

## **We Are Saved by Faith in Jesus**

(Hebrews 11)

Faith is a common theme throughout the Bible. We may not find the word *faith* on every page; however, in nearly every description of what God expects of His people, there is at least an indication of faith. Throughout Scripture, we read that faith is the means by which God is pleased with His people as they chose to trust Him.

Hebrews 11 emphasizes the significance of faith by unpacking how God has been saving His people through faith from the beginning. From creation to the first family and on and on throughout the lives of individuals, tribes, and nations God uses faith as the evidence of who belongs to His kingdom and the means by which He gives hope.

So, what exactly is faith? According to the author of Hebrews, “Faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

To be clear, this does mean that it is possible to have faith in something other than the truths of the Bible, the work of Christ, and the promises of God. We may place our faith in a future spouse, job, experience, or accomplishment; however, according to the Bible, only one object of faith is truly saving before God, and that is Jesus.

What is the object of your faith? Do you have hope in the unseen promises of God? Does the object of your faith look more like a whimsical desire for your own good, or is it confidence in the wonderful work of a life-giving Savior? In the grand picture of life, there is no more important question than this because the object of your faith will most certainly determine the direction of your eternity.

The individuals described in Hebrews 11 put their faith in God’s promise of a coming Christ; therefore, their actions revealed their trust and dependence on the Lord. Ultimately, this produced faithfulness in their lives and blessing from God.

Hundreds of years from now, will your life be associated with this type of faith? Let the faith of Abraham, Sarah, Moses, and others inspire you to take risks in obedience to following Christ. Pray for a faith that actively trusts that God is who He says He is and holds tight to the confidence that God keeps His promises.

## **Jesus Calmed a Storm**

(Matthew 8; Mark 4; Luke 8)

In the Gospel accounts of Jesus calming the storm, we learn that Jesus' disciples experienced tremendous fear. Their fear was so great, they believed they would perish in the storm. Yet, Jesus experienced the same violent storm, and rather than quake in fear, He slept.

The disciples' fear emerged from a lack of faith in the One who slept in the boat. While they worried about their circumstances and allowed fear to overtake their hearts, Jesus remained confident in His control over all things—including the raging sea. Not a drop of an ocean wave or a gust of wind escaped His authority. The Word made flesh, who spoke all creation into existence, rules every inch of this world according to His sovereign will.

At the sound of His voice, the wind and the waves were stilled. And the disciples' fear of the storm was redirected to a fear of another kind—one of reverence and awe. The power of the storm was no rival for the power of the Lord, and the disciples' perspective was shifted to wonder at the holiness, power, and authority of Jesus.

The disciples' fear toward Jesus was different. This fear was one of awe and reverence—a humbled perspective regarding the holiness, power, and authority of Jesus.

We all resonate with their timidity, for it is commonplace in our daily lives to be shaken by concerns in the face of trying circumstances. This story is about a storm and the different feelings that came out of it. But from that storm, and even the storms within our own lives, we see the character of a Savior. It is about our need to bow our hearts and our lives to the beauty, holiness, power, and authority of Jesus as we trust in His authority—for His glory and also for our good.

We all have things that cause us worry and concern, but do you have a reverent awe toward the God who made you and loves you and has promised to be with you through every circumstance of your life?

## **Jesus Healed and Forgave**

(Matthew 9; Mark 2; Luke 5)

As Jesus worked miracles, people were curious and amazed. Large crowds started following Him. Among those most interested in the works of Jesus were the Jewish leaders who looked unfavorably upon both the actions of Jesus and the following that he was gaining. Though they were interested, they felt increasingly threatened.

The Pharisees and teachers had gathered to see the power of Jesus for themselves and would later attempt to build a case against Him. But Jesus' authority to forgive sins served to reveal their hardness of heart and evil intentions.

When Jesus told a paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven and then asked these religious men the question, "Which is easier ... ?," the point wasn't for them to do a scientific assessment to determine which act required greater power. The point was to show them His authority.

Therefore, Jesus followed His question with the true answer: "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." He commanded the man to get up and walk. Jesus affirmed His authority to forgive sins by healing the paralyzed man. All of Jesus' miracles provided the evidence for His teachings and His authority. What's more, Jesus' authority is not constrained to only the physical world, but also reaches deep into the spiritual component of every person. While healing the man's physical condition was a beautiful act of grace, what the man needed most was to have his sins forgiven. And this was the truth the religious leader's hard hearts failed to understand.

As we reflect on Jesus' words in this passage, we can ask Him to examine our hearts. Unlike the religious leaders, whose prideful hearts kept them from submitting to Christ's authority, we can joyfully ask the Lord to reveal any sin. Then by His grace, we can repent and find forgiveness. Just as Jesus demonstrated His authority to forgive the man's sins by offering the evidence of healing, so has He also shown us His power to forgive our sins through the cross. Not only can we be confident that He will forgive, but we can rejoice that He has met our greatest need.