

Scott A. Wood & Scottie Alvarez 1-19-2025
HEBREWS SERIES: PERSEVERE, HOLD ON, BELIEVE TILL THE END
PART 11C: FAITH IS OBEDIENCE IN ACTION PT1

Good morning! God answered our prayers. The winds calmed, and the fires fizzled! Thank you, Jesus! God blessed our relief efforts with seven volunteer leaders, some who are new volunteers who've not served with us before. That's exciting! We're working with Foursquare Disaster Relief to flow resources to those in need. You've generously given \$7,535 for relief and have met many needs in our church family. You also gave \$3,785 to send Tara & Ray's entire podcast team on their youth missions trip. Even in the midst of disaster, you give. I'm humbled by the outpouring, but what I love most is the gratitude and humility to share needs and receive help. I've been saying all week: **The helpers need help.** Those of us struggling with perfectionism and shame—blaming God and assuming He's punishing us—are growing in gratitude and praise in hardship. If you missed our special wildfire response service last week, our **YouTube Channel & Facebook Page**, both **@cvchurchla**, and our **website cvchurch.com** have everything you need to see it. If you do not get our email or text blasts, last week you were in the dark. Please let us know you'd like to be added by writing your name, email, or phone on your friends card or emailing info@cvchurch.com and we'll add. Being family relies on communication, and we want everyone to be in the loop. Before we start, let's take a moment to re-focus on Jesus. Let's pray: *"Jesus, we give You thanks and praise for protecting our city and community. We give You our worries, fears, and grief today. You are our refuge and strength. Like the faith heroes we'll see today, we fix our eyes on You. We pray for Your protection, and we look forward to Your eternal city where all is as You intended. May Your Word encourage us today to live with bold faith, putting our obedience into action. We worship You today. In Jesus' Mighty Name we pray, Amen!"*

Follow me in your notes as I read the first of our three Scripture sections for today, Hebrews Ch 11, verses 20-22. As I read, ask yourself: **"How can I apply to my life, today, the encouragement from our heroes of faith to live out my faith?"** This will allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us about persevering, holding on, believing till the end. Follow along with **Hebrews 11:20-22 – Great Examples of Faith – ²⁰IT WAS BY FAITH THAT ISAAC PROMISED BLESSINGS FOR THE FUTURE TO HIS SONS, JACOB AND ESAU. ²¹IT WAS BY FAITH THAT JACOB, WHEN HE WAS OLD AND DYING, BLESSED EACH OF JOSEPH'S SONS AND BOWED IN WORSHIP AS HE LEANED ON HIS STAFF. ²²IT WAS BY FAITH THAT JOSEPH, WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO DIE, SAID CONFIDENTLY THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WOULD LEAVE EGYPT. HE EVEN COMMANDED THEM TO TAKE HIS BONES WITH THEM WHEN THEY LEFT.** To persevere, hold on, and believe till the end, exercise your faith

muscles by putting your obedience into action like our ancient heroes. **We live out our faith!** Here's the first fill-in in your notes: **I. PASS your faith on to the next GENERATIONS.** Our first heroes of faith are Abraham's lineage: his son Isaac, Isaac's son Jacob, and Jacob's son Joseph. They put their faith into action through their obedience to God. Hebrews defines faith as **active obedience to God by depending upon the reliability of God's character, behavior and promises. Faith is the confident belief in the promises of God that are not yet visible and a firm trust in what is to come despite the lack of physical proof.** American professor and scholar, the late William Lane, says: **"Now faith celebrates the objective reality of the blessings for which we hope, the demonstration of events as yet unseen. On this account the ancients of the past received attestation-affirmation by God."** This means God authenticates our faith heroes, corroborates, declares, documents, evidences, proves, substantiates them. Lane continues: **"...without faith it is impossible to begin to please Him, for it is necessary for the one approaching God to believe that He exists and that He becomes a rewarder of those who seek Him out."** The next fill-in, part **A. Isaac PASSES God's blessings on by COMMITTING to His plan.** Isaac and his father Abraham's story in Genesis 22 we just read in our Bible bookmark. **[Show Isaac binding]** They exercise their faith through obedience in action. Abraham is commanded by God to leave home and journey to the land where God promises Him countless descendants despite his age. To test him, God instructs to take his son Isaac, the heir of God's promise, to a specific mountain and sacrifice him as an offering. Despite the difficulty of this request, Abraham obeys, traveling with Isaac and preparing an altar, demonstrating his faith in God's plan when it seems impossible. Follow along as I read **Genesis 22:6-8 – ⁶SO ABRAHAM PLACED THE WOOD FOR THE BURNT OFFERING ON ISAAC'S SHOULDERS, WHILE HE HIMSELF CARRIED THE FIRE AND THE KNIFE. AS THE TWO OF THEM WALKED ON TOGETHER, ⁷ISAAC TURNED TO ABRAHAM AND SAID, "FATHER?" "YES, MY SON?" ABRAHAM REPLIED. "WE HAVE THE FIRE AND THE WOOD," THE BOY SAID, "BUT WHERE IS THE SHEEP FOR THE BURNT OFFERING?" ⁸"GOD WILL PROVIDE A SHEEP FOR THE BURNT OFFERING, MY SON," ABRAHAM ANSWERED. AND THEY BOTH WALKED ON TOGETHER.** How is your faith? Is it wavering due to the wildfires? Don't let what you can see betray the reality of what's unseen. At some point Isaac realizes that, unless God provides, HE'S the sacrifice. But God provides. Isaac witnesses his father's commitment to obey God. This is the greatest test of Abraham's life—and of Isaac's. There's a lot of debate over how old Isaac is when this happens. Estimates range from 13 to 37. No matter how old he is, he sees firsthand what his father's faith produces. American seminary president Albert Mohler writes, **"Isaac was the son through whom God would fulfill His promise to Abraham, yet the building of the nation would take place through his son, Jacob, and Esau. Isaac passed the promises he had received from his father to his son.**

This demonstrated his trust in God’s promise that through Abraham’s heir his offspring would be as numerous as the stars.” Do you see God’s promises as only yours? They span generations! Apply this truth by faith and obediently pray for your children, grandchildren, family, and friends to receive Jesus as their Savior. Pray they’ll respond in faith to God’s plans for their lives. Do you have the faith to pray prophetically over your descendants? It’s okay if you don’t. It takes practice. Just start. Start to pray God’s purposes to be fulfilled in their lives just like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and the rest of our faith heroes for today. As you spend time with Jesus, reading his Word in our Bible bookmark, listen to what He puts on your heart and mind and pray that over your loved ones. The next fill-in, part **B. Jacob WORSHIPS God by blessing his GRANDSONS**. Isaac’s son Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, has a history of deceit and personal failing. **[Show Jacob’s blessing]** He’s a liar, cheater, pretender—yet God forgives him and through him sends us Jesus. Jacob intentionally passes on God’s covenant promises by blessing his grandsons. American professor and scholar David DeSilva describes Jacob’s blessing: **“Worshiping God at the head of his ‘staff’ signifies Jacob’s persistence in embracing his identity and reaffirming his hope as a pilgrim and sojourner. Jacob’s dying act of faith, as he leaned on his staff, symbolized his acknowledgment of God’s faithfulness throughout his life and his confident hope in God’s provision.”** Do your flaws and struggles stop you? Jacob’s don’t. He knows that God’s promises extend beyond his own lifetime and trusts that God will fulfill them in the next generations. Are you too self-conscious or afraid to pray? Talk to God just like you would a friend and see where the conversation leads! Open the Book of Psalms and start praying the Psalms back to God. Pray for God’s preferred future to be worked out in detail in your family, your church, your city, your nation, and the world. Your flaws do not negate God’s purposes! When God calls us, He factors in our flaws. Jesus’ work on the cross covers our sins and failings. Have you stayed on the sidelines because of your sin? Jacob doesn’t. You can still be a vessel for God’s legacy! The next fill-in, part **C. Joseph TRUSTS God to DELIVER His people**. As we move down the generational line, from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Joseph, the focus is on Joseph’s faith. Not his miraculous journey through slavery at the hands of his jealous brothers. Not being taken to Egypt where he governs the whole nation under Pharaoh. (Pharaoh by the way considered himself a god in human form—how’s that for installing a believer under an ungodly authority?) The text says nothing about Joseph’s gift of interpreting dreams, or how he stewarded Egypt through a severe famine, or how he shrewdly used his position to save his family from starvation, or how he forgave his brothers for their betrayal. **[Show Joseph’s prophecy]** The preacher mentions none of these accolades on Joseph’s resumé! He focuses on the last couple of lines in Genesis, a mere footnote to Joseph’s life. Listen as I read **Genesis 50:24-25 – ²⁴“SOON I WILL DIE,” JOSEPH TOLD HIS BROTHERS, “BUT GOD WILL SURELY COME TO HELP YOU AND LEAD YOU OUT OF THIS LAND OF EGYPT. HE WILL BRING YOU BACK**

TO THE LAND HE SOLEMNLY PROMISED TO GIVE TO ABRAHAM, TO ISAAC, AND TO JACOB.” ²⁵**THEN JOSEPH MADE THE SONS OF ISRAEL SWEAR AN OATH, AND HE SAID, “WHEN GOD COMES TO HELP YOU AND LEAD YOU BACK, YOU MUST TAKE MY BONES WITH YOU.”** Are you confident in Jesus? Joseph was so sure of God that he gave specific instructions for his bones to be carried back to the Promised Land. Scholars believe that Joseph gave this prophetic instruction 400 years before Moses ultimately would lead Israel out of Egypt during the Exodus. Maybe you think you are too young to matter, too old, too this, or too that? At the end of his life, Joseph spoke boldly of God’s future deliverance of Israel. Maybe you need to see God’s cards before you lay yours out on the table? Joseph’s faith displays how we trust God and believe His promises *before* they’re realized. We read Hebrews 11:1 earlier – **“1FAITH SHOWS THE REALITY OF WHAT WE HOPE FOR; IT IS THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS WE CANNOT SEE.”** Influential American scholar and preacher, Thomas Long writes, **“As for Joseph, when he faced, down in Egypt, his own loss, his own approaching death, he did not view this as the end of everything but looked out toward the horizon of God’s future with the eyes of faith. Staring into the grave, he saw Grace. If his great-grandfather’s test has proved a glimpse of the resurrection, Joseph’s own impending death gave him a glimpse of the promised land.”**

Follow along as I read our 2nd section, Hebrews 11:23-28 – **²³IT WAS BY FAITH THAT MOSES’ PARENTS HID HIM FOR THREE MONTHS WHEN HE WAS BORN. THEY SAW THAT GOD HAD GIVEN THEM AN UNUSUAL CHILD, AND THEY WERE NOT AFRAID TO DISOBEY THE KING’S COMMAND. ²⁴IT WAS BY FAITH THAT MOSES, WHEN HE GREW UP, REFUSED TO BE CALLED THE SON OF PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER. ²⁵HE CHOSE TO SHARE THE OPPRESSION OF GOD’S PEOPLE INSTEAD OF ENJOYING THE FLEETING PLEASURES OF SIN. ²⁶HE THOUGHT IT WAS BETTER TO SUFFER FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST THAN TO OWN THE TREASURES OF EGYPT, FOR HE WAS LOOKING AHEAD TO HIS GREAT REWARD. ²⁷IT WAS BY FAITH THAT MOSES LEFT THE LAND OF EGYPT, NOT FEARING THE KING’S ANGER. HE KEPT RIGHT ON GOING BECAUSE HE KEPT HIS EYES ON THE ONE WHO IS INVISIBLE. ²⁸IT WAS BY FAITH THAT MOSES COMMANDED THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL TO KEEP THE PASSOVER AND TO SPRINKLE BLOOD ON THE DOORPOSTS SO THAT THE ANGEL OF DEATH WOULD NOT KILL THEIR FIRSTBORN SONS.** The next two fill-ins: **II. INFLUENCE others toward faith despite FEAR, and below that, part A. Moses’ parents DISCERN God’s purpose and ACT by faith.** The preacher of Hebrews picks up 400 years later with Moses, who we just saw fulfills Joseph’s last prophecy. Moses’ story is in the Old Testament Book of Exodus Chapters 1 through 3. He’s born to Hebrew parents in Egypt under Pharaoh’s population control orders to kill all newborn Jewish males. **[Show Moses’ parents]** To save Moses, his mother puts him in a basket on the Nile River, where Pharaoh’s daughter finds him and raises him as her own Egyptian son. Again, the preacher focuses on the lesser-known yet powerful moments of faith exercised through

obedience in action. When Moses' parents discern, by faith, Moses' calling, they defy Pharaoh's orders. The Jewish midwives, because they fear God, also defy Pharaoh's edict to drown the male babies. The preacher celebrates their defiance of Pharaoh's evil policy as an act of faith. Are you being called to stand up to evil? Many of us are. Many are standing up to demonic policies and anti-Christ ideologies. Stand firm! Be counted as faithful! Don't give in to Satan's plans for our culture. **2025 is the YEAR TO RISE!** The next fill-in, part **B. Moses chooses OPPRESSION in order to lead and serve his PEOPLE.** Moses' example of faith rocked my world this week. Moses foreshadows Jesus. Moses points us to Jesus! Moses willingly identifies with God's people and endures suffering. Jesus does that for us. Moses rejects fleeting pleasure to lead God's people to the Promised Land. **[Show Moses leading]** Jesus leads us to Heaven. Moses is mistreated, yet he looks to a future reward. Jesus identifies with us and leads us, and is rejected in return, yet He endures the cross for our reward. The preacher specifically states that Moses thinks it's better to suffer for Christ than to own Egypt's treasures. Moses lives some 1400-1500 years before Jesus! Moses prophetically suffers for the Jesus that he won't meet this side of Heaven (although some argue that Jesus appears to Moses—that's for another day). Moses looks ahead to his reward. He suffers for Jesus. He displays his faith through obedience in action. His actions evidence what he can't see but knows is true. Aussie scholar and professor David Peterson writes "**Faith led Moses to choose temporary disgrace and to evaluate the honors of the world in light of God's reward.**" DeSilva adds "**Moses' choice calls us to reassess our priorities, to value what brings us closer to God rather than what offers the temporary comfort of societal approval.**" Do you need to re-evaluate, re-prioritize? Where's Jesus calling you to give up approval or comfort in order to follow Him?

Flip back to our 3rd scripture, Hebrews 11:29-31 – **²⁹IT WAS BY FAITH THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WENT RIGHT THROUGH THE RED SEA AS THOUGH THEY WERE ON DRY GROUND. BUT WHEN THE EGYPTIANS TRIED TO FOLLOW, THEY WERE ALL DROWNED. ³⁰IT WAS BY FAITH THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL MARCHED AROUND JERICHO FOR SEVEN DAYS, AND THE WALLS CAME CRASHING DOWN. ³¹IT WAS BY FAITH THAT RAHAB THE PROSTITUTE WAS NOT DESTROYED WITH THE PEOPLE IN HER CITY WHO REFUSED TO OBEY GOD. FOR SHE HAD GIVEN A FRIENDLY WELCOME TO THE SPIES.** The next fill-ins: **III. FOLLOW Jesus against the culture to witness MIRACLES.** and below that, part **A. Israel WALKS on dry ground and sees Jericho's walls CRASH down.** You can read about these two famous miracles in Exodus 14 and Joshua 6. They both have one thing in common. God provides the miracle; we must respond by obediently taking action in faith. **[Show Moses Red Sea]** It required faith for the Israelites, while Moses' arms are raised and God rolls back the walls of water, to walk through the Red Sea. How many of us would refuse to take a step and grumble that it was a trap? Faith is not a trap! God is not lying in wait to punish you! **[Show Jericho walls]** It demands faith for Israel to march around the walls of Jericho for seven days, obeying God's specific command through Joshua. God says it will happen, the Israelites obey God and their leader, Joshua, Moses' protégé, and just like at the Red Sea, a miracle: the fortified city walls collapse! Where do you need to trust God? Where do you need to take a step of faith?

Your obedient action demonstrates that you believe the reality of what you trust Him for. Your actions in faith prove the things you cannot see. God is real! His character, Word, and promises are true! The last fill-in, part **B. Rahab SAVES her family by PROTECTING God's people.** Rahab is a gentile prostitute, a non-Jew, the last person who'd be counted as one of God's people under Old Testament Jewish law; yet she's in Jesus' lineage because of her faith. **[Show Rahab]** Her story takes place before the walls of Jericho fall. She helps two Israelite spies sent to scout before they attack Jericho. She declares her faith in God, hides the spies, boldly defies Jericho's king, and confidently asks the spies to spare her and her family. The Israelites march, God topples the walls, the Israelites capture Jericho, and Rahab and her family join God's people. Do you have faith to act decisively? Rahab's motivated by a genuine belief in God's power. His inclusive grace covers her and her family. Her faith saves her. Is God calling you to lead courageously? Moses, Joshua, and Rahab display faith in action at considerable personal risk. Moses left Egypt behind to suffer with God's people. Joshua risked death at the hands of Jericho's army. Rahab risked defying her king to protect God's servants. Where do you put your trust? Are you grasping at worldly security or are you stepping out in faith, obedience in action, to follow God's call?

[Communion] Let's celebrate communion! Take your packet and open the wafer while I read from **Matthew 26:26-30: "As [the disciples] were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then He broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, 'Take this and eat it, for this is My body.'"** Hold up your wafer: *"Jesus, thank You for giving Your body on the cross for us. We honor our faith heroes who took action in obedience to point us to You, Jesus. You reveal Yourself to us through them. We eat this wafer as a symbol of our faith in You, Lord Jesus."* Let's eat together. Now open your cup while I continue in Matthew: **"...[Jesus] took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to [the disciples] and said, 'Each of you drink from it, for this is My blood, which confirms the covenant between God and His people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many. Mark My words—I will not drink wine again until the day I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom.'"** Hold up your cup: *"Jesus, thank You for shedding Your blood so that we might have life, faith, and hope in You forever. We drink this juice as a symbol of Your blood cleansing our sins, fear, and passivity. We celebrate how You've revealed Yourself to us today, Jesus. Amen."* Let's drink together. Kathe will close.