A Prayer Workshop:*Morning Edition*

Discovering and Applying Biblical Prayer Principles from Hebrews 11

**Session Twelve: The Faith of The Sinning Saint: Prayers of the Unlikely Overcomers**

**Hebrews 11:29-40**

(ESV***) 29By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. 30By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. 31 By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. 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—***

 Our author is making the point that anything of worth accomplished by God’s people, whatever the circumstances, happened by faith. The more subtle point is that these people were NORMAL, sometimes rebellious, sometimes rash, but always unpredictable and unlikely heroes. This makes their examples perfect for us, anyone, anywhere, anytime who truly believes God will win, regardless of his outward circumstances and personal foibles. Aren’t you glad of that?!

What can we take from these things as prayer principles?

**1. We pray in faith to the God of grace, regardless of our situations or our past**.

 Other than Samuel, whose own sons did not follow in their father’s footsteps (1 Samuel 8:1-5), each of the named “faith action heroes” had issues of lifestyle and/or character, and no two of their situations were alike.

 Scriptures: Psalm 103:1-14; James 5:13-18

 Prayer prompts: Father, help us know we owe everything to your grace.

 Father, grant us grace to look to you for every need.

 Father, help us delight in your delight of your people.

**2. We pray knowing that God’s people experience both victories and setbacks.**

 Our faithfulness does not guarantee a conflict-free existence in this life. In fact, many discover great opposition to their faithfulness, to the point of torture and death. Life is “mixed,” and we must not be surprised by adversity.

 Scriptures: 1 Peter 4:12-17; 1 John 3:11-15

 Prayer prompts: Father, help us not be surprised when trials beset us.

 Father, help us not be defeated by our losses in life.

 Father, help us be distracted by our victories in life.

**3. We pray out of knowledge that final reward must await Christ’s return.**

 The faithful died in faith without receiving what had been promised (Heb. 11:13-16; 35b-40). Ours is a forward-looking faith, for what we believe is that God’s present purposes in covenant grace will overcome all evil, including our own.

 Scriptures: Matthew 5:3-12; 6:5-13; 1 John 2:28–3:3

 Prayer prompts: Father, help us not grow weary of doing good.

 Father, help us be those who overcome.

 Father, help us not be deceived by the lusts of the world.

Let’s pray. . . A Model Prayer of The Sinning Saint Psalm 31:9-16 (ESV)

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| 9 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief;  my soul and my body also. 10 For my life is spent with sorrow,  and my years with sighing;  my strength fails because of my iniquity,  and my bones waste away. 11 Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors,  and an object of dread to my acquaintances;  those who see me in the street flee from me. 12 I have been forgotten like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.  | 13 For I hear the whispering of many—  terror on every side!—  as they scheme together against me,  as they plot to take my life.14 But I trust in you, O Lord;  I say, “You are my God.” 15 My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors! 16 Make your face shine on your servant;  save me in your steadfast love! |