

Maybe its just me but when I read a story or hear about a person that stepped out in a moment and did something really amazing, I always wonder if I would have the same courage or boldness or what ever attribute was shown, I wonder if I would have the same reaction. We have all read those accounts of just a normal everyday person that reacted in a abnormal way, lifted a car or ran into a burning building to save a child, or had a moment of blind action to the benefit of others. Those reports are inspiring to hear and they should make us take a look at ourselves and evaluate what we would do if we were placed in that same situation.

Would I Step out? Would I look away? Would I expect someone else to do the job? Or would I actually rise to the occasion regardless of the danger? Success in those moments seems to be the defining factor doesn't it? If I knew I wouldn't get hurt or fail and the person or group would be saved then yes, I'm all for it but if there is a chance, and it could be a really tiny chance, but as long as there is a chance that I could fail, then I begin to rethink the entire process. Can I just tell ya that In those moments, if the outcome or success vs failure is the deciding factor, you will rarely get the chance to step out in the moment because they are gone very quickly, we delay and simply miss the chance . A call to immediate action is needed, not after we have decided or reasoned through possible best case/worst case scenarios.

1 Cor 13:13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. I think at times we forget the heart behind this powerful vs. Love is the goal, Loving God and loving others, being like Jesus, showing Christ to the world, sharing Gods love, all of these things should be in place but the faith to actually do those things can be very elusive and difficult to raise in our lives in those moments where its needed the most.

In Hebrews 11, the great “hall of faith” as its called, we see the outcome of not only lives lived with love for God and hope in His power but also the faith to do something about it, faith to further the kingdom, faith to represent God and faith to stand firm in the face of the enemy. We're gonna spend some time in this chapter and check out the highlight reel to build a foundation to move us forward in what God has called each and every one of us to do.

Heb 11:1-3 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. Right off the bat its important to define what kind of faith we are talking about. Its not some weak ideology that is based on a shaky ground of maybe's and what if's, this faith is much more of a solid place to stand in our love for God.

The word substance here is defined with words such as supportive, assurance, confidence, in other words, its not thin and flimsy, faith is solid and real and the understanding of that is the first step in a life lived for God.

You can read them for yourself later but for now let me sum up the first 29 vs for ya..*Abel offered a proper sacrifice, Enoch was taken up , Noah moved when he was told to, Abraham obeyed when he was called out, Sarah received strength to bear a promise* all this faith and then in vs 13 we see the fruit... ***vs 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. They all died without receiving the fullness of the promise (Jesus), the incredible thing to note is that they all had the same choice you and I have, Notice there in vs 15, God didn't put a gun to their heads and make them do these things, they could have bounced and just went home but they didn't. Their faith in God kept them steadfast in the hope of heaven and look at the outcome,,what a powerful vs..Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God..***

I hope that someday that is the testimony our all of our lives, maybe winning a few here and there but how much more do we want to be pleasing to God..that God himself would be proud of us and how we stood firm..(Neh 8:10) That is an amazing testimony and we should always be looking how we can leave that kind of a mark.

Heb 11:17-29 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.

These portion of scripture paints for us a picture of faithful lives, impacting the next generation by Teaching that God is real, showing that He is love and believing that He is preparing a place of rest. Making sure that they were not the last of the faithful, planting seeds of hope that carries on, right up into the seats we sit at today. Faith in action.

That's the kind of faith were talking about here. A faith that just doesn't keep everything in state of thought process and evaluation but rather a faith that moves and works. .. I know that there is a fine line.. action doesn't mean your right with God. Movements do not prove that you are believer. Trying to work out your belief by your own talents is futile, God has done a great work and we cant add a thing to it. But that's not an excuse to just simply love God, hope in heaven but never do anything. Its an age old debate in the church,,we know we should be doing something, but we also know we really don't have to do anything, It is finished Consequently, some do way to much and others don't seem to move at all. Both sides have a solid foundation..God will love you either way movement or not..truth.. but..*James 2:18-26 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

Notice there an important point..faith without works is dead, not your salvation, not Gods love for you or His blessings toward you. Your confession of sin and belief in Jesus are solid and unable to be taken from you..*John 10:27-29 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.* In Christ you are secure and safe, trying to learn and follow what He has commanded us keep you in the mind of Christ. Loving God with all your heart soul and mind..This is the big one.. The GOAT..its the goal and the end game in the life of every believer. Love God, fully..without doubt or fear, with every thing we have and yes, that is a valid and solid life but lets not forget the second which is Just like it,second but the same.. Love others. **(Phelps)** So close that they look like a tie. To Love others is a command of action. First comes the Faith that God loves and then simply responding to the call of the second but equal command, to love others, and the puzzle pieces will fall right in place for you.

Yes there are a lot of people out there who are trying to earn their way into heaven. You have to do this or you cant do that and unfortunately that has found a home in the church and that's very sad to say the least. On the other side of this equation sits an equally damaging point of view. I believe, God knows my heart, I really don't need to follow every command, I don't need to serve or even go to church.. Me and God are good..nope.. survey says..wrong.

Somewhere between these two viewpoints lie the balance and that's all we should be looking for in our lives.

Not earning our way in but also not just sitting and letting the lost and dying world slip away from us. Stepping out and letting God work throughout our entire lives will produce fruit. Faith can give your great conversations, can put you in the right place and the right time. Faith can give you insight into where to serve and when to go. Faith in action guides our daily lives for sure but lets not forget, that same faith can accomplish things in and through us that can only be attributed to God. Results so far beyond our abilities there is no doubt what so ever that God showed up...*Heb 11:30-38*
By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. 31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

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, 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. 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.

This is a powerful history lesson concerning faith, however, in this section of scripture there are two very different accounts of that faith..the faith we like..conquering, surviving lions, escaping, valiant battles and so on.. That type of faith moves us into action Karate Kid style..but then you get to the second half of vs 35.

There is another result of Godly faith, torture, mocking, jail time..stoned to death, sawn in two? Destitute, afflicted, tormented.. not a lot of encouragement here. Sign me up!!

The invincible Christian that I used to be has sadly given way to the Christian that does not want to be uncomfortable in the least not to mention, mocked and possibly sawn in half...i mean c'mon.. you don't see this type of stuff on any missions brochure. Big faith forces us to make big steps and the result of that is we learn that we serve a big God.

John sums it up so well for us.. ***1 John 3:18-23 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. 20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. 22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. 23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another...***

Faith calls us to run about in the world we live in. God wants us to be those hands and feet but our hearts begin to fail, doubt can creep in and the dreaded reasoning begins. Look at that powerful truth..God is greater than your doubtful heart..have confidence, not in ourselves but what God has for us..if ya don't know what that is..just ask.

Vs 23 holds a truth that we need to understand. Believe on the name of Jesus..we have read that countless times and think nothing about it, but in the framework or faith in action there is a lot to understand. Yes we believe in Jesus, we believe in His birth, life, death and resurrection and that's the belief that will secure for us eternity, in heaven. ***Rom 10:9-10 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*** John is relaying a different kind of thought with this term “believe on”. **(cars and bikes)**

That's the kind of faith we are talking about today. Faith that will jump on board and put our lives into the fire. Over the years the risks of that kind of life can become o great, it doesn't diminish our belief in Christ by any means but fear and doubt can sure delay our belief on Jesus.

Faith of that magnitude cannot be found on shaky ground. We are timid enough and the last thing we need are big holes in the story and no confidence in the outcome. So how can we know that all of this can be trusted..***Heb 12:1-2***

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

You can trust God, He is God, He is love, He is all of those things you are thinking and more. The reason for my trust lies in the history of God in my life and the lives of other faithful believers all though out the word. That's the reason for this chapter in Hebrews and so many other accounts of the bible.

Different times, people, situations and outcomes all weave for us a path that takes us to the person and the promise of Jesus. In a nutshell, If God has done all that He said He was going to do in the past, then I have no reason to believe that He will not do what He said He is going to do in the future..All of these faithful lives in Hebrews lay a foundation of trust in God and His strength. That's a huge anchor in our lives as we face an unknown tomorrow.

Ps 18:28-30 For You will light my lamp; The Lord my God will enlighten my darkness. For by You I can run against a troop, By my God I can leap over a wall. Notice there the certainty of these vs.. God will and you can..wanna know why?)30 As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.

I pray that we can find a stronghold in this vs.. not just believing in but acting on faith..By my God I can...fill in the blank. Why? Because God is perfect and His word is proven.. Trust in the fact the saving power of Jesus is built on the volume of the book and in the infallibility of the word...brings new life to. ***Heb 10:7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come — In the volume of the book it is written of Me...*** If I cant see God in my past then I'm not sure that I can trust Him for the future. Its a pretty common phrase in the church to just “let go and let God”... but that has also been one of the most difficult attitudes to adopt and implement in my daily life.

To have the trust to just flow with it is very elusive, I know God wants the best for me, I know His word says things like..mountains will move, and wind and waves obey and that should translate into boldness and courage in the face of trials and yet somehow it doesn't work all the time..Ps 18 ends with a great vs and its where we are going to end today..***He is a shield to all who trust in Him.***

The key to a faithful life is found in trust..fully, completely and without a worry about success or failure..just faith in God and His love..period.. **The trust fall.**