

A GOOD REPORT THROUGH FAITH HEBREWS 11:32-40

Text: Hebrews 11:39

Introduction:

Excellent faith has as its example these who gave everything for their faith in God and their willingness to go the distance.

The name Stradivarius is synonymous with fine violins. This is true because Antonius Stradivarius insisted that no instrument constructed in his shop be sold until it was as near perfection as human care and skill could make it.

Stradivarius observed, "God needs violins to send His music into the world, and if any violins are defective God's music will be spoiled." His work philosophy was summed up in one sentence: "Other men will make other violins, but no man shall make a better one."

God is in constant search, I believe, of those He can add to this list of faithful people, not to Scripture, but in His heart.

Most people think the Christian life and faith is about success, but that is not at the top of God's priority list:

He is looking for people of excellence

"Success means being the best. Excellence means being your best."

1. STRONG FAITH HAS COURAGE

Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared.

A. Gideon (vs. 32) (Judges 7:2-7)

Hebrews 11:32

³² And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

Judges 7:2-7

² And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. ³ Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. ⁴ And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, *that* of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. ⁵ So he brought down the people unto the water: and

the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. ⁶ And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. ⁷ And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto his place.

- God's plan was different from Gideon's plan
- Gideon had already learned that God had called or commissioned him for this task. Not only had God called him but God had also equipped him for this task.
- But God's plan was different that Gideon's.
- Gideon planned to march into battle with 32,000 soldiers, but God had a different plan!
- When we make our plans for our lives, we always try to make them so that things fall in our favor.
- That is human nature! However, God will usually have a different plan.
- The plan of God will bring honor to Himself, not us.

- Gideon, he has seen his 32,000 man army reduced to just 300 men. He is getting ready to attack a force that is many times larger than his own.
- God is not asking for a leap in the dark, he is asking for a clear step of faith.
- Had Gideon and his men not been willing to follow God's plan, they would have missed out on God's best for their lives!
- There are times when the Lord will lead you in directions you never imagined. He can come up with plans for our lives that are very distinct! Yet, when we go His way, we find out that He always has the best plan!

B. Samson (vs. 32)

The power of Samson

- Encountered a lion (14:1-7)
- A thousand Philistines slain (15:14-20)

Destroyed more in his death than in his entire life

2. STRONG FAITH HAS COMMITMENT

What is the difference between involvement and commitment? Perhaps it can best be explained this way by the analogy of bacon and eggs. With the egg the hen is involved but with the bacon the pig is committed.

To commit is to stay true to a course of action, to see it through to the end.

Those in this text saw the bigger picture and trusted God, no matter what.

A. Daniel (vs. 33) – stopped the mouths of lions

B. Three Hebrew men (vs.34) – quenched the violence of fire

- What are deterrents to commitment?
- We are fearful of what it might cost us (time, emotions, money, etc.)
- We may not like the repercussions (opposition, naysayers, and negative thinkers)
- We don't like the speed bumps along the way.
- We just get lazy

- We lose our passion because of distraction.

What are the marks of faith?

Mark of God's guidance - Psalms 37:5

Psalms 37:5

⁵ Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

Mark of a disciplined mind - Proverbs 16:3

Proverbs 16:3

³ Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

Mark of seeing the end result - Philippians 3:14

Philippians 3:14

¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Mark of a satisfied life - 2 Timothy 4:7

2 Timothy 4:7

⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith:

3. STRONG FAITH HAS CONVICTION

Illustration:

David Hume, 18th century British philosopher who rejected historic Christianity, once met a friend hurrying along a London street and asked where he was going. The friend said he was off to hear George Whitfield preach. “But surely you don’t believe what Whitfield preaches do you?” “No, I don’t, but he does.”

Conviction is a belief you are willing to die for

Certainly, the people in Hebrews 11 qualify for conviction

The people listed here stood strong, not matter what, and believed God.

Today People are not convicted anymore because:

- Their belief system is weak
- They compromise
- They feel peer and societal pressure to be “open-minded”.

4. STRONG FAITH HAS CHARACTER

Illustration:

A man took his daughter to the carnival, and she immediately ran over to a booth and asked for cotton candy. As the attendant handed her a huge ball of it, the father asked, "Sweetheart, are you sure you can eat all of that?" "Don't worry, Dad," she answered, "I'm a lot bigger on the inside than on the outside."

That's what real character is – being bigger on the inside.

The definition of character - The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he knew he would never be found out.

Character is developed in many ways:

Our upbringing

Our influences

The Holy Spirit

The Word of God

NOTE TO REMEMBER

God is more concerned about our character than our comfort. His goal is not to pamper us physically but to perfect us spiritually.

Close:

Where is your faith?

Is your faith progressing toward trust in God every day?

Would you fit in with these in this chapter that had great and ultimate faith?

What price would you pay to have that kind of faith?

There is no limit to what God can do with those who have strong faith in Him!