

HEBREWS CHAPTER 11 – HEROES OF FAITH

Lesson #18

DAVID
Hebrews 11:32

“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets....”

We have been studying faith in the lives of the persons mentioned in Hebrews chapter eleven. David is the eighteenth named person in the Hall of Faith. In each life we have seen faith in action, deeds done because the individuals put feet and hands to their faith. John Calvin said, “Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is never alone.” Faith is always accompanied by works, as James emphasizes. (James 2:20)

In the introduction to Hebrews chapter eleven, in his book *Conversations*, Eugene Peterson comments: “In order for faith to be faith, it must be *lived* faith. Something visible, tangible, palpable. It must be walked out, a step at a time, a day at a time.... The vocabulary of faith is a vocabulary of action, of response to what God has said and to what he has done. The focus is on *acting*, on making a move toward God, one step at a time.”

If it is an active faith that you want to see, we have come to the right character when we come to David. Who, in the Christian community, has not heard of David, the shepherd boy who became king? There are few stories of persons who arose from obscurity to authority that are more well known than that of David. David, a country boy who has a city named for him, “the city of David” (Luke 2:11); David, a peasant who became a prince; David, a singer and writer of songs who saved his people with a slingshot!

Chuck Swindoll writes about David as follows: “Would it surprise you to learn that more has been written about David than about any other biblical character? Abraham has some fourteen chapters dedicated to his life, and so does Joseph. Jacob has eleven. Elijah ten. But do you have any idea how many are dedicated to David? Sixty-six, if my counting is correct, and that does not include some fifty-nine references to his life in the New Testament.”

Not only is he mentioned more than any other Old Testament individual in the pages of the New Testament, but David is the only person in Scripture to be called “a man after God’s own heart,” and that comment appears two times. (1 Sam.13:14; Acts 13:22) He was a great man, yet far from perfect. He is one of the models of faith mentioned in Hebrews chapter eleven.

There are so very many passages in the Bible that record David’s great faith in God, that it is difficult to know just where to begin a review of his faith life. There were failures in David’s life, like all the men and women of faith past and present. However, David’s faith enabled him to overcome his failures. Let us begin by observing some of the times, of the many, where David’s great faith is clearly displayed.

LET US REFLECT UPON DAVID’S FAITH AS FOLLOWS:

DAVID'S FAITH IN HIS CHAMPIONSHIP OVER GOLIATH. Faith imparts courage.

The account of the youthful David never ceases to thrill us. The boy David, went up against a 9 foot giant named Goliath and killed him with a slingshot. How did he do that? Because his faith was focused on the size of his God, not the size of the giant. His faith in the great God was put into action. That's what faith is, belief in action! Part of the scriptural account reads:

"Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." (I Samuel 17:32-37)

And continuing, David said, *"This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands."* (I Samuel 17:46-47)

Each day the Philistine "champion" named Goliath would come out from the Philistine camp to taunt the Israelites. His size was intimidating. Goliath He wore a helmet and shin guards made of bronze. His body armor weighed nearly 200 pounds. The head of his spear was made of iron and weighed about 15 pounds and he had a soldier walking before him with a shield.

Goliath made his daily appearance and issued his challenge striking fear in the hearts of the Israelite army once again and David accepted his challenge. When Goliath saw that David was but an unarmed boy he cursed David in the names of his gods. David boasted that he would decapitate Goliath and through this victory all the earth would know that there was a God in Israel.

As Goliath began to move toward him, David loaded his sling and sent a small stone flying which lodged in the giant's forehead. He was down but not dead until David cut off his head with the giant's own sword. The Philistines fled. Saul's army pursued and the victory was complete. David's faith empowered him to fight with courage despite overwhelming odds.

True story? Yes! God and a believing boy with 5 small stones and a slingshot won a victory over thousands that day. Just like the day the lad with the lunch who gave Jesus 5 small loaves of bread and saw thousands fed on another day!

There are giants that intimidate us today. You probably will not go head to head with a 9 foot tall giant, but all of us face things in our lives that intimidate us. David's faith and courage

serve as an example to each of us whenever we face giant problems. That is why Hebrews chapter eleven is part of the Word of God.

DAVID'S FAITH IN HIS HARDSHIPS OF LIFE. *Faith ignites when crushed.*

David had been anointed to be king by Samuel – he was the king-elect (I Sam. 16:12-13) but it would be twenty years before he would be crowned king. In the meantime Saul was king and during this time David's life was in constant danger because of the jealousy of Saul. After several attempts by Saul to kill him, David escaped and hid in the cave of Adullam. (I Sam. 22:1)

Eugene Peterson says this about David's troubles: "David isn't an advertisement for a trouble-free life Living a Davidic life, following Jesus, centering our life in the worship of God doesn't exempt us from suffering. Christians get cancer in the same proportions as non-Christians. Believers are involved in as many automobile accidents as non-believers. When you hit your thumb with a hammer, it hurts just as much after you've accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior as it did before." (Leap Over a Wall)

These were some of the darkest days of David's life - the king-elect hiding in a cave. He had hit bottom; Saul's 3,000 soldiers were scouring the hills for him; food was in short supply, water was scarce, friends were few. Will he cave-in in the cave? Will he give up on God?

Faith is often like a stick-match that ignites when scratched on a rough surface! Resistance brings out faith at its best. We do not need faith to enjoy a picnic on a sunny day with family and friends eating watermelon. But when in a dark, damp cave hiding from enemies who intend to kill you and the necessities of life are scarce, it is then that faith, if one has any, ignites! If David has any faith in God, this is where it will shine.

Psalms 142 was written in the cave of Adullam. The heading at the top of the Psalm reads: "A Contemplation of David. A Prayer when he was in the cave." Read his cry to God from the cave:

Psalm 142

"I cry out to the LORD with my voice;
With my voice to the LORD I make my supplication.
I pour out my complaint before Him;
I declare before Him my trouble.
When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,
Then You knew my path.
In the way in which I walk
They have secretly set a snare for me.
Look on my right hand and see,
For there is no one who acknowledges me;
Refuge has failed me;
No one cares for my soul.
I cried out to You, O LORD:
I said, "You are my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living.
Attend to my cry,

For I am brought very low;
 Deliver me from my persecutors,
 For they are stronger than I.
 Bring my soul out of prison,
 That I may praise Your name;
 The righteous shall surround me,
 For You shall deal bountifully with me.”

Chuck Swindoll comments as follows: “In the midst of all this, David has not lost sight of God. He cries out for the Lord to deliver him. And here we catch sight of the very heart of the man, that unseen quality that God saw when He chose and anointed the young shepherd boy from Bethlehem.”

Psalm 57 is another cave-man Psalm. The heading reads: “A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul into the cave.” Read the entire Psalm. Here are a few excerpts that give an indication of what he is thinking. See if you can detect David’s faith in this Psalm:

Psalm 57

“Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me!
 For my soul trusts in You;
 And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge,
 Until these calamities have passed by.
 I will cry out to God Most High,
 To God who performs all things for me.
 He shall send from heaven and save me;
 He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. Selah
 God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.”

(vs.1-3)

And then these verses: “My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;

I will sing and give praise.
 Awake, my glory!
 Awake, lute and harp!
 I will awaken the dawn.
 I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples;
 I will sing to You among the nations.
 For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens,
 And Your truth unto the clouds.
 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
 Let Your glory be above all the earth.” (vs.7-11)

When I was shopping for a diamond ring for my bride to be, the jeweler placed a black velvet mat on the top of the showcase and sprinkled a small bag of diamonds upon it. The sparkling diamonds were in sharp contrast to the darkness around them. Diamonds shine brightest when set in a black background. Likewise, stars are seen best in a dark sky.

The diamond of faith and the star of faith, show up best in dark settings. The “valley of the

shadow of death” brings out the sheep’s faith in the Shepherd. David’s faith shines brightly during the dark days when Saul was threatening him.

“Living by faith doesn’t mean living with our eyes closed, denying our troubles. Living by faith means that even though we’re hemmed in by our troubles, we lift our eyes to heaven so we can see our troubles from God’s perspective and how he is using them in our lives not only to shape us but to bless us.” (Eugene Peterson in *Conversations*)

DAVID’S FAITH IN HIS LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNMENT. *Faith invigorates capabilities.*

“Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, “Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, ‘You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.’” Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.” (II Samuel 5:1-5)

David was Israel’s greatest king, the great grandson of Ruth, and the forefather of Jesus, the promised Messiah. Israel’s second king was an extremely popular person, a very dedicated king and a brave warrior. The following passages are just a few of the examples of David’s leadership:

“Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. So David inquired of the LORD, saying, “Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?” And the LORD said to David, “Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand.” So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there.” (II Samuel 5:17-20)

And his exploits continue: *“Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. Therefore David inquired of the LORD and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.” (II Samuel 5:22-23 and 25)*

II Samuel chapter 8 contains the record of many more of David’s accomplishments as excerpts from the chapter reveal:

“After this it came to pass that David attacked the Philistines Then he defeated Moab..... David also defeated Hadadezer David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians.... Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David’s servants So the LORD preserved David wherever he went. And David made himself a name when he returned from killing eighteen thousand Syrian in the Valley of Salt. He also put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David’s servants. And the LORD preserved David wherever he went So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered judgment and justice to all his people.

God did not choose David for his looks, but for his heart. What was inside and not what was outside David counted. What mattered were not his human qualifications, but his godly qualities and especially his faith. David's imperfections were glaring but his heart for God brought him back to his roots in God and the Spirit of God transformed, empowered and equipped him for the work God had for him. God honored David's faith and God honors those who operate on the principle of faith, even though there may be lapses of faith in the lives of the persons of faith.

DAVID'S FAITH IN HIS WORSHIP OF GOD. *Faith issues in consecration.*

Worship from a pure heart, spontaneous worship, worship when everything is not going well is the real barometer of one's faith. David's worshipful attitude is expressed beautifully in various scriptures. It is difficult to know which ones to cite as examples. A few verses from Psalm 71 is a good sample of his worshipful faith: *"You are my hope, O Lord GOD; You are my trust from my youth. By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You."* (vs.5-6)

Another window into David's life of worship shows us his faith and dedication to God. He had been contemplating building a House of Worship dedicated to God. Then God told him that his son, Solomon, would build the Temple. David then worshipped and here is the record: *"Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: "Who am I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord GOD, know Your servant. For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know therefore You are great, O Lord GOD. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God."* (II Samuel 7:18-24)

People of faith are characterized by worship – genuine worship. Not just attending a service called a "Worship Service," but by celebrating, eulogizing and praising God in the sanctuary of the soul; with humble yet high and holy thoughts; adoration, with or without words, with or without sounds; in private or in public; alone or with others of like precious faith. If you do not enjoy worship or employ worship regularly as an expression of your faith, you had better check up on your faith for it is not the Bible variety!

DAVID'S FAITH IN HIS OWNERSHIP OF HIS SIN. *Faith induces confession.*

David was not perfect. He, like all the other heroes of faith had warts. David sinned. What he did about his sin reveals that his faith failure was not permanent. Because he was a man of faith, he dealt with his sin as Psalm 51 so graphically shows. Psalm 51 is the most intensive and extensive confession in the Bible. His sin with Bathsheba was not swept under the rug. He dealt with it before God.

Confessing sin is owning up to one's sin. We can blame others for our sinful actions, like saying "the devil made me do it" or "they just made me so angry that I"; or "I just have a hot temper....", etc. Confession is not blaming; confession is naming. Confession is coming before God, the Judge and pleading guilty.

The person who has true faith is sensitive to sin and believes that *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9) In this vein David confesses his sin to God and we read about the struggle in Psalm 51. The psalm is a masterpiece of confession.

He said, *"Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight."* (Psalm 51:1-4)

Notice the terminology that he uses in his confession. First, the three words he uses in asking God to forgive: He asks God to "*blot* "; "*wash*" and "*cleanse*." In other words, he wanted to be rid of his stain. Then, note the three terms he uses for his offences against God: "*transgressions*"; "*iniquity*" and "*sin*."

He continues: *"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God...."* (vs.7-19)

Here is a man thoroughly contrite, broken, remorseful and repentant. He abhorred his sin, acknowledged his guilt and confessed that he had sinned against the God Who had done nothing but good to him all the days of his life.

Later, in Psalm 32 he reflects upon his confession and God's forgiveness and he has the assurance that God did indeed forgive him, saying: *"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit."* (vs.1-2)

Then he recounts the misery that his sin had caused him before he confessed it to God: *"When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah."* (Psalm 32:3-5)

I do not mean to be trite in saying that David felt the pain, stain, strain and drain of his sin, proving what? Proving that he was indeed a man of faith! He was sorry for his sin; sorry that he had broken the heart of God and he owned up to his sin, confessed and forsook it. Only a person of faith does that.

DAVID'S FAITH IN HIS PENMANSHIP OF PSALMS. *Faith inspires communication.*

Genuine faith cannot be kept silent, it insists upon being shared, spoken, sung. David communicated his faith in various ways but in none that surpass his writings. Where do we begin to demonstrate David's faith as expressed in the many Psalms attributed to him? It is somewhat like standing beside the ocean and trying to decide at which place to plunge in. Let us sample his Psalms and notice how he expresses his faith. Here are some snippets:

His faith is seen in his view of God:

"I will love You, O LORD, my strength.
The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."
(Psalm 18:1-2)

His faith is seen in his view of the cosmos:

"O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth,
Who have set Your glory above the heavens! (Psalm 8:1)

"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him? (Psalm 8:3-4

"The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork." (Psalm 19:1)

His faith is seen in his view of himself:

"I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.
My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written,
The days fashioned for me,
When as yet there were none of them." (Psalm 139:14-16)

His faith is seen in his praise:

"I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise shall continually *be* in my mouth.
My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.
Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together."

(Psalm 34:1-3)

His faith is seen in his fellowship with God:

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight,
O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer." (Psalm 19:14)

“How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
If I should count them, they would be more in number than
the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.....
Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:17-18;23-24)

His faith is seen in his love for God’s Word:

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;
The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” (Psalm 19:7-10)

His faith is seen in the way of daily victory:

“Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass.” (Psalm 37:3-5)

CONCLUSION

We could go on and on talking about the evidences of David’s faith. The divine record is replete with stories, events, actions, words, successes and failures, victories and defeats in which his faith is evident. We have seen enough to understand why he is included in the Faith Chapter of the Bible. His name, as well as all those mentioned in this chapter, are not there to honor them or elevate them above all others who ever exemplified faith, but to encourage us, by their example, to live by faith.

The secret of living a life of faith that makes a difference, is realizing that it is not what you do for yourself, but rather it is what you allow God to do for others through you. This is how we make a difference in this world, and how we make a lasting impact.

Songwriter, Steve Green, puts it this way:

**"Oh, may all who come behind us find us faithful,
May the fire of our devotion light their way.
May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe,
And the lives we live inspire them to obey.
Oh, may all who come behind us find us faithful!"**