

Remember:

**FAITH IS CONFIDENT OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S WORD,
IN SPITE OF CIRCUMSTANCE OR CONSEQUENCE**

- 1. FAITH IS ABOUT PLEASING GOD**
- 2. FAITH IS ABOUT BELIEVING IN GOD**
- 3. FAITH IS ABOUT SEEKING GOD’S WILL**

TODAY’S TEXT

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he *to whom it was said, “In Isaac your descendants shall be called.”* He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come. By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.

THE FAITH OF RESURRECTION (11:17-19 - Abraham)**GOD CALLS ABRAHAM 5 TIMES IN GENESIS**

Note: God first calls Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldeans, revealed in Acts 7:2

1. Chapter 12 – A call to leave Haran / a call to bless through descendants
2. Chapter 15 – A call to an heir through Abraham / Abraham’s faith counted as righteousness
3. Chapter 17 – Affirmation of the promise / name changed / a son through Sarah
4. Chapter 18 – Visit of 3 angels / promise of a son through Sarah next year / judgment of Sodom & Gomorrah
5. Chapter 22 – Call to sacrifice Isaac – faith’s ultimate test

ABRAHAM’S TRIPLE FAITH TEST

1. A Test of Devotion (11:17) - offering up what is most precious
2. A Test of Spiritual Understanding (11:18) - accepting apparent contradiction
3. A Test of God’s character (11:19) – believing in the One who can make the impossible possible

A LIVING PARABLE

1. Jesus – The Heavenly Father’s only begotten Son (John 3:16)
2. Jesus – the Lamb of God (John 1:29)
3. Jesus carried the wood implement of his sacrifice (John 19:17)
4. Jesus walked up the hill of Moriah / Golgotha (2 Chr. 3:1; John 19:17)
5. The seemingly impossible happened (risen-Luke 24:6)
6. Faith is demonstrated by believing the impossible (John 8:56; Rom. 10:9-10)
John 8:56 [Jesus:] Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.

Romans 10:9 If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

THE FAITH OF PROVIDENCE (11:20-21 – Isaac and Jacob)

ISAAC

The account of aged Isaac blessing his twin sons, Esau and Jacob, is found in Genesis 27. The account of aged Jacob (now called Israel) blessing his son Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, is found in Genesis 48.

Both accounts show the providence of God that supersedes the wisdom of men.

In the first account, younger twin Jacob, with the help of his mother, deceives father Isaac into giving him the greater blessing of abundance and mastery over his relatives. We now know that Jacob was in the line of the Messiah Jesus, and was passed on the blessing given to grandfather Abraham. When older twin Esau finds out, he pleads with his father Jacob for a blessing, but there is only a blessing of living by the sword and being restless. And we now know that Esau became the father of the Edomites –enemies of the Israelites. (Petra of today is in ancient Edom)

Even though it might seem to us unfair, God' providence superseded the wisdom of men. And the writer of Hebrews tells us that it was by faith that Isaac gave those blessings exactly as God intended.

JACOB

Likewise, an aged Jacob, renamed by God as Israel, had 12 sons who became the "twelve tribes of Israel." Joseph, the second from the youngest became the blessing and "savior" of the family, even though he was despised and sold into slavery by his brothers – a type of Jesus not received or honored by his own people (John 1:12).

Late in Jacob/Israel's life he gave blessing to his son Joseph's two boys: Manasseh the oldest, and Ephraim the younger. The aged Jacob/Israel could not see. And when Manasseh approached his grandfather he approached to Jacob's right hand to receive the greater blessing, and Ephraim approached to Jacob's left hand to receive the lesser blessing. But for some reason we now know as the faith of Jacob and the providence of God, Jacob crossed his hands and gave Ephraim the younger the greater blessing.

Today, as followers of Christ we must view the courses of history that we don't understand or might even perceive as being unfair, as demonstrating the providence of God. As God put it through the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.

Who are we to question whether the course of nations and rulers (or elections), and even the course of our life might not be exactly what God has intended for his greater purposes? By faith, we trust the course of this sinful world to eventually play into the perfect will and plan of God. That is the faith of providence.

And for our life of faith in God, we trust His promise of Romans 8:28:

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose

THE FAITH OF PROMISE (11:22 - Joseph)

At the very end of Genesis, in chapter 50, we find that Joseph is about to die:

Genesis 50:24-25 *Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob." Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "... and you shall carry my bones up from here."*

Have you ever taken notice of how promisingly the book of Genesis begins;
Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

And yet how despairingly Genesis ends:

Genesis 50:26 So Joseph died at the age of 110 years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

At the end of the Genesis account, the account of the beginning of the earth and the human race – WE NEED A SAVIOR !

Joseph's faith is documented as trusting God's promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of a promised land given to the children of Jacob, including himself as one of the 12 sons. And so rather than receiving the pomp and ceremony of an Egyptian burial that he would surely have received as the second in command of Egypt, including a pyramid in his memory, he chose to have his bones buried unceremoniously in the promised land of Canaan. And for this, he had to believe in an eventual exodus from Egypt that he would never see.

JOSEPH'S TESTIMONY OF FAITH

- √ a 400 year old unburied coffin
- √ No pyramid in Egypt to house his embalmed sarcophagus
- √ Moses bringing *Joseph's bones out of Egypt (Exodus 13:19)*
- √ His bones finally buried in the promised land (Joshua 24:32)
- √ *A life that is a type of Jesus our Savior*

Charles Spurgeon:

"The Holy Spirit in this chapter [Hebrews 11] selects out of good men's lives the most brilliant instances of their faith. I should hardly have expected that He would have mentioned the dying scene of Joseph's life as the most illustrious proof of his faith in God . . . Does not this tell us, dear brethren and sisters, that we are very poor judges of what God will most delight in?"

OUR RESPONSE OF FAITH

May we fully embrace our ultimate resurrection, because Jesus has risen !

May we fully embrace the providence of God, knowing He will work all for His good !

May we fully embrace the promise of a glorious promised land beyond this life !