

# “Impossible without Faith” // Hebrews 11:6, 17–40 // *Christ is Better*

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This is my first week back after several weeks on the road... warning: I haven't preached here in so long I feel like a Coke bottle that has been shaken up and is about to explode. If you like calm, soothing sermons this might be an unpleasant experience.

- (Of course, if you like calm, soothing preaching I'm not sure why you come to church here.)
- If I sound angry when I preach it's nothing personal, it's just how I get when I'm excited.

By the way, some of you have wondered how we determine when I'll be “off” a week preaching. It's whenever you bring a guest you want to introduce to our church. At least that is what I'd conclude from the notes I get. “I finally get my friend to come and you're not here. So I convince them to come back a 2<sup>nd</sup> week and you're not here again. So we give up and I come alone and then you preach for 8 weeks straight.”

Grateful for excellent teaching resources at the Summit Church (church planters we've sent out; campus pastors)

**HEBREWS 11: WE'RE IN A SERIES THROUGH HEBREWS CALLED *CHRIST IS BETTER*.**

This chapter, chapter 11, is all about faith. Your campus pastors did the first part of this chapter. I'm going to do the last half.

Here's a confession you won't hear often from a pastor: in many ways, it takes very little faith for me to follow Jesus.

- Denying God would be more costly for my family than following Him. Imagine if I came home and told Veronica, “I don't think I believe in God anymore!”
- Plus, my job requires me to be a Christian... that's like the first box on my job performance: “Is a Christian: check.”
- Plus, I have enough cash flow that I'm not usually worried about where the next meal is coming from... I'm not like: “*Oh, God if you don't come through for me my kids are not able to eat tonight.*”
- So it's really easy for me to walk with God and do Christian things without any real faith.
- But that can only take you so far.
  - If you're a thinking person, eventually you get confronted by something in the Bible that is really hard to believe. Sometimes I'll be in a discussion with someone who is not a Christian who will be challenging me on what I believe and they'll be like, “Surely you're not saying *this*?” and I think, “Am I saying that? Do I really believe that just because the Bible teaches it?”
  - Or I'll sense God asking me to do something that really puts things on the line: a financial sacrifice He wants me to make; or a right or privilege I should give up; or to put myself or my family in some kind of danger to obey and I'll ask again, “*Do I really believe these things?*”
  - This week I was with a bunch of missionaries... I always love hearing their stories about how God directed them to do what they do. You hardly ever hear somebody say, “*Oh, I just loved to travel and didn't really like my family so I wanted to live in a strange place and learn a whole new culture and language.*” No, usually it is simply, “We were convinced this is what God wanted us to do.”
  - One of them, the mom and dad of one of our staff members here, told me about being at the top of his game...
- I am convinced that many of us squeak out a Christian life without ever really being confronted with the hard questions of faith.

- Taking your kids to church or participating in the Christian subculture you grew up in and are most comfortable with is not a bold faith risk. For many of you, it's just the path of least resistance—and I'm sorry if that sounds rude, it's just the truth.

But the writer makes it clear in Hebrews: <sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

- You can only go so far without faith.

Remember what's going on in Hebrews. The writer is admonishing a group of people for whom following Jesus has gotten really difficult.

- People are being persecuted for their faith and that included many of their friends and some of them have fallen away... people are telling them they're crazy.
- They've got a lot of unanswered questions, "Why isn't God doing this?" Or "where is God when this happens?"
- Many of the people the writer is addressing are starting to lag behind in their faith
- The writer tells them there is no way they are going to make it if they don't honestly and truly believe that God exists and that following Him is worth it.

We live in a world without a lot of persecution for our faith—at least, it has been that way; it is getting less so of recent—but for the most part, people don't bother us for our walk with Jesus, and it's fairly easy for us to go through the motions of the Christian life without real faith.

But we'll never please God; and we'll never go all the way with Him—that means, believe everything He reveals, live as His disciple, be involved meaningfully in His mission—until we are convinced that God is and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

**The story I always use to illustrate this...** I want to give the cliff notes version because I've told it before but it is a metaphor I am going to refer back to today (*repelling*)...

- Some of you are going to come to that point of a crisis of obedience if you're not there already.

Here's what we are going to do: I'm going to walk you through the last half of Hebrews 11... You'll see several specific examples of what it looks like to have faith, and then we're going to use those to discuss what exactly faith is and where it comes from.

<sup>17</sup> By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, <sup>18</sup> of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."  
<sup>19</sup> He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead...

- God had told Abraham to sacrifice his son. This was more than just the sacrifice of something he loved, as significant as that was. As I've told you before, in those days, your sons were your hope for the future.
  - The society was agrarian: so the more sons you had, the more workers you had to work the land, tend the herds; the more income you could generate for your family.
  - Plus, since this was an age before social security or 401K's or retirement homes... your children were your safety net. The more children you had, the more likely you were to be taken care of in old age.
    - That's still my philosophy as a parent—why we had 4; I just need 1 of them to get rich and Veronica and I will be fine...
  - OT scholar Walter Brueggemann says "*(Childlessness)*<sup>1</sup> in any ancient text or narrative is the effective metaphor of hopelessness, for without children, there was no foreseeable future for yourself, for your family, or for your people."
- Abraham and Sarah have one child—he was a miracle baby they had in their 90's—and God is asking them to give him up.

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<sup>1</sup> Brueggemann uses "barrenness."

- He was asking them to give up all they looked to for life, joy and security; to put their earthly hopes and dreams on the line and walk away from all of it.
- That took faith. And they did it. They said, “God, our futures are in your hand. Our hope, our security, our joy—we trust you with all of it.”

<sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. <sup>22</sup> By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

- Here you’ve got 2 stories of people who died in a state where it didn’t look like God was anywhere close to fulfilling His promises.
- God had told Abraham and his descendants that they would be a great nation, have their own land, and be a blessing on the earth.
  - Jacob was Abraham’s grandson. Yet when he dies, the family is in Egypt because they’ve had to flee the promised land due to a famine.
    - Things are going the wrong direction. Rather than looking like they are being made into a great nation that blesses the earth, they are guests in someone else’s nations living off of handouts.
    - But when he dies, he leans on his staff and repeats the promise to his son and asks to be buried back in the promised land.<sup>2</sup>
  - When Joseph, his son dies, the whole family is still in Egypt. And he does the same thing. He says, “When our family returns to the land God gave us, dig up my bones and take them back, because that’s the place God promised to us and God will keep His word. I know this is not the end of the story.”

<sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son

of Pharaoh’s daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. <sup>27</sup> By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

- Think about how crazy this is. Moses has as his inheritance all the privilege and position you could have hoped for. He has one of the highest positions in the world’s mightiest empires.
- Yet, he walks away from all of it. And on what basis.
  - It wasn’t like he left one position of power for another. It wasn’t like he traded the presidency in Egypt for the presidency of Israel. That wouldn’t happen for another 40 years. He left the halls of power to go feed sheep in the desert and wait on God!
- Can’t you hear people telling him how crazy he is? “Moses, this position, this palace, this power, is real; you have got a real 401K and real future security here in Egypt. And you’re leaving it all for what? You’re leaving what you can actually touch for what you can’t. That is a bad career move, Moses.
- But he did it. He traded the visible for the invisible because he believed it.

<sup>28</sup> By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

- Here you have the children of Israel believing what God says about He is going to save even though nothing like that had ever happened before.
  - Imagine trying to explain this to your Egyptian neighbors. You go over to them and you’re like, “You know, you really ought to kill one of your sheep and take its blood and paint it on your doorframe.” “*And why is that?*” “Because the *death angel* is coming tonight.”
- Like Noah that you went over two weeks ago: built an ark in the middle of the dry land because God said he was sending a flood. People mocking, saying you have lost your mind!

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 47:1; 27–30.

<sup>29</sup> By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

- Here you've got the children of Israel trusting that God is going to provide for them in an impossible situation. They were doing what God said, and He led them to the brink of the Red Sea. As they are waiting for their next move word comes that the entire Egyptian army is coming behind them to destroy them. And they are like, "God, what are we supposed to do?" And God says, "Go forward." And they are like, "But there is an *ocean* (make waves) there."
- And God says, "Trust me. Go forward. I will fight for you. You have only to be silent" (Ex 34:14).
- And they believed Him and set their face toward the Red Sea.

<sup>30</sup> By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

- This one always gets me... they go up against an enemy and they're like, "OK, God, what is the strategy for defeating this enemy?" And God says, "OK, we're going to run the old 'circle and shout' on them. You're going to line everybody up and they are going to walk around Jericho. Nobody is going to say a word. You're just going to stare. On the last day, after you do it 7 times, you are going to shout and I'm going to bring the walls down."
- And they are like, "Uhhh... what? No fighting? No battering rams? No flanking maneuvers?" And God says, "No. Just walk around the wall. And at the appropriate time give a shout of faith and I'll fight for you."
- And they did it, and God gave them the city.

So, let's stop there and I want you to learn 3 important things about faith:

### 1. Faith is a response to God's revelation

<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Faith is relatively simple. It believes that God exists and that obeying Him is worth it.

Now, people look at that phrase "that He exists," and they say, "Well, that's the problem. How do you know that *He exists*?" It almost seems like Hebrews is saying you just make some blind leap into the dark where you say, "Well, I'll just believe God exists, with no evidence... I'll believe just *because*."

- But that's not what it is saying. "Believing that He exists" means that you believe that *God is* as God has revealed Himself.
- The Bible never sets out to prove God philosophically (there's no book in the Bible called "the 5 arguments for God"). It just points to the places that God is speaking and says, "Do you recognize these as the voice of God?"
  - You hear it in creation. Psalm 19 says the "heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth proclaims His handiwork... their voice goes through all the earth and their words are heard to the end of the world. There is no place on earth this voice is not heard." For most people the explanation that nothing x nobody = everything is just not compelling.
  - You hear his voice in the guilt you feel about your sin. ***RDU parking tickets.***
  - In the longing for eternity in your heart or in the transcendence you feel in moments of romantic love.
    - **Francis Crick**, an atheist who died recently (2004) wrote in a book called "*The Astonishing Hypothesis: "You, your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will (the love for you feel for another human) are, in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules. You are nothing but a pack of neurons."* Everything is chemistry

- Really? Is that romantically satisfying to you? *“The love I feel for you, baby, is just a random assortment of chemicals that I inherited, and my desire to be with you is really just the desire of those chemicals to propagate their own genetic distinctive in the species. Will you be my Valentine?”* I’m guessing that is not going to make it on a Hallmark card anytime soon.
  - You just know there’s something more to human experiences than chemicals and firing neurons.
- You sense it in the gratitude you feel in your happiest moments. C.S. Lewis said that atheists have the problem of feeling profoundly grateful in their happiest moments and not knowing whom to thank!
- In where you turn in moments of distress.
  - ~~One of the cattiest things Christians say, but it’s true, is “There are no atheists in foxholes.” Famous skeptics have admitted that they prayed in a time of great fear and danger. Mark Twain: a strident unbeliever said that when his wife was deathly ill he prayed and prayed, like a dog. Now, you might say “Well, that’s because people are in an unnatural situation and they’re desperate, but when they get their right mind back, that’s when they know this is all fake. I would suggest the opposite to you.... that it is during those moments, when you see how fragile life really is, that the real you come on. C. S. Lewis had a great explanation for this: if you want to see what’s really in your basement, surprise your basement. If you sneak down into it and then flip on the light, you’ll see the rats and spiders in the middle of the floor... If you don’t surprise it, if you walk gradually down into it, making lots of noise, flipping on the~~

~~lights... you’ll never see what is really there. Everything goes into hiding. But if you surprise it, you’ll see what’s really there. When you surprise the human heart and you see how quick it is to pray you see what it’s made of and who it’s made for.~~

- You hear His voice in the Bible.
    - Keyhole
  - In the person of Jesus and you say, “That’s Him. That’s my Creator.”
- You hear those voices and you just recognize that these are the voice of God. Theologians call it the “sensus divinitus” and it works like your other senses.
- You say, “Well, don’t I need to be able to prove, logically, that there is a God”? Well, think about your other senses.
  - If I asked you to prove with water-tight logic that I was actually standing here and you were actually listening to me and that your senses were not playing tricks on you and this was not all an illusion or a dream, you probably couldn’t do it.
  - Philosophers concluded a long time ago that we can’t prove the existence of things outside of our own minds—you’ve seen “Matrix,” right? How can you prove you’re not plugged up in a pod somewhere having a dream? Or if I said, “*Prove to me what you think is your consciousness is not actually the result of being a character in the complex dream of a demon,*” you probably couldn’t do it.
  - But very few of you live plagued with the idea that that’s really the case. For someone to actually think that way is not *normal*. It makes for a good movie but if you think the Matrix is actually true than you probably need counseling. You’re actually here and I’m actually here and Keanu Reeves is not our savior.
  - You don’t assume that the world around you exists because you can prove it by logical inference. Your senses sensed me and you believed they were telling you the truth.



- Philosophers call that a “*basic belief*.”
- Or think of it like how you know certain things are wrong. Like murder or genocide. Imagine you met a Nazi who starts laying out a logical case why Hitler’s action in WW2 were not wrong... he starts laying out arguments from evolution and history and the greater good... you are not even going to listen to him, right? You know he’s wrong before you even get into the reasoning. You don’t reject his conclusion on the basis of reasoning; you reject it on the basis of instinct. Our moral conclusions can be backed up by logic, but their basis is usually instinct.
- This is not to say that there are not good, philosophical reasons to believe in God. There are. And there are good, evidential reasons to believe in Jesus—prophecies, and the resurrection, and those kinds of things. But those things just back up our *sensus divinitus*—our sense of the divine.
- You say, “A-ha! What about those people who don’t believe? If it really was a basic belief everyone would have it!” That’s not true. According to the book of Romans, one of the results of our sinfulness was that our hearts were darkened, and our ability to perceive God got all messed up.
  - The book of Romans says that the inability to perceive God is a kind of spiritual insanity. It’s part of being spiritually fallen.
  - Just like the kind of person who really struggles with the fact that the Matrix is true has some issues, or the person who can’t really sense that abusing children is evil has a morally dysfunctional heart.
- BTW, church, this is why we spend so much time in prayer for people. Because you can’t heal someone’s heart through logical argumentation. The Bible says we need “regeneration.” God can use our arguments in the process, but only His Spirit restores our sanity.
  - Analogy, on top of a building

So, faith is a response to the revelation. It takes God at His word and believes that He is as He reveals Himself to be.

- ~~This is the question of how you are supposed to know what to believe... Blind men and the speaking elephant~~
- You say, “But I have such a hard time believing. There are so many hard questions... why is this happening? If God loves me, what about this? And, I don’t understand the morality of the Bible. And why is there a hell?”
  - I feel you. I really do. I have all kinds of questions. One day I’m going to write a book called “*The pastor with more questions than his parishioners*.”
  - That’s right where these people in Hebrews are. And the author has said to them, chapter 2, we don’t have all the answers... but what we do have is Jesus! We recognize the voice of God in Jesus and where we can’t understand everything about Him or His plan we trust Him because we recognize that He is God.
    - **Here’s how you should think about it.** If God appeared to you right now... and told you, would you be willing to suspend...? Yes. Why?
- That is essentially what He does.
- If Jesus is who He says He is, we can trust what He says about thing we don’t quite understand.
  - A famous church father, Anselm, said the Christian experience is “faith seeking understanding.” I want to understand, and every once I get a flash of insight and I do understand... but in the meantime, when I can’t understand, I hold onto what God has revealed about Himself. God is all loving, kind, good, and powerful, even if I can’t understand it all now.
  - The source of my faith is not explanation, but revelation.

Faith is a response to revelation.

## 2. Faith is action

- The people in this chapter are famous for their faith, right?

- Well, did you notice that when the writer describes them, they are all presented in terms of some action?
  - Noah *built*
  - Abraham *left*
  - Jacob *blessed*
  - Joseph *instructed*
  - Moses *chose*
  - Joshua *fought*
- Faith is synonymous with action. Apart from action there is no faith.
- Here's an interesting piece of trivia: there is no noun for "faith" in Hebrew. Faith only a verb.
  - So, in other words, all these people in Hebrews 11 became famous for something they didn't even have a name for.
- ...Because faith does not exist apart from action. Faith is a conviction expressed in a choice.
  - Obedience is not something you do later down the road after you have faith.
  - Your belief doesn't *become* faith *until* you act upon it.
  - **Faith is not "believing the rope will hold you"; it is leaning back on that rope.**
- There is no faith apart from obedience. Faith is belief in action.

### 3. Faith takes a bold dare on the unseen

<sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of (2 groups. Everybody hold up one finger; this is group 1)

Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—<sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,<sup>34</sup> quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.<sup>35</sup> Women received back their dead by resurrection.

(Group 1. Now put up your 2<sup>nd</sup> finger. This is group 2) Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a

better life.<sup>36</sup> Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.<sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—<sup>38</sup> of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.<sup>39</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the promise,

- What group do you want to be in? 1 or 2? You've got some who received a great deliverance with their faith; others died with nothing on earth that really validated their faith.
- What they had in common was that they all believed the word of God and risked everything upon it.

***Let me tell you this clearly: If you require earthly validation of your faith, you won't make it.*** The life of faith requires a confidence in a God you can't see and promises that you can't always feel and sometimes you stand along with seemingly the whole world against you!

So that is the question: Can you lean back on, risk it all on, what is invisible?

- Like **Abraham**, will you obey all that God commands?
  - Will you obey what God says about morality even when it makes no sense to you?
    - People say, "Well, I love God and I believe the Bible but I don't do this and this that it says because I just don't agree with that."
    - *If you are the kind of person who demands that you agree with what God says before you'll do it, I don't think you understand what it means for Him to be Lord.*
  - Or maybe you sense that God is calling you specifically to something that is requiring you to walk away from your career or your security, and people are telling you it is crazy.
- Can you, like **Jacob and Joseph**, have unwavering hope in the midst of darkness?

- When the day is dark and the outlook is bleak can you rejoice that God has appointed all things for His purposes, that He will bring His promises to pass; that He can mend what has been broken and turn your tragedy into triumph;
- In the darkest hour of the night can you get up with hope because you know the dawn is coming?
  - When the cancer is not in remission
  - When the family is not holding together
  - When your prime marriage age or having kids is passing by
  - When the spouse is not coming back
- *How you respond to disappointment, or tragedy, reveals whether, or how much, you actually believe God*
- *Or here's another way I've said it: **Your ability to be joyful in all things is the measure of your faith.***
- So much of our Christian experience is spent waiting. Read the Psalms. The word "wait" appears over and over:
  - Psalm 37:7, "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him."
  - Psalm 62:1, "For God alone my soul *waits* in silence."
  - Psalm 63, My flesh faints as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
- Waiting patiently with hope is faith. *Your ability to be joyful in all things is the measure of your faith.*
- Do you believe what God says about how He says He saves, when everyone else thinks your crazy, like the **Israelites had to do in front of the Egyptians** or Noah had to do in front of the whole world?
  - Acts 4:12,
  - That is the driving mission behind my life. That's why liberal churches never grow. They are not driven in faith by what God says about the mission?
- I wouldn't be doing all this; going all over the world; and giving up all this money, if I didn't believe what God said about the urgency of the mission!
- Do you trust that God will provide for you in impossible situations when you are pursuing His will, like **Israel did at the Red Sea** or Jericho?
  - As a church, getting ready to take the next step.
  - I feel it as a parent... God, how can I raise my children in this kind of world?
  - C. S. Lewis said in *A Grief Observed* that the depth of our faith is revealed only when it is a matter of life and death.
  - Maybe how scared and panicky you get that God won't provide you reveals how little you actually believe God.
- Like Moses, have you believed in eternity so much that you've taken your earthly power and position and leveraged it for the invisible Kingdom?
  - **I'm convinced that God is telling some people in our church to walk away from a lucrative career to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth and the crisis for you right now is "Do you believe in Him and His mission enough to do it?" Or to figure out how to re-engineer your career so that it's used for the purposes of God's mission.**
  - **Or maybe God is telling you to give away lots of money!**
- I don't mean to be negative: I'm convinced a lot of us, our lives don't take faith: tipping a little money to God in the plate is not faith giving. Giving till it hurts; until you say that they only way I can feel good about giving this up is knowing that eternity is real and I'm investing in it.
  - Not bold in your witness. You never say anything controversial to people around you because you are not convinced God has told the truth.
  - Never go on mission trips.
  - You don't sacrificially give until it hurts.



- Living your Christian life is not predicated upon your absolute confidence in the invisible!
- Do you really believe in the invisible and are you willing to put it all on the line for eternity?
  - I'm telling you, that's a gut question for me...

So, there it is: faith is a bold dare on the promises of an unseen God.

- Faith's object is the revealed word of God. It's not a positive feeling. It's not a hunch. It's not a wish upon a star. It is, quite simply, believing the promises of God. It's not a magic elixir that makes God like you better or commandeers Him into serving you. It's not name it, claim it, because if God hasn't named it, you can't claim it.
- **Martin Luther:** *Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace makes you (ever) joyful and bold in your relationship to God and everyone else... Because of it, you freely, willingly and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, and suffer all kinds of things, never ceasing to love and praise and rejoice in the God who has shown you grace.*<sup>3</sup>

Last thing: <sup>39</sup> And these all died in faith, not having received the promise, <sup>40</sup> since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

- We have a reason to believe that all of these Old Testament people have. Jesus. We see the love and faithfulness demonstrated at the cross; the trustworthiness of God demonstrated at the resurrection.
- What they saw in a shadow we see in completion... of course you can trust Jesus with your finances or your future or your kids.
- He sought you when you were a stranger and reconciled you to Himself when you were an enemy. He who did not

<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther, "Introduction to the Book of Romans," from Luther's German Bible, 1522.

withhold His own Son for us, will He not with Him freely give us all things?

***Are you living a life of faith?*** In Cairo there is a small, dusty grave in an out of way location. I've never seen it, but I heard that you'd never in a millions years know it was there—it's all overgrown with grass. In it lies the body of William Borden, the heir of the Borden milk company. He graduated from Yale in 1909 and had a life of luxury and power laid out for him. Borden is still a big company, but then it was one of America's biggest. He had become a Christian as a teenager, and told his parents that he was giving his life to bring the gospel to Muslims. Refusing even to buy himself a car, Borden gave away hundreds of thousands of dollars to missions. After only four months of zealous ministry in Egypt, he contracted spinal meningitis and died at the age of twenty-five, on a ship en route for medical help. Someone asked him right before he died what he thought about his decisions, and he said simply, "No regrets." On his tombstone in Cairo is a brief description of his sacrifices for the kingdom of God and for Muslim people, followed by the simple phrase, "*Apart from faith in Christ, there is no explanation for such a life.*"<sup>4</sup>

#### Prayer:

- Do you believe? Can you say that right now?
- The gospel: a gift you believe and receive.
- Is God telling you to do something: go somewhere; give something... at the end of the service you can talk to one of our pastors or prayer teams.
  - what He says He is. There is no one more good and loving and smart than He. And even though I can't fathom His wisdom now, or understand why He does things like He does them, if I could see things

<sup>4</sup> Taken from Randy Alcorn, *Treasure Principle*.

from His perspective I would understand  
and one day I will see them from His  
perspective and will understand.

- They were doing what God told them to do and they were up against an insurmountable obstacle but they kept going, trusting God to help them.
- If you read it, they had to begin to walk into the water before it actually parted.

; and waiting is how God perfects our faith: “The number one chisel in God’s toolbox for our lives is waiting/patience.”<sup>5</sup>

- In the words of my favorite Christian big-hair band from the 1980’s, Petra, “Good things come to them that wait; but not the those who hesitate, so hurry up, and wait upon the Lord.”
- **QUOTE (SPURGEON OR LUTHER)**

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<sup>5</sup> James MacDonald