

A GREAT HIGH PRIEST

Take-Home · Session 10 · By Faith · Hebrews 11

A Catholic Journey Through the Letter to the Hebrews

What We Found

Faith is the ground under hope. The assurance (hypostasis, substance) of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen: the faculty for exactly the two categories the senses cannot audit: the future, and the invisible.

Every “by faith” wears a verb. Offered, built, obeyed, went out, chose, refused, crossed, welcomed: even the chapter's thinking is load-bearing, for by faith we understand (11:3) and Abraham considered that God was able (11:19). Faith here is more than a private feeling or a bare list of correct opinions: it assents to what God has revealed and then acts on it. In this chapter faith is trust with its boots on: the verbs are faith's own body.

Abraham did resurrection math on Moriah. Promise and command could not both stand unless God could raise the dead: so he considered that God was able (11:19), and Isaac came down the mountain as a parable of Easter: on the hill country where the temple would one day stand.

Faith justifies, and justifying faith works. The Bible's only “faith alone” says not by it (James 2:24): we are justified by grace, through living faith working in love: the works are not faith's admission fee but faith's pulse.

The dark wing hangs under the same caption. Some by faith escaped the sword; some by faith died on it: of whom the world was not worthy. And none of them received the promise: God foresaw something better, “that apart from us they should not be made perfect” (11:40).

Voices of the Church

St. Clement of Rome *Letter to the Corinthians*

In one first-century letter: we are justified by faith, through which Almighty God has justified all from the beginning: and we must be justified by deeds, not words. Both truths, one saint, no contradiction.

St. Augustine *Sermon 169*

He who created you without you will not justify you without you. Grace does everything, and grace does not do it over your head: which is why the gallery's faith always has hands.

St. John Chrysostom *Homilies on Hebrews*

Faith gives substance to things hoped for: it makes the unseen stand solid before the soul. The heroes did sums with invisible integers: the reproach of Christ outweighing Egypt is only madness

if the reward is not real.

Live It This Week

1. Give your faith one costly verb this week: an obedience begun before the full itinerary arrives, Abraham-style, and tell someone in the group what it was.
2. Pray for the dark wing: the persecuted Church, by name where you can: those of whom the world is not worthy.
3. Read Hebrews 12 before next session. Bring your favorite saint's name with you: you will need it.

Scripture Memory Verse

HEBREWS 11:1 (RSV2CE)

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Before Next Session

Read Hebrews 12, and bring a favorite saint's name.

Catechism Connections

CCC 145–147 (Hebrews 11, the Catechism's own gallery) · CCC 1814–1815 (faith, alive or dead) · CCC 2008–2009 (merit as God's gift) · CCC 1821 (hope's grammar)