

THOUGH OUR FAITH EXPERIENCE VARY, WE'RE ALL PERFECTED IN CHRIST

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Scripture: Heb.11:32-40

Facilitator: Alfreda Chandler

Introduction: We remember the circumstances that prompted this author to write this book, was to encourage the Jewish believers. He also gave them examples of many people who are considered pillars of faith. These were people who they held sacred in their traditions or were taught about them regularly. We see in Hebrews 6:9-12; 10:32-39 describe what they were facing opposition, rejection and persecution. This letter continued to encourage them not to grow weary or give up but keep hold to the faith, in God and his promises, despite the opposition. This is why the writer included the Hall of Faith because these heroes were like them and had also faced similar obstacles or some worse, but they kept the faith in God. This faith was not new for it was a part of their history which was full of faithful believers who endured for God. He reminded them in 10:39 that “we are not of those who shrink back, but those who have faith”. In 6:12, he tells them to be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherited the promise.

The answers found in this book gives us a wide range of individuals, who gained God’s approval. They all had one thing in common. They made their share of mistakes just like them and us.

Defining Perfection: The meaning of perfection in the Bible relates to a state of completeness or absolute wholeness. Biblical perfection involves freedom from fault, defect, or shortcoming. In the New Testament in the Greek, it is defined to mean maturity.

Lesson: Though Our faith Experience Vary, We’re All Perfected in Christ

V.32-35a. The author is saying, “do I really have to keep going here, isn’t it obvious by now what faith has been about? I don’t have the time to name all of them and their deeds from the Law, the Writings of the Prophets and the Word of God. After ending the first list with Joshua, he moves on to the period of the Judges; then he moves to the history period of David and Samuel; next was the Prophets Elijah and Elisha; last was the writing Prophets, Isaiah, Jermiah, Ezekiel and the 12 minor prophets. When

we look at any of these examples, we see that they didn't have consistency or steady faith. They all had major character flaws, and some were more explicit than others. Nevertheless, the author wanted to show that when they had faith in God, he did mighty things through them.

As we are reminded of the verse 1 about faith is the assurance of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen." None of the things listed in these verses happened because of human strength or wisdom. They were a conduit for the power of God to work through them when they had a little or wavering faith. It is conquering with the assurance that God will give the victory.

V.35b-38. In the second half, we find more examples of those who were added to the Hall of Faith. The power that is on display here specifically is the power to endure or not to give up. This is faith fueled perseverance. Think of those like Joseph, Elijah, Jeremiah, David and others. These were men who some point in their lives mistreated, destitute and afflicted because they sought to do what was right in the eyes of God. Some were killed and Zachariah was stoned to death in the Temple courtyard 2Chr24. It is written in Jewish history that Isaiah was sawn into, and Jeremiah was stoned to death and the book of Kings tells us about how Jezebel murdered the Prophets with the swords. In verse 38 it states the world was not worthy of them. Matt.5:10-12; John 15:20. If they persecuted Christ they will persecute you, we are not immune from any persecutions.

In contrast to what many of the prosperity preachers declare, faith is not always about the power to prosper and succeed. Often, faith is about the power to persevere in the midst of rejection and ridicule; the power to endure in a time of defeat; sometimes it is the power to simply hang on for one more day.

V.39-40. From chapters 6&10, we saw how the Hebrew believers were under attack and some were contemplating giving up Christianity and going back to Judaism. The previous verses are meant to give them encouragement, to not turned back to a fading covenant and man-made traditions, when in fact the whole Old Testament is showing them, what faith looks like in every book. But when we look at verse 39 which is a focal verse, it doesn't sound too encouraging. Not one of them ever received what was promised in terms of the "better", in terms of the "complete; in terms of the "fulfillment, even though they gained divine approval because of their faith. They didn't have that "better hope" (7:19); they didn't know the "better covenant" (7:22);

they didn't have "the better promises (8:6) made possible by a better sacrifice (9:23). The writer gave them the reason why in verse 40: "because the time was not fulfilled for those in the Hall of Faith but now the time is now for them. He is trying to get the Hebrew believers to understand that they are now living in the better. God had them (us) in mind and had something better for them (Us) and they will be made perfect together with us.

We are called to be perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect (Ps.18:32). He is complete and lacks nothing. In the NT James reminds us that every good and perfect gift comes from God (Jas.1:17). Therefore, God also becomes the source of all that is "perfect" within this world. To be perfect does not mean to do things for God to try to please Him. To be perfect means to give ourselves into His hands completely. It means to allow Him to correct our sinful nature; to allow Him to bind and heal us; to let Him live His life through us and allow Him to make us whole and healthy in Him. Jesus encouraged the disciples to love their enemies in the same way that God loved them (Lk.35). This was showing the perfection or maturity that He desired. Paul also reminds all Christian as the writer of Hebrews, "to be imitators of God (Eph.5:1). Like Paul we are encouraged to press on to possess that perfection that Jesus first possessed (Php.3:12). For those who stay committed to God he provides that perfect peace (Is.26:3). Perfection for believers would only be realized in the life to come (Php.3:13-21) and was made possible because the sacrifice of the Perfect lamb of God, and for all time. As the book of Hebrews have pointed out, under the Old Covenant, the priests minister before the altar offering the same sacrifices over and over, which never take away sins. But we have a High Priest who offered Himself as a single sacrifice for all sins and it is good for all times. He then sat down in the place of Honor at God's right hand to intercede on our behalf. For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy (Heb.10-14).

Another scriptures about perfection is Co.12:9- But he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you my power is made perfect in weakness. Christians are perfected in weakness; through participating in the suffering of Jesus; they are conformed to His image (Matt.5:10-12; 1Pt.2:19-25; 3:14; 4:12-19).

Col.2:10- So you also are complete through your union with Christ..

The Bible teaches us that we are credited with Jesus' righteousness, and are made perfect before God, when we believed in Jesus and became a Christian (Rom. 3:21-21);

2Co.5:21). However, the honest person knows that their daily behaviors like their thoughts, words and deeds are not perfect.

Each one of these individuals are remembered by God and commended for their faith. Their faith as well as the faith of all believers is refined and developed within the unique circumstances designed by God, in spite of their personal failures, discouragement, weariness and the sins that so easily entangled them. When we all stumble and are overwhelmed with life circumstance or sin, lift our eyes to the hill to where our strength lies. Confess and repent and resume the race by running with endurance.

It is Jesus who begins and brings to perfection our faith. In Him is the beginning; in Him is completion of the promises.

Conclusion: You are now accepted as His Beloved. You are accepted in Christ and are complete in Him, Who Himself is perfect. Christ has done it all- It is finished. In Him God sees us through the lens of what His Son has Done. (Heb.10:17; Col,2:14; Heb.10:14).

The Great Cloud of witnesses did not receive the promise of perfection in their lifetime, not because of unfaithfulness but because Jesus hadn't yet come to die for them during their lifetime. Like us, they are included in the inheritance and will be rewarded because they were predestined by God to obtain it (Eph.1:11).

Heb.11:40. ... God Had Planned Something Better For Us So Only Together with Us Would They Be Made Perfect!!!

