HUDSON'S HOPE CHAPEL

Faith That Looks Forward

May 24, 2026 · Series: Greater Still - The Glory of Jesus in Hebrews · Luke Hughes-Bunger

Main Passage: Hebrews 11:1-40 (ESV)

Big Idea: Faith takes God at His word and orders life around His promises, even when fulfillment feels delayed, incomplete, or costly.

Introduction

Near the end of *The Truman Show*, Truman Burbank has to decide whether he will stay inside the familiar world he has always known or move toward a reality he cannot yet fully see.

That picture helps us with Hebrews 11. Faith means staking your life on a reality you cannot yet fully see because you have become persuaded that it is true. The Christian life is not the power of positive thinking. It is not confidence in ourselves. It is taking God seriously enough to let His word define reality for us.

Hebrews 11 shows what that kind of faith looks like. It is not a chapter about religious celebrities or quick visible success. It is a chapter about God's people hearing His word, trusting His promises, obeying before they possess, and continuing on even when fulfillment still seems far away.

Faith Lives on God's Word Before It Sees God's Fulfillment

Hebrews 11 begins, *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen"* (Heb. 11:1).

This is not just a neat definition to memorize. It describes the whole life-pattern the chapter is about to display. Faith is confidence in what God has promised, even when we cannot yet see the full shape of its fulfillment.

That is why verse 3 says we understand the world itself by the word of God. Faith receives God's account of reality. It says that God's voice is weightier than our present sight.

Noah gives us a clear example. Hebrews says he was warned by God concerning events "as yet unseen" and built the ark in reverent fear (Heb. 11:7). Noah had not yet seen the flood, but God had spoken. So Noah acted.

Verse 6 takes us right to the heart of the matter: *"without faith it is impossible to please him."* Faith believes that God is and that He rewards those who seek Him. In other words, faith begins with God. It does not begin with our emotional certainty or our own inner strength.

This matters for us because many people think the Christian life rises or falls on whether they feel confident enough. Hebrews says something different. The question is not whether we feel heroic. The question is whether we will let God's word define reality for us.

Faith Obeys and Endures Even Without Immediate Possession

From verse 8 onward, the chapter slows down over Abraham and Sarah.

Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out, "not knowing where he was going" (Heb. 11:8). He had the word of God, not a full map. Later he lived in the land of promise as a stranger, still in tents, because he was "looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God" (Heb. 11:10).

Sarah also lived by faith because she "considered him faithful who had promised" (Heb. 11:11). That is the logic of faith. Not, "I can already see how this will work," but, "He is faithful."

Then the writer pauses and gives one of the most important statements in the chapter:

"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar..." (Heb. 11:13)

That line helps us enormously. Faith is not measured by how quickly visible outcomes arrive. Some of God's people died still waiting, and they were not failures. They were commended.

Hebrews says they were strangers and exiles on the earth, seeking a homeland, desiring "a better country, that is, a heavenly one" (Heb. 11:16). Faith lives toward what God has prepared, not merely toward what can be touched today.

Moses makes the same point in a different way. He turned from the treasures of Egypt and chose mistreatment with God's people because he was "looking to the reward" (Heb. 11:26). Rahab is also included, reminding us that faith is not for the impressive only. It is for those who take God at His word.

So Hebrews 11 helps us when life feels delayed or unclear. The faithful often saw the promise from afar and kept walking.

Faith Keeps Going Because God Has Provided Something Better in Christ

In verses 32-38, the chapter speeds up. We hear of people who conquered kingdoms, escaped danger, and saw remarkable deliverances. But we also hear of people who were mocked, imprisoned, tortured, and killed.

That balance matters. Hebrews will not let us say that faith always produces obvious earthly success. Some conquered by faith. Others suffered by faith. Both belong in the same chapter.

That means suffering does not automatically mean faith has failed. Nor does visible success automatically prove faithfulness. God's verdict is what matters most, and verse 38 gives it: *"of whom the world was not worthy."*

Then the chapter closes:

"And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us..." (Heb. 11:39-40)

That word "better" ties chapter 11 to the whole letter.

Hebrews has been showing us:

- a better Priest
- a better covenant
- a better sacrifice
- and now a better country

The whole story was always moving toward Christ. The saints of old trusted the same God and moved toward the same fulfillment, but we now live with clearer light because Christ has come, died, risen, and opened the way.

We still live by faith and not by sight. We still wait for the city to come. But we wait on this side of the cross and the empty tomb.

Application and Conclusion

Hebrews 11 gives us a much steadier view of faith than the world does.

Faith is not self-invented certainty. Faith is not spiritual hype. Faith is not worldly success wearing Christian language.

Faith is hearing God, trusting Him, obeying Him, and continuing on when the promise still seems far away.

So this week:

- ask what is really defining reality for you right now: God's word or present sight
- obey where God has already spoken, even if you do not yet see the whole path
- do not treat delay as proof that God has forgotten you
- keep seeking the better country God has promised in Christ

If you are not trusting Christ, the call of this chapter is not to create a vague spiritual feeling. It is to entrust yourself to the God who has spoken in His Son.

If you are a believer, do not despise the ordinary slowness of the life of faith. The saints saw the promise from afar, greeted it from afar, and were commended. So keep going.

Discussion Guide Questions

1. Why is *The Truman Show* a helpful opening picture for Hebrews 11?
2. What does Hebrews 11:1 mean by "the assurance of things hoped for" and "the conviction of things not seen"?
3. Why is Noah such a clear example of faith in verses 6-7?
4. How does Hebrews 11 show that faith begins with God rather than with confidence in ourselves?
5. What stands out to you about Abraham obeying "not knowing where he was going"?

6. Why are verses 13-16 so important for understanding the whole chapter?
7. What does it mean to live as "strangers and exiles on the earth" today?
8. How does Moses help us see the difference between immediate comfort and future reward?
9. Why is Rahab an important inclusion in this chapter?
10. How do verses 32-38 correct prosperity-style ideas about faith?
11. What is the "something better" God has provided for us in verses 39-40?
12. Where do you most need to trust God's word over your present sight this week?