**Faith to Persevere**

Sunday School Lesson 9

*Faith in Action*

Hebrews 11:35-40

6/30/2024

**Introduction & Recap:** We’ve come to the last week in our lesson series on *Faith in Action.* In our previous lesson, we looked at how faith helps us to let God fight the battle. First, we can let God fight the battle because we trust that the enemy isn’t as big as it might seem to be. Oftentimes, people fail to trust the Lord in the midst of a battle because they can’t get past the size of the enemy. This was the case for the children of Israel who died in the wilderness. This was also the case for David’s brothers and the other soldiers who were terrified at the sight of Goliath. The spies that went into Jericho did not see the enemy as too big. They trusted that God would deliver them. Second, we can let God fight the battle because we trust the promised victory. The Lord promised victory to Joshua, and he and the Israelites needed only to trust the promises of God. Likewise, God has promise the Christian that He will give us victory. We must simply trust His promise. Third, we can let God fight the battle because we trust the Lord’s methods. The command to march around the walls of Jericho was an especially unusual command. We do not find anything else like it in all of the Bible. The Israelites had to choose to trust in God’s methods. We may find ourselves in spiritual battles, and God may use what seems to be unconventional methods. We must trust those methods. Finally, we can let God fight the battle because we trust the Lord’s strength more than our own. We are a weak and frail people. It is not our own strength that gives us what we need to fight battles. It is the power that comes from within us. It is the power of God. He is greater than anything or anyone that we will face in this world. For today’s lesson, we are going to be looking at faith to persevere. The Bible has much to say about the idea of perseverance and endurance. Let’s consider the following:

1. **WE ARE ABLE TO PERSEVERE THROUGH PAIN CAUSED BY OTHERS BECAUSE WE TRUST THE DELIVERANCE OF THE LORD.**

* *Hebrews 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 1 Kings 22:26 And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; 27 And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. 28 And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you.* Many people look at the ending of Hebrews 11 and are inclined to think that the persecutions mentioned are speaking to the early church and what we know from church history. Ultimately, every example used is a reflection of something that happened in the days of Israel before Christ’s coming to the earth. A good number of Bible students think that the reference to facing torture and not accepting the deliverance that would have come through lying speaks to the story of the prophet Miciah. It was his job to prophesy to Ahab, but Ahab wanted nothing to do with the prophet. In fact, he hated him. When Miciah told Ahab the truth, the king refused to accept it. He believed that the prophet was prophesying against him because of some personal dislike. He threatened to throw him into prison if the prophet did not change his answer. Miciah responded with a message of the truth. He did not care about saving himself from the persecution that awaited him. Like many others, he had great confidence in the resurrection. Either way, He trusted in God’s deliverance.

1. **WE CAN PERSEVERE THROUGH UNJUST TREATMENT BECAUSE WE TRUST THAT THE LORD WILL SHOW FORTH THE TRUTH.**

* *Hebrews 11:36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: Jeremiah 38:4 Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt. 5 Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do any thing against you. 6 Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.* Just like Miciah, Jeremiah was presented with a situation where a king did not really want to hear the truth. He wanted to be told that everything was going to be okay. Jeremiah refused to do that. He was accused of being a traitor to Israel. The princes accused him of wanting Israel to be hurt. As a result, he was thrown in a miry pit at the bottom of the dungeon. They wanted him to die there. Given the condition of Israel, he would have likely starved to death. Thankfully, God used someone to bring the prophet out of the dungeon. Ultimately, the truth about his prophecy showed itself out in the captivity of Judah by the Babylonians. Jeremiah spent his life being rejected and maligned. While we don’t have a promise that every truth will come out during our lifetime, we can persevere because we trust that truth will eventually be revealed by the Lord.

1. **WE CAN PERSEVERE EVEN UNTIL THE VERY END BECAUSE WE TRUST THAT DOING RIGHT IS ALWAYS WHAT IS PLEASING TO THE LORD.**

* *Hebrews 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 1 Kings 21:13 And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.* The most familiar story in the Old Testament of someone getting stoned unfairly is Naboth. He was willing to be stoned to death over his vineyard than to sell it to King Ahab. He knew that it was not right to sell the inheritance of his fathers. It would have been easy to justify the sell in the face of intense pressure from the king, but Naboth never budged. He stood firm in his position. Surely, he knew of the wickedness of King Ahab when he made the decision to refuse to sell it to him. It can be very hard to persevere and continue to do right when the consequences of doing so are not favorable. You might recall that we noted something similar with Moses related to his choosing affliction over the riches of Egypt. Yet, doing right is always the right decision. The end result of Naboth was incredibly unfair, but God knows and sees.

1. **WE CAN PERSEVERE WHEN WE LOSE EVERYTHING BECAUSE WE TRUST IN THE AUTHORITY GOD HAS TO ALLOW THINGS TO BE GIVEN AND TAKEN AWAY.**

* *Hebrews 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; Job 1:20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, 21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. 22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.* Hebrews 11 speaks of those who wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins. They were destitute, afflicted, and tormented. This could speak to a number of individuals throughout the Old Testament. Certainly, Elijah and Elisha knew what it was like to live without great wealth. Many of the other prophets experienced this as well. The most prominent person in the Old Testament, though, when we think of extreme poverty has to be Job. He lost everything that he had. Through a test of Job’s faith, God allowed for him to endure extreme destitution. He lost his family and his wealth. While we understand the example that it provides to us in the Bible, the story is still an incredibly hard one to consider and to comprehend. Ultimately, the only thing that gives a person strength to persevere when they lose everything is a strong faith in the character of God and the authority that He has over mankind.

1. **WE CAN PERSEVERE THROUGH SOCIETAL REJECTION BECAUSE WE TRUST THAT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT.**

* *Hebrews 11:38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 1 Kings 18:13 Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?* There were many prophets who lived with no real dwelling place due to persecution that they suffered at the hands of wicked kings. Additionally, we find that Jesus Himself had no place to lay His head. Overall, their lack of a place speaks to how rejected they were by society. No one was willing to give them a place to stay. When the world rejects the Christian, he must trust that his relationship with the Lord is the most important. Otherwise, we will give in to the pain of that rejection, and we will compromise our standing with Christ.