

Session 3: Enduring Faith of God's People

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 31 August 2025

Preacher: Kyle Essary

[0 : 00] In the previous two sessions, we have talked about the definition of faith. That's what we talked about last night, in which we said that God-given assurance of unseen realities and never even see the fulfillment of those promises.

Tonight, we're particularly going to look at the faith of Moses, and then we'll look at the faith of others, in what I would say is this section on the faith of Israel.

Now, in the 14th printing of his wildly popular book, get this, 14th printing of his wildly popular book, the so-called pastor from my home state of Texas, Kenneth Hagen, says this, God is glorified through healing and deliverance, not through sickness or suffering.

At another time, he says, Nothing is left out of the redemptive work of Christ, not a headache, not a stomach ache, not any kind of cancer, nor any kind of heart trouble.

Joseph Prince agrees. Joseph Prince says, At the cross, God also took all of our sicknesses and diseases and suffering and put them on Jesus' originally perfect and healthy body, so that we can walk in divine health.

[2 : 04] There are many such statements that we might find, from various American, Singaporean, and even Malaysian pastors. You can probably think of some without me even naming them or quoting anymore.

But it's hard to find such statements like this that would fit with a passage like what we have read this evening. In this passage, God's people are rejected by the world.

They're flogged. They're chained. They're imprisoned. They're stoned. They're sawn in two. They're killed by the sword. They are destitute, afflicted, mistreated, wandering, going about in deserts and mountains and caves and holes.

It's hard to make that match with the things that we often hear preached about. You see, in this evening's message, we will see that faith may not lead to celebrity, success, or prosperity.

Instead, faith gives us the assurance that it is necessary to face immense trials and to choose God's delight over our own pleasure.

[3 : 27] The author shows us this through his discussion of the faith of Israel. Now, our passage, if you look at it in your Bible, it has three distinct sections.

In verses 23 through to verse 28, the focus is on the faith of Moses.

Moses can endure trials because he hopes for more than the riches of Egypt. In verses 29 through to 38, we see the enduring faith of God's people.

The author emphasizes the great trials that are faced by God's people, but how they persevered in their faith. And then finally, in the final two verses, verses 39 and 40, we see how Israel's faith relates to our faith.

We will consider how Israel's faith looked forward to God's fulfillment of his promises and how our faith both looks back to what Christ has accomplished so that we can look forward with confidence.

[4 : 42] So let's consider the first of these three sections where we see the faith of Moses. Let me read that section again to us, verses 23 through to 28.

You can read along with me. By faith, Moses was hidden by his parents for three months after his birth because they saw that the child was beautiful and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

By faith, Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

He considered abuse suffered for Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of heaven, for he was looking ahead to the reward. By faith, he left Egypt unafraid of the king's anger, for he persevered as though he saw him who is invisible.

By faith, he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

[6 : 02] We see here that faith led Moses to choose God's reward over Egyptian comforts.

Moses chose his own heritage over his Egyptian family, choosing to suffer alongside the Israelites and rejecting the riches of Egypt for hope in Christ's reward.

What we see here is that Moses renounced fear and privilege so that he might hope in God's promises.

Now, if you look in your Bibles, you see that there are three acts of faith that are mentioned in association with Moses and one act of faith from his parents.

His parents disobeyed the king's edict in order to save their son. Such an action threatened their own lives had they been caught.

[7 : 05] If they were caught, not only would Moses be killed, but they would be killed as well. Yet they saved their child, and the passage says this was done by faith.

What would it take for you to disobey the law in order to save someone? Would you disobey to save someone's physical life?

Would you disobey to share the gospel with someone and potentially save their spiritual life? You see, Moses' parents set an example of faithful disobedience that places the authority of God above the authority of an immensely powerful human ruler in the Pharaoh.

And then the passage continues, and it notes three actions by Moses that are done in faith. First, he aligned himself with the Israelites instead of the Egyptians, enduring as he left Egypt and keeping the Passover.

In each of these examples, Moses placed his hope in Israel's God. Consider the first example. Moses refused his royal titles.

[8 : 36] Moses refused his royal titles. He could have used that privilege in various ways. But instead, he chose mistreatment alongside his people.

What's fascinating is that the author of Hebrews tells us this. The author of Hebrews says that he chose Christ over Egyptian wealth.

How did Moses know about Christ? Right? Isn't that the question? How does he know who the Messiah is?

Now, we can only speculate that he learned through God's people and their hope in the Messiah. I'm assuming Pharaoh's daughter wasn't giving him lessons in the Torah, right?

But maybe his own family, who did help to raise him for the Pharaoh's daughter, would teach him these things. And so it says that he placed his hope in Christ instead of in the Egyptian Pharaoh.

[9 : 45] Consider the second example. It says that he endured the anger of this same Pharaoh because he followed the invisible God.

Now, the Egyptians could all point to their statues of Osiris, Ra, Horus, and the rest. But the Israelites had no statues.

They had no idols that they could point to because they believe that God is a spirit and does not have a body like men. Yet, despite not having any visible form to follow, Moses led God's people to follow the invisible God who provided their passage out of Egypt.

What would have happened if Moses were caught? If caught, Moses would have been put to death. Even though he comes from the royal family, he would have been killed.

But he hoped in God to save him and to help him endure. Finally, consider the third example. Moses kept the Passover.

[11 : 00] He performed the rituals that God had given so that his family would be spared from God's wrath. Moses led the people in this ritual as we read.

They slaughtered a lamb. They spread its blood around the doorposts of their houses. They ate the lamb together as a family, and they waited.

Their faith was rewarded as God brought his wrath upon the firstborn children across the land of Egypt. Whether Egyptian, Israelite, or from somewhere else, God killed the firstborn child of any family who did not keep this ritual.

But Moses had faith, and he led the Israelites in keeping this ritual. You see, Moses hoped and put his faith in the God of his ancestors.

Now, there are many other passages throughout the scripture that reinforce the truths that we see in this passage. Whenever you ask parents what they hope for for their children, quite a few will

say, I hope that my child gets into a top university.

[12:24] I hope that they get a good job. I hope that they make lots of money. But consider how Moses set aside such desires for the reward of faith.

Consider what the New Testament says about such truths. I'm reminded of a passage like 1 John 2, verses 15 through to 17, where the apostle John says, do not love the world or the things of the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires. But whoever does the will of God abides forever. The same teaching is found in the apostle Paul, who says in Philippians 3, verses 7 and 8, but whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ.

[13:57] The consistent teaching of the Bible is that in Christ, we can find greater reward than anything else that the world has to offer.

And that pursuing Christ is worth any trials or suffering that we might face in the process. Because the things of this world will come to an end. But Christ will always satisfy us. So what might this look like today?

Let me give two pretty simple day-to-day examples. First, a simple example would be something like this. Consider a student. Let's call him Dylan.

Are there any Dylans in the room? I'm not talking about you. Okay? He's trying to finish his assignments. His parents place a lot of pressure on him to only get full marks.

[15:00] His parents expect him to take only the most challenging courses because this will help ensure him placement into a top university.

Feeling the pressure to succeed and get things done, Dylan opens up ChatGPT on his phone. And he thinks, should I just have the chatbot do my assignment?

It would do it all right, you know? However, he reflects on the various ways that such an action would sin against God.

Such an action would sin against his parents, his school, and himself because he would be lying and deceiving. It would claim that someone or something else's work is his own.

It would claim that he had done something which he had not done. As such, he decides to study hard and take whatever marks he gets, even if he doesn't live up to his parents' expectations, because he considers the reward of Christ greater than his parents' commendation.

[16:18] Consider another example. Julie. Do we have any Julies? I'm not talking about you. Maybe I am. I don't know. Julie reads her Bible every morning before starting her tasks at work.

She gets to the office early so that she has a few minutes to read a chapter and spend some time praying as she starts her work day. Her friend, who did not grow up in a Christian family, begins to ask her questions about what she's doing, what she's reading.

Julie wants to tell her friend, but she also knows that her friend's family, society, and maybe even the government wouldn't approve of her friend learning what the Bible says.

Julie considers how her silence would be a sin, even if the situation is quite sensitive. After all, God placed her there in this workplace to make disciples of all nations.

And this includes her good friends from different backgrounds than hers. So Julie decides to wisely talk to her friend, tell her what she's reading, share the gospel story, and even commit to praying for her daily.

[17:48] Why? Because she considers the reward of Christ greater than what her friend's family, society, or maybe even her government might say or do.

These are simple examples, but we have such examples every day where we must decide in this moment, will I choose the reward of Christ, or will I give in to some sin or temptation?

We see in the example of Moses that he chose Christ even above the comforts of Egypt, even above the possible reproach and dangers of Egypt, in every situation he chose Christ.

Christ. And this faith, the type of faith that we see in Moses, is the type of faith that can endure great trials.

And that's what we see in the next section of our passage, where we see the enduring faith of God's people. Let me read that to us again to remind us, verses 29 through to 38.

[19 : 06] Beginning in verse 29. By faith, the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land. But when the Egyptians attempted to do so, they were drowned.

By faith, the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith, Rahab, the prostitute, did not perish with those who were disobedient because she had received the spies in peace.

And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release in order to obtain a better resurrection.

Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death. They were sawn in two. They were killed by the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy.

[20 : 37] They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and in holes in the ground. We see here the enduring faith of God's people.

We see that faith sustained God's people in the midst of immense suffering. suffering. Notice how these stories begin at the Red Sea and they continue throughout the history of Israel up until possibly even just before the time of Christ.

Some of the final examples are stories that are known from events that happened between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In other words, this is a story of faith from the Red Sea all the way up until the author's own day. It's worth noting that these stories emphasize God's actions and not the moral character of the individuals named.

[21 : 41] I mean, who would point to Samson or to Jephthah as a moral exemplar? I hope you would not. If you do, go back and read those stories again.

There might be some more there that you missed out on before. Who would point to inconsistent stories such as Gideon, Barak, or even David? However, what's important is not the moral example of their entire lives, but specific situations when by faith God did amazing things through them so that they might endure.

Throughout their stories, we see that God saves his people through their suffering. In some of these stories, God's people are saved physically.

Some were saved from lions, verse 33, escaped the sword, verse 34, or even raised from the dead, God. Verse 35, but this was not the case for many.

Others were imprisoned, tortured, stoned, or slaughtered, even sawn in half. These were saved in a different way. They were saved from their suffering to enter an eternal reward with God.

[23 : 04] Verse 35 states this very well when it says, some were tortured, refusing to accept release so that they might rise again to a better life.

That better life fits our previous discussion of the greater reward that is found in Christ. Their faith endured immense suffering.

It endured even death itself, having assurance and conviction in a yet unseen resurrection at the day of the Lord.

Whether in life or in death, God's people will be saved. Because we believe in a greater salvation than even physical safety, security, or restoration.

Because we believe that we suffer in hope of a greater glory. consider the teaching of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4, verses 16 and 18.

[24 : 12] He says this, we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

For this light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to things that are seen, but to things that are unseen.

For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. Paul's comments go well with what we've seen in Hebrews 11.

Later, in chapter 11 of 2 Corinthians, Paul will describe the sufferings of this light, momentary affliction, which include beatings, shipwrecks, and even being stoned.

However, even these trials compare little to the amazing glory to be revealed in Christ. As with the other individuals in our passage, Christians are encouraged by Paul to focus on the unseen, the eternal realities that are often obscured by the transient things that we see so clearly.

[25 : 39] Brothers and sisters, enduring suffering in hope of a greater glory is the story of Christian history.

If we move on beyond the New Testament and we look at stories of the early church, we would tell stories of Polycarp or Ignatius of Antioch, of Perpetua and Felicity.

We might remember medieval people who suffered for the Lord like Maximus, the Confessor, or Thomas Beckett. For those of us who come from the Reformed tradition, we would certainly remember Jan Hus and William Tyndale who suffered for the Reformation and for the spread of the Scriptures.

In recent days, we would remember names such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, of Jim Elliot and his companions, or of, just a few years ago, the 20 beheaded Egyptian Christians who refused to renounce Christ and shouted, yes, Lord Jesus, as their heads were taken from them.

You see, faith gives us the assurance necessary to face immense trials and choose God's delight, Christ's reward, over our own pleasure.

[27 : 10] And so finally, in the third and last section of our passage this evening, we see Israel's faith and how it relates to our faith.

Let me read those final two verses of chapter 11. Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

Israel looked forward to a heavenly city, but we draw near in Christ.

What does the author of Hebrews mean in these two verses? It took me a bit of trying to read through this and research it to figure it out. How does their faith await us for the completion of their faith?

Well, first, I would say that we see that the Lord commended their imperfect faith. Verse 39 sums up the previous chapter.

[28 : 21] All these individuals and groups who acted in faith, whom we've been reading about today, they received God's commendation, but they did not receive what was promised.

So the question is, what promise did they have in mind? Right? Because it said, just a few verses earlier, that some of them did receive promises.

I think this is looking back to verse 13. If you look up to verse 13, it says, these all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth, end quote.

They were strangers and exiles who could only see the promised city from afar. But in Christ, believers can now draw near.

Flip back in your Bible to chapter 10, and look at verse 22 and 23 of chapter 10. It says, since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

[29 : 54] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. Because of Jesus, who serves as our great high priest, we are no longer seeing things from afar.

We are no longer seeing things with a long distant hope. Instead, through Christ, we can draw near.

In chapter 12, he'll speak about the promised city. And he'll say, but you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Notice we have the blood of Abel mentioned again. And so what we have here is what literary people call an inclusio, where you have one phrase that is mentioned here and then a section and then another phrase that's mentioned to close it off.

And so with these two mentions of the blood of Abel, in the middle, we see faith in this hope of a promised city, a heavenly city, the new Jerusalem where we will spend eternity.

[31 : 28] And so Hebrews 11, I'm sorry, Hebrews 13, verse 14, says this, for here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

in Christ, we have access to that promised city, a city longed for by the patriarchs, as we read about with Abraham, that was looked forward to as the reward by the Israelite faithful, but a city that is found in Christ alone.

This explains, I believe, why in our passage, verse 40 says that God has provided something better for us that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

If you will, think in your mind about a building project. The faith of the ancestors laid the foundation, but apart from Christ, the cornerstone, their faith cannot reach its completion.

Furthermore, we are built upon the foundation of the prophets and the apostles, so that together we might form a unified people of God across the ages.

[32 : 58] From the faithful hope of those in the Old Testament to our confidence today in the finished work of Christ, we together can look forward to that heavenly city when the saints of all ages will be united in Christ.

And so I think that's what's going on in verses 39 and 40. So we've seen through this evening's passage that faith gives us assurance necessary for us to face immense trials and to choose God's delight over our own pleasure.

We have seen how the saints of old endured immense suffering and even faced death in the hope of the reward that only Christ can give. They suffered in their lifetime so that they might hope in glory at the resurrection.

Moses chose suffering over the riches of Egypt. God's people chose torture over their own release. Prosperity preachers may promise our best life now but the Bible promises endurance through Christ now for a glory in Christ at his return.

So let me ask you this evening as you think about the immense faith that we see in this chapter what trials would you endure to move forward in faith?

[34 : 41] I know I've already heard some stories the last few days. I know that if we were to sit around in small groups around this room we would be able to share quite a few stories of how we have seen the sustaining power of faith help us to endure some of the most challenging times.

I could share stories of a near-death accident that I was in where I spent a few months in the hospital I literally spent months in a wheelchair months using a walker and almost a year and a half on crutches after that and how God's faith in the Lord and honestly the faith of my family and friends brought me through that.

I could share about how my mentor in ministry got caught up in sin committed suicide and the pain that it brought but how our faith in the Lord and our hope in a greater resurrection helped us to endure through that and I know that many of you could share stories that are similar so let us continue to press forward in faith looking beyond the sufferings that we face now and the sacrifices that we have to make now and looking forward to the return of Christ when he will make all things right and our faith will become sight let's pray father God oh how we long for that day even tonight as we think about it my heart is just drawn to you yearning for hoping in that day of your return father whether we see that in our lifetimes or whether we endure various trials and suffering and even die in hope of that of that resurrection we pray that we will be people of faith who will endure we thank you for the faith that you give us the gift of faith that you have placed into our hearts so that we can draw near to you we thank you for the examples that you have given us in the passage tonight of people who set aside worldly comforts and power and power and titles for the sake of knowing you those who endured great suffering so that they might hope in the greater glory revealed at the day of the

Lord and so as many would look to the day of the Lord as a day of judgment fearfully a day of your wrath we look to it with hope knowing that because of Christ we have been preserved from God's wrath so that we might have an eternity with you a joyful eternity free of all suffering and pain and trial with you forever in Jesus name we pray amen