

## **A Reading from Hebrews 11**

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's.

By faith Enoch was taken so that he did not experience death.

By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.

By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old.

By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son.

By faith Moses was hidden by his parents for three months after his birth. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

1. Our passage from Hebrews is all about faith. Reading over the different people in this passage, what do you think faith is?
2. Can you think of a faithful person in your life who made an impact on you? Share them with the group
3. Rahab - mentioned in the text - was a prostitute. You can read about her in Joshua 2. Do you find it surprising that she is singled out as a hero of faith?
4. We discussed on Sunday how faith is the key and God is the treasure. What do you think that might mean?

## Psalm 27: 1-5, 10-14

1

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2

When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh— my adversaries and foes—they shall stumble and fall.

3

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.

4

One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

5

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock.

10

If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.

11

Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

12

Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they are breathing out violence.

13

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

14

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

5. The Psalm is all about God's protection and strength and power. Do you find it easy or hard to accept that God might in some way protect you? Have you ever felt this sometime in your life?

6. One of the things we explored on Sunday was the idea that - because we are in Christ - God might share some of his characteristics and attributes with us in a way appropriate to our created-ness e.g. his strength and power. Does that make sense to you? Is it surprising?

7. Activity: in the Psalm, the Psalmist says that God is a fortress. Draw a castle or tower. On the outside, write the things you want to keep out of your life. On the inside, write the things you want to keep in. Use this as a prompt to ask God to give you and your loved ones what you need