*Living a Faith-Filled Life: From Zero to Hero – pt. 9*

*Hebrews 11:32 -12:1-2*

***32And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 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. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection.*** Hebrews 11:32-35

Faith trusts God in spite of ***results***, looking to the ***final reward.***

**Gideon** is a ***judge.***

Judge = elevated to a place where their leadership and their wisdom put them in a ruling position somewhere in the life and the land of Israel.

**Judges 7:2-3; 16-18**

God is planning to save Israel in an unusual way that highlights ***His power***, not Gideon's ability.

What caused Gideon to have the courage to think he could defeat 135,000 with 300?? ***Faith.***

**Barak** received a message from God through a prophetess, Deborah, and he ***believed*** that God would give him the victory.

**Judges 4:7-9; 15, 21-22**

**Samson** - Israel’s champion against the ***Philistines.*** He knew that at any point in time his strength came from ***the Lord.***

**David** – one whose story starts as a young man with ***a faith*** that dwarfed his elder warriors.

**1 Samuel 17:45-47**

**Samuel -** a great man of faith, facing a rebellious, idolatrous, arrogant people who didn’t concern himself with his own ***protection or safety*** .

***“were made strong out of weakness”***

Faith requires recognizing our ***weakness***, all the while resting in God’s ***strength.***

*“... apart from Me you can do nothing.”*  John 15:5

*“Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God.”* 2 Cor. 3:5

*“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves.”*  2 Cor. 4:7

Sometimes, instead of giving victory over the enemy, God chooses to sanctify, ***to refine*** rather than to deliver.

***Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. 36 Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 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— 38 of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*** Hebrews 11:35-38

Why did they endure this against all this terrible treatment? Because of what they believed was in the future waiting for them, a ***better resurrection***.

***39And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.*** Hebrews 11:39-40

None of them would be in heaven if it weren’t for what happened that *we* know about…

the ***cross*** and the ***resurrection.*** The “something better” is the ***New Covenant.***

***12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*** Hebrews 12:1-2

Faith involves the risk of putting yourself into a situation where, if God ***does not come through,*** you will fail miserably.

**Join us for the next OOTB, Thursday, April 20th**  6:00 dessert/6:30 worship