah

Hebrews 11:32 • Judges 11:29–35 • 16:23–30

- Samson prayed for strength one last time as the Philistines celebrated their victory over him.
- The Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah before he fought the Ammonites.
- Hebrews names Jephthah among the faithful. Judges also records the grief that followed his rash vow.

David, Samuel, and the prophets

Hebrews 11:32 • 1 Samuel 7:7–13 • 17:41–50

- David faced Goliath trusting that the battle belonged to the LORD.

- Samuel prayed for Israel, and the LORD thundered against the Philistines.

- The prophets spoke God’s word across generations, sometimes at great personal cost.

Kingdoms, righteousness, promises

Hebrews 11:33 • 2 Samuel 7:8–16 • 8:14–15

- David’s reign illustrates victory over hostile kingdoms and the work of administering justice.
- God’s promise concerning David’s house illustrates a promise given in history with fulfillment extending beyond David’s lifetime.
- Verse 33 recognizes concrete acts of God that the faithful experienced in their own time.

God shuts the lions’ mouths

Hebrews 11:33 • Daniel 6:10–23

- Daniel continued praying after the decree forbade petitions to anyone besides the king.
- God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths.
- Daniel had already decided to remain faithful before he knew how God would answer.

God restrains the fire

Hebrews 11:34 • Daniel 3:16–27

- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego trusted that God was able to deliver them.
- They declared they would refuse idol worship even if deliverance did not come.
- God preserved them in the furnace after they took their stand.

Strength in weakness

Hebrews 11:34 • Judges 7:15–22 • 1 Kings 19:1–8

- Hebrews describes people escaping the sword, gaining strength, and routing foreign armies.
- Gideon’s small force illustrates victory granted through human weakness.
- Elijah’s flight from Jezebel illustrates escape and God’s provision for a weary servant.

Women receive their dead

Hebrews 11:35a • 1 Kings 17:17–24 • 2 Kings 4:18–37

- Through Elijah, the widow of Zarephath received her son alive again.
- Through Elisha, the Shunammite woman received her son alive again.
- Both sons returned to ordinary earthly life. The second half of the verse points to a better resurrection.

Others refused release

Hebrews 11:35b

> “Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.”

- The word “others” brings suffering believers into the same account of faith as those who escaped.
- They held to resurrection hope when release would have come at the cost of faithfulness.

A better resurrection

Hebrews 11:35 • 1 Corinthians 15:42–44

- The sons restored through Elijah and Elisha returned to mortal life.

- The resurrection believers await brings life that is imperishable.

- The hope of lasting life with God gave these sufferers courage to face death.

Mocked, beaten, and imprisoned

Hebrews 11:36 • Jeremiah 20:1–2 • 37:11–16

- Hebrews records mockery, scourging, chains, and imprisonment among the trials of the faithful.
- Jeremiah was struck and put in stocks after speaking God’s word. Later he was beaten and imprisoned.
- God’s approval of His servants stands even when public authorities condemn them.

Some died for their faith

Hebrews 11:37 • 2 Chronicles 24:20–22 • Jeremiah 26:20–23

- Zechariah son of Jehoiada was stoned after confronting the people’s disobedience.
- Urijah was brought back from Egypt and killed by the sword for his prophetic witness.
- Hebrews mentions being sawn in two and leaves the victim unnamed.

Life on the margins

Hebrews 11:37–38 • 1 Kings 18:4

- Some lived in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated.
- They wandered in deserts and mountains and took refuge in dens and caves.
- Obadiah’s sheltering of prophets in caves gives a biblical picture of such displacement.

The world was unworthy of them

Hebrews 11:38

> “Of whom the world was not worthy.”

- Those who appeared disposable to society were people God regarded as worthy of honor.
- This verdict teaches the church to honor faithful people whose suffering the world overlooks.

One testimony, different outcomes

Hebrews 11:34, 37, 39

- Some escaped the edge of the sword. Others were slain by the sword.

- Verse 39 gathers both groups into one commendation. They obtained a good testimony through faith.
- We can pray for God to deliver us while trusting Him with the outcome.

Promises and the promise

Hebrews 11:33, 39 • 11:13–16

- Verse 33 says some obtained promises. Verse 39 says all these did not receive “the promise.”
- God fulfilled particular promises in their lifetimes. They still awaited the fulfillment God had prepared for His people.
- The chapter points toward a heavenly homeland and a better resurrection.

God provided something better

Hebrews 11:40 • 10:14 • 12:1–2

- God planned for earlier believers and for us to share in the fulfillment of His saving purpose.
- Hebrews grounds our access to God in Christ’s sacrifice and calls us to look to Jesus as we run with endurance.
- God’s people across generations share one hope in the work of Christ.

Discussion and application

Hebrews 11:31–39

- What did Rahab do that showed whom she trusted?
- How does reading verses 34 and 37 together shape what we say to someone whose prayers for relief remain unanswered?
- Where is God calling you to obey Him before you know the outcome?