

Great Faith 6: The Price of Faithfulness

We're wrapping up the series on Great Faith.

- We started with '**Make Faithfulness Great Again**'. What is real faith but faithfulness? Embodied Faith. Not just what I believe but what I believe enough to change the way I live my life and see the world!
 - Can we not just believe but believe enough to change?
- Ps Neli spoke on the **faith of Enoch** and how his faithfulness led God to call Enoch into greater intimacy with him.
- Week 3 we looked at Noah who **walked faithfully** with God (Gen 6:9)
 - His faithfulness saved his family. His faithfulness saved him.
 - His faithfulness condemned the rebellious and their lies.
 - His faithfulness made him family with God (heir of righteousness)
 - **It's really applicable to us because we're also building an ark.**
- Week 4 looked at the life of Sarah who had unbelieving faithfulness.
 - She didn't believe the promise of a child (Gen 18 Laughed and Lied)
 - But she received the promise of a child because she knew God to be faithful - twice her husband jeopardised her safety, but God delivered her.
 - **Doesn't matter if we can't believe the promise. Believe the promise giver.**
- Week 5 we looked at Moses and a faithful perspective.
 - Moses parents saw something
 - Moses saw something
 - Moses saw something more - God.

And we come to the end of Hebrews 11 with a whole bunch of people. **Divided into two groups.**

Hebrews 11 32 *And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about **Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets,** 33 **who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.** 35 **Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. 36 Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37***

They were *put to death by stoning*; they were *sawed in two*; they were *killed by the sword*. *They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated*— 38 *the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.* 39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 *since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.*

There's two groups of people.

- v32-35: Those who because of faithfulness were in difficult positions and **won victories and were vindicated.**
- v35-38: Those who because of faithfulness were victimised. **Suffered and died.**

There's **three things** in common between these two sets of heroes.

- Faithfulness isn't comfortable. Faithfulness has to be tested. Faithfulness to God means conflict with the world.

39 These were all commended for their faith

- The victors and the victimised were both commended for their faith
 - God commends faithfulness not results.
 - Some defeated armies others were defeated - but God commended them both

39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

- The victors and the victimised both didn't receive the promise
 - They received some promises (33) but they didn't receive THE Promise.
 - Faithfulness isn't about getting promises. They're a bonus. Faithfulness is about getting the Promise.
 - Faithfulness is about Jesus. Relationship with him

If you are faithful to Jesus you might not face an army but you will face something. **You have to.**

- You might experience victory over that something (finance, health, relationship, work etc)
- You might experience what seems like defeat and suffering.
- Either way you will have Jesus and that's what matters.

Conclusion

This series has been a call to faithfulness to a king.

- I've called you to be faithful to Jesus. To his kingdom, his values, his mission.
 - For us at ENM that means honour God and Make disciples, Church Planting Campus ministry and Mission. Specifically it means the 2020Vision.
 - That means cost. Time, money, emotions, energy.
- But the cost of faithfulness is nothing compared to the reward:
 - Jesus' kingdom
 - Jesus' values
 - Jesus' mission
 - **Jesus himself**

You can have Jesus

You can have the promise - because Jesus is the faithful king

Hebrews 12 *1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*