By Faith
Hebrews 11:27-40

Getting Started

- Modern culture is increasingly driven by a demand for immediate results and instant gratification. How does this "instant" mindset hinder our ability to trust God when his promises seem to linger or remain unfulfilled?

- Historic cathedrals were often built over centuries, meaning the original architects knew they would never see the finished product in their lifetime. How does this concept of "Cathedral Thinking" compare to the biblical definition of faith described in this passage?

Key Ideas for Discussion

Act I: Moses and the Courage to Choose Discomfort (v.23-27)
Act II: Joshua, Rahab, and the Absurdity of Divine Math (v.28-31)
Act III: The Spectrum of Faith—Triumph, Tragedy, and Flawed Saints (v.32-40)
Act IV: Cathedral Thinking and the Finished Work (v.39-40)

TT: Faith provides a "larger-than-this-life" vision and purpose for living.

Digging Deeper **(Read the sermon text again and discuss the following questions.)**

Courage and Discomfort

1. **The Radical Choice of Moses:** At forty years of age, Moses made a deliberate "negative choice" by refusing to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Why does the author contrast the "fleeting pleasures of sin" in the Egyptian royal court with choosing to be mistreated alongside God's slave people? What does this choice reveal about the long-term nature of faith?

2. **Regarding "Disgrace for the Sake of Christ":** What does the writer mean when he says Moses regarded "disgrace for the sake of Christ" as of greater value than all the treasures of Egypt? How could Moses experience the "reproach of Christ" centuries before the Incarnation, and how did "looking ahead to his reward" alter his economic and moral calculations?

Obedience and the Unlikely (v. 29–31)

1. **The Logic of Faith:** The crossing of the Red Sea and the fall of Jericho required Israel to act in ways that contradicted human military logic. Based on the text, how does faith bridge the gap between God's commands and human understanding?
2. **Rahab's Distinctiveness:** Rahab was a Gentile and an outsider. What does her inclusion in this "Hall of Faith" suggest about the nature of the New Covenant, which the commentary describes as a "Jewish religion that has grafted in the Gentiles"?

The Use of Flawed Vessels (v. 32)

1. **Human Frailty and Divine Choice:** The author lists individuals like Gideon, Samson, and Jephthah—men with significant moral and character flaws. Drawing on the commentary's observation that even great "theological heroes" (like Martin Luther) have "profound blind spots," why do you think God chooses to work through such imperfect individuals?

The Two Faces of Faith (v. 33–38)

1. **Triumphant vs. Suffering Faith:** Verses 33–35a describe those who "conquered kingdoms" and "escaped the edge of the sword," while verses 35b–38 describe those who were "sawn in two" and "wandered in deserts." How does this contrast challenge the modern idea that "strong faith" always leads to physical or material success?
2. **Worldly Estimation:** What does the phrase "the world was not worthy of them" (v. 38) imply about the status of the "minority society" of believers living within a culture that may mock or persecute them?

The "Something Better" (v. 39–40)

1. **Defining Perfection:** Greek Lexicons define "perfection" (*teleiosis*) not as being "without flaws," but as "arriving at a desired end" or "reaching a goal." How were the Old Testament saints "made perfect" only in conjunction with us?
2. **The New Covenant Promise:** How does the "something better" provided in Christ (the New Covenant) answer the "nagging, debilitating guilt" and the "inability of the law to take away sins" that the saints of the past could not fully resolve?

Apply It!

- **Trusting God's Math:** Where in your life are you currently tempted to rely on human logic or "immediate results" rather than God's specific instructions? What would it look like to "trust God's math" in that situation this week?

- **Measuring Sustaining Grace:** We often measure our faith by what God *removes* (pain, trials, obstacles). How would your perspective change if you measured your faith by what God *sustains you through*? Identify a current trial where you need to ask for "sustaining faith" rather than just "removing faith."

- **Living for the "Something Better":** Knowing that we have a "better hope" and an "eternal inheritance" that is already ours in Christ, how should this "full assurance of faith" change your response to the "public insults" or "confiscation of joy" you might face in the world today?