



Sunday, February 13, 2022
Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to Hebrews 11:11-12, 17-19

What is the strength of God’s promises? In many ways that is what is at the root of the tests we face as Christians. Are God’s promises solid enough for me to live as though they are true, even when it costs me? Ultimately the “unseen” part of our faith is simply that: What has God promised to do that is yet in the future? Of course, God is Spirit, and no one can see God except to see Jesus, but the “unseen” nature of faith is often that we cannot see the fulfillment of His promises.

So, we are faced with a choice. Do we really believe God’s promises to us, or do we think that He won’t deliver on them? The answer, as it did for Abraham, doesn’t ultimately lie with what we think or say about ourselves, but with how we live our lives and the choices we make. For Abraham, taking his *one and only* son, a point that Genesis 22 makes emphatically, up on the mountain to kill him required a faith that God would provide the sacrifice (which He ultimately did) or that God would raise his son from the dead, having obediently followed the command he was given. Either way, Abraham proved to be a man of faith. Will we be shown to have similar faith?

Context

In Hebrews 11, the author is making the argument that the faith of the “great ones” of old is the same faith we must possess today. The way they related to God resembles the way we must relate to God. We trust promises that are not yet fulfilled. We long for a country that is not yet our own. We hope for a future that is free from all the trials and tribulations that are features of this life. For Abraham, this not only meant trusting that God would provide a child that seemed impossible for him to have, but also trusting that while he might live as a sojourner in the land for his whole life, that his descendants one day might possess it.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Gen. 22:1-19; Heb. 11:11-12, 17-19

“Faith’s Greatest Fire”

Faith embraces the promise

Faith refined in the process

By faith received the son

By faith released the son

A little faith will bring your soul to heaven, but great faith will
bring heaven to your soul

Discuss

- 1) What would you say has been the greatest test your faith has endured?
- 2) According to Hebrews 11, why was Abraham able to endure the test in Genesis 22?
- 3) What do you believe about God that would enable you to endure tests of your faith?
- 4) Read Matthew 4:1-11. What do you notice about the way Jesus endured the temptations He faced?
- 5) Why is it good that our faith be tested?