

Stories of Faith Week 1:

Hebrews 11 “Faith in Things Unseen”

By Rev Jonny Grant

Pray: Lord, we thank you that you are the creator, sustainer and restorer of everything, including us. We pray that you would open our eyes to see your fingerprints of faithfulness in the stories of your people and in our lives today.

Read: As a group, read Hebrews 11 aloud, each person reading out a few verses at a time.

What is Faith?

At the beginning of this chapter, the author gives us a working definition of Biblical faith. He says (verses 1-2): “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.”

When you think about this description of faith, and the stories mentioned in this chapter, what are some of the challenges we face seeking to trust our lives to invisible realities? What are the invisible things and things not yet seen that you believe in? How do they affect your daily decisions?

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

The author of Hebrews describes our genealogy of faith or spiritual whakapapa as followers of Christ through these “ancients,” not because they are distant from us or that their experiences are unique, but because they are our faith mentors and show us the timeless characteristics of faith.

*Is there a Biblical character that you identify with especially?
What is it about his or her experience that draws you to them?
What can you learn and apply from their faith and relationship with God?*

Leaving Home

Read verses 13-16. This passage uses the metaphor of leaving a familiar home or city to travel towards a new heavenly city or country; one that remains in the distance. This points of course to our ultimate destiny in the Age to Come, but it also describes the journey of faith we experience now in common with the “ancients” before us.

When we lived in Vancouver before coming home, we experienced two journeys of faith that coincided with each other and which each fit the pattern described in Hebrews. First, I felt called to write a full manuscript for a book before I had received a publishing contract. As if that wasn't enough, we also felt called to leave Vancouver for Auckland before my role at St Paul's had been confirmed; in fact, when it still seemed a long way off. Both were unusual courses of action that reversed the normal process of decision-making. In both cases, we sensed that God was asking us to set off for a new place before the destination or final plan was confirmed. This took a lot of faith and trust that God would fulfil His plans and resonated with Hebrews 11.

Have you experienced a time when God has called you to set off before the plan was fully formed or the final destination certain?

How did God confirm His calling? How did that journey unfold? What did you learn about God?

When you look back on your life, where can you see God's faithfulness?

Are there situations in your life now that you need to trust God with and seek His guidance?

Closing Prayer: Lord, fill us with courage to follow you with the eyes of faith, knowing that you are the good Shepherd who has already gone before us and a made a way forward. Help us to keep our eyes fixed on your good plans and the future you have prepared for us. Amen