

Dr. David A. deSilva, Hebrews, Session 10B, Hebrews 11:1-12:3: Faith in Action (Part 2)

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Welcome back, deep divers, ready for another fascinating exploration. Always. Awesome.

Today we're going to be diving into the whole idea of faith in action. Okay. Yeah.

And we're going to be using Dr. David A. deSilva's lecture on Hebrews 11 as our kind of roadmap. Ah, Hebrews 11. Yeah.

You have that chapter that's often called the, uh, what is it? The hall of fame of faith or something like that. The hall of faith. The hall of faith.

And get ready, folks. We're about to meet some pretty incredible figures. We're talking kings and prophets and everyday people facing like the most impossible odds.

Yeah. You know, it's interesting when you really look at Hebrews 11; it's not just like a highlight reel of, you know, Bible heroes. It's not just name dropping these, you know, big names.

It really digs into how their trust in God played out in their lives. So we're not just talking about believing the right things. We're talking about like actually doing something about it.

Exactly. Like putting your faith into action. And that's where it gets really exciting.

I like that. I like that. Dr. deSilva uses this analogy of a relay race.

Ooh, I like that. To describe how faith is passed down through generations, kind of leading up to Jesus. Okay.

So picture this: a chain of people, each one carrying a torch of faith forward, and they're passing it on through, you know, generations. Yeah. Each person's faith building on those who came before.

It's powerful stuff. And some of these stories, I mean, they're epic, right? Oh yeah. Conquering kingdoms, working for justice, promises fulfilled against all odds.

Absolutely. And the author doesn't shy away from the drama either. You know, they use all this vivid imagery, like shutting the mouths of lions, walking through fire unharmed, escaping the edge of the sword.

It's wild. It's like a, it's like a theological action movie. Right.

But what strikes me is how these stories, as crazy as they seem, still resonate with us today. Oh, totally. I mean, haven't we all faced situations where it felt impossible to stand up for what we believe in? You're sure.

You know, maybe not lion taming level, but still those moments where you have to choose what you're going to prioritize. It's about having that courage, that conviction. And these stories, they show us what that radical commitment can look like.

Yeah. And you know, it's about more than just personal bravery. When you dig a little deeper, you see these people dared to trust God's promises, even when the world was telling them something totally different.

It's like they were operating on a different level. Absolutely. Almost like a different reality.

And their actions had ripple effects that literally changed history. All right. Let's zoom in on a particular group mentioned in Hebrews 11.35. Okay.

The women who received back their dead. Dr. deSilva highlights some incredible examples. Elijah raising the widow's son.

Elisha reviving the Shunammite woman's son. Powerful stories of restoration. Right.

It's like life from death. It's incredible. What's the significance of that? What's going on there? Well, those stories add another dimension to what the chapter is exploring.

It's not just about faith in general. It's about God's power over death itself. That theme runs throughout Hebrews 11, ultimately culminating in the promise of resurrection.

And, you know, we see the fulfillment of that in Jesus. But these women and their stories, they give us a glimpse of that greater reality. Oh, interesting.

So it's like these little mini themes, these echoes within this one chapter. You've got these triumphant stories. You've got these incredible miracles.

But then things take a kind of darker turn, don't they? Yeah, there's definitely a shift in tone as we encounter those who faced intense suffering and even death because of their faith. The martyrs. Yeah, especially those who lived during the Hellenization crisis, a time when Jewish practices were brutally suppressed.

We're talking about Antiochus the Fourth trying to wipe out Jewish traditions, right? It was a time of intense persecution. And those stories, they really highlight the cost of discipleship sometimes. It's a stark reminder that standing up for what you believe in can come at a huge price.

For sure. The author points to the story of Eleazar and those seven brothers who refused to eat pork. That was a direct violation of their faith.

It's hard to fathom that kind of strength. And, you know, the world might look at those who suffered and died for their faith and say they lost, that they were victims. Right.

But the author challenges that perspective. They were victors in God's eyes. They held onto this promise of a better resurrection, a reality that transcended their earthly suffering.

So it's like they were living by a different set of rules. Absolutely. A different scorecard altogether.

They were citizens of a different kingdom. It makes you think about what it really means to live by a different set of values than the world around you. Definitely.

What sacrifices are we willing to make? It's a question we all have to grapple with because following this path of faith isn't always easy, right? No, it can be uncomfortable, even dangerous at times. But as we've seen so far, the rewards can be extraordinary. Absolutely.

And that brings us to a really bold statement in Hebrews 11.38: people of whom the world was not worthy. Whoa, that's a powerful statement. Yeah.

It's almost like who's judging who here? It flips the script. The world, with its limited perspective, couldn't grasp the true worth of these individuals who lived by faith. So it's not about fitting in.

It's about embracing a higher calling, even if that means standing out, being different. Exactly. And notice how the author describes their lives.

They were wandering in deserts, living in caves. They were on the fringes of society. Living in a different reality.

Yeah. Guided by something the world just couldn't see. Their faith in God.

It's like they were citizens of a different kingdom, a reality that transcended their circumstances. Which brings us to the climax of chapter 11, the ultimate example of faith in action, Jesus. Yes.

After this incredible lineup of faithful individuals was appointed to Jesus, she embodies faith in its most complete form. He endured the cross, the ultimate symbol of shame and suffering, but he did it for the joy set before him. For the joy set before him.

It's mind-blowing. He was so focused on the goal, on the eternal reward, that he considered the shame of the cross as nothing. Wow.

He was playing an entirely different game. And that idea of despising shame, that's a thread that's been woven throughout this whole chapter, hasn't it? It has. We've seen it with Abraham, with Moses, with the martyrs.

It's about choosing God's approval over the fleeting approval of the world. Dr. deSilva quotes John Chrysostom here, who said, Jesus died disgracefully for no other reason than to teach us to count as nothing the opinion of human beings. Powerful.

It really is. It gets to the heart of what it means to follow Jesus. It's a call to radical discipleship.

Absolutely. A willingness to embrace the upside-down nature of God's kingdom. It challenges us to reorient our lives around a different set of values, to prioritize God's approval over the fleeting accolades of the world.

And that's where it gets really practical for us. Dr. deSilva leaves us with this question. What's ultimately more real in your life? The tangible rewards of worldly pursuits or the unseen rewards of following God? That's a great question.

It really makes you examine your priorities. It does. Like, what are we really chasing after? And the beauty of Hebrews 11 is that it's not just theoretical.

It gives us concrete examples of what this kind of faith looks like in real life. These were real people with flaws and doubts who chose to trust God, even when it was hard, even when it didn't make sense. And their stories inspire us to do the same.

To run the race with endurance, keeping our eyes on the prize. Exactly. And you know, that leads us right into chapter 12.

Okay. Yeah. Where the author continues to use this athletic imagery.

He urges us to throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. That's good. I like that.

So the question for us is, what are those weights that might be holding us back? What keeps us from running freely towards Jesus? That's a great question to ponder. What are we allowing to take precedence over our relationship with God? It could be anything, really. Fear, doubt, pride, materialism, unhealthy relationships, anything that becomes more important to us than God.

Yeah. It's a call to self-reflection, to identify those things that have become idols in our lives, those things that we're prioritizing over our relationship with God. Right.

And to let go of them and surrender them to the one who offers true freedom and purpose. It's a journey of letting go and embracing God's transforming grace. It's beautiful and challenging.

It's an invitation to step into this legacy of faith, to join this great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us. Imagine that, this whole cheering section of faithful people. They get it.

They understand the challenges, and they're there rooting for us to keep going. And they're not just cheering us on. Their lives are proof that it's possible to finish the race, to persevere, to come out victorious.

We're not alone in this. We're part of something much bigger. You know, I love this idea of a relay race.

Each generation building on the faith of those who came before. It makes you think about your own place in that lineage. It does.

How are we impacting the people coming after us? Our actions have ripple effects. The way we live out our faith today will have an impact on future generations. It's humbling.

It is. And inspiring. Absolutely.

So as we kind of wrap up this first part of our deep dive into Hebrews 11, what's the one thing you hope our listeners take away? You know, for me, the core message is this. Faith isn't passive. It's not just about believing the right things.

True faith is active. It's about putting your trust in God into action, even when it's difficult, even when it doesn't make sense to the world. It's about aligning your life with the reality of the unseen, right? Trusting God's promises, even when you can't see the finish line.

That's it. And that's where the real challenge lies. What do we need to let go of to run this race with more freedom, with endurance? What's hindering us from fully embracing that life of faith that God has called us to? That's a great question to ponder.

What needs to change? Our priorities, our habits, our mindset. What do we need to do to align more fully with the values of God's kingdom? It's a lifelong process, a journey of growth and transformation. But you know what? As we immerse ourselves in these stories of faith, as we let them shape our understanding of what it means to truly follow Jesus, we become equipped and empowered to run the race with courage, with conviction, and with unwavering hope.

Absolutely. To all our deep divers out there, keep exploring Hebrews 11 on your own. Let these stories sink deep into your soul and ask yourself, how will you live out your faith in a way that honors God and inspires those around you? Keep diving deep, friends.

Until next time, may your faith be fueled by action. Yes. You know, it's interesting how this whole idea of shame keeps popping up.

It's like a countercultural thread woven through all these stories. It really is. It seems kind of paradoxical, doesn't it? Right.

Like we live in a world obsessed with image, reputation. Totally. But these figures, these heroes of faith, they're celebrated for despising shame.

It's a different value system altogether. Exactly. What do you think the author's trying to get at there? It's like the things the world might consider shameful.

You know, sacrifice, humility, standing up for unpopular beliefs. Those are like badges of honor in God's economy. Yeah, yeah.

It's a total reframing of what really matters. Like, think about Moses. Right.

He could have had all the wealth, the power of Egypt. Right. But he chose to identify with his people, the ones who were enslaved.

And he gave up everything. He turned his back on all the things the world prizes. And we see that same disregard for worldly approval in the martyrs.

Yeah, totally. They willingly face torture and death rather than compromise their conviction. They were looking beyond the immediate to a higher reality.

A different kingdom. Yes. It reminds me of that verse in Hebrews, for here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

Wow. Their eyes were fixed on a kingdom that went beyond this world. A kingdom where God's values are supreme.

And speaking of kingdoms, that brings us to the culmination of chapter 11, right? Yeah. The one who embodies this faith in action in its most perfect form. Jesus.

Jesus. After this whole procession of faithful men and women, the author points us to Jesus. Right.

The ultimate pioneer and perfecter of our faith. And notice how he endured the cross. Right.

The ultimate symbol of shame in Roman culture. It's hard to even wrap your mind around that. He did it for the joy set before him.

For the joy set before him. That just speaks to a whole other level of vision. Right.

And purpose, beyond human understanding. Totally. He was so focused on the goal, on that eternal reward.

Yeah. That he saw the shame of the cross as nothing. Wow.

He was playing a totally different game. With eternal stakes. Eternal stakes.

Exactly. And that idea of counting the opinion of human beings is nothing. Yeah.

That's what Dr. deSilva quotes from John Chrysostom, right? Yeah. That's the heart of it all, isn't it? It is. It's a call to radical discipleship.

A willingness to embrace the upside-down nature of God's kingdom. It's a challenge, for sure, to reorient our lives around a different set of values. To put God's approval above everything else.

And that's where it gets real, you know? Yeah. Dr. deSilva asks, what's ultimately more real in your life? The tangible rewards of worldly pursuits or the unseen rewards of following God? It cuts to the core. Like, what are our motivations? What are our dreams? What's our definition of success? And it's easy to get caught up in the pursuit of material wealth and career advancement.

Oh, yeah. Status. All that.

All that stuff. But this chapter challenges us to consider a different path. One that puts eternal values above temporal gain.

And what I love is that Hebrews 11 doesn't just present these abstract ideals. It gives us actual examples. Real people.

Real people. With flaws. Who chose to trust God.

Even when it was hard. When it didn't make sense. Exactly.

Their stories remind us that we can live lives of extraordinary faith, too. Lives that make a difference. It's like we're invited to join this lineage of faith.

This great cloud of witnesses is cheering us on. Love that. As we run our own race.

But it's not passive, is it? We're not spectators. Not at all. Right at the beginning of chapter 12, the author says, "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.

Powerful words. What do you think those weights are that might be holding us back? What keeps us from running freely toward Jesus? That's a great question. I think it could be anything, really.

Yeah. Fear. Doubt.

Pride. Materialism. Unhealthy relationships.

Anything that we prioritize above our relationship with God. It's a call to look inward. To really examine what's important to us.

To let go. Surrender it all to the one who offers true freedom and purpose. A process, isn't it? It is.

Of letting go and embracing. Of surrender and transformation. There's beauty in that.

This journey of becoming more like Christ. Of living out our faith in a way that really makes a difference. Absolutely.

So as we move into the final part of our deep dive, I'm really curious to explore what this faith in action looks like for us. Like right here, right now. Me too.

Let's get practical. How can we apply these ancient truths to our lives today? How can we live out our faith in bold and courageous ways? It's kind of mind-blowing to think about all those people, that great cloud of witnesses cheering us on. It's like we're surrounded by this massive cheering section of faith.

Exactly. And all their lives, their stories, they're not just inspirational, feel-good stories. No, not at all.

They offer some pretty practical wisdom. Oh, yeah. Totally.

Think about Abraham. Okay. He left everything familiar behind, everything comfortable, to follow God's call.

Blind faith. Blind faith. What does that radical obedience look like for us today? What does that look like? I mean, maybe it's letting go of that dream job that compromises our values, or moving to a new city to serve, or even just saying no to things that drain us, right? Things that keep us from really pursuing God's purpose.

So it's about recognizing God's voice in our lives. Amidst all the noise. Amidst all the noise.

And distractions. The distractions. And being willing to take that leap of faith.

Even when it feels scary. Even when it's scary. Even when it's hard.

Yeah. And then there's Moses. Oh, yeah, Moses.

Who chose to identify with his people, even though they were suffering. Rather than enjoy the comforts of the palace. Right.

He had it all in Egypt, and he gave it up. He saw the injustice. He chose to stand with them.

Even at a huge personal cost. So it's like his story challenges us, right? It does. To look beyond ourselves.

To consider the needs of others. Yeah. Like, how are we using our gifts, our resources?

Our influence. To really make a difference in the world. Are we willing to speak up against injustice? To advocate for those who are vulnerable.

To be a voice for the voiceless. These are big questions. They are.

But it's a good reminder that faith isn't just some private, you know, internal matter. Right, right. It should affect our actions.

Our relationships. How we engage with the world around us. It's about living it out.

Living it out every day. So as we wrap up this deep dive, I think it all comes back to faith in action. It does.

It's not passive. It's not just a belief system. Right.

It's an active, dynamic way of life. It's a verb. Faith is a verb.

And so that's the challenge, isn't it? To move beyond just knowing about it. To actually live it out. Yeah.

To let these stories from Hebrews 11 inspire us, challenge us. To push us. To push us to live more boldly, more courageously, more, you know, lovingly.

And maybe, just maybe, as we run our own race. Yeah. We become part of that great cloud of witnesses.

Inspiring others. Inspiring future generations to embrace a faith that truly makes a difference in the world. That's a great thought.

It is. To all our deep divers out there, keep exploring Hebrews 11. Let those stories really sink in.

Yeah. And ask yourselves, what does faith in action look like for you? Today. What's that one step you can take? That step of faith.

Thanks for joining us on this deep dive. Keep seeking. Keep exploring.

Keep living out your faith in bold and beautiful ways. Until next time.