

# Sermon Note: Faith

## Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Introduction

This week, we continue our **Dearly Beloved** series with a focus on faith—but not faith as an idea, a feeling, or a private belief. This passage reminds us that faith moves. It walks through danger. It endures shame. It builds community. And it keeps going, even when the road is long.

Hebrews tells stories of people who acted even when the outcome was unclear. Some were victorious; others were crushed. What they shared wasn't the result—it was the perseverance. Now their stories surround us like a cloud, urging us on. In a time when many are weary or unsure how to keep going, Hebrews names a truth we need to hear: we don't run alone. And we don't run for nothing. There is joy on the other side.

### Illustration Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgcI-W1NH70>

In this scene from *Encanto* (2021), the Madrigal family and their neighbors come together to rebuild the family's destroyed home. Without their magic, they rely on each other—and on the strength of their shared commitment—to begin again.

### Why This Video?

This scene is a powerful example of faith in action. The family has lost their miracle, their home, and the identity they thought defined them. But they start rebuilding anyway—with help from neighbors and friends who show up to carry the work together.

That's the kind of movement Hebrews lifts up as faith: not a guarantee of success, but a decision to keep going. The people in this scene don't know exactly what will come next, but they trust that what they're building is worth it. Like the cloud of witnesses in Hebrews, they surround each other with encouragement, presence, and purpose. It's a reminder that faith often takes shape through small actions, shared effort, and quiet trust in something more.

### Video Discussion Questions

1. What emotions do you notice in the characters as the rebuilding begins?
2. How does the mood of the scene shift as more people join in the work?
3. What role does community play in making the rebuilding possible?
4. How do you think the family feels doing this work without their magic?
5. Why do you think the neighbors show up to help—even though the Madrigals no longer have powers?
6. Have you ever had to start over after a loss or setback? What helped you take that first step?
7. What does this scene suggest about the relationship between faith and action?

8. Where do you see signs of hope in this scene?
9. If you were in this moment—part of that crowd or that family—what would you be feeling?

### **Hebrews 11:29-12:2 (CEB)**

<sup>29</sup>By faith they crossed the Red Sea as if they were on dry land, but when the Egyptians tried it, they were drowned.

<sup>30</sup>By faith Jericho's walls fell after the people marched around them for seven days.

<sup>31</sup>By faith Rahab the prostitute wasn't killed with the disobedient because she welcomed the spies in peace.

<sup>32</sup>What more can I say? I would run out of time if I told you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. <sup>33</sup>Through faith they conquered kingdoms, brought about justice, realized promises, shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup>put out raging fires, escaped from the edge of the sword, found strength in weakness, were mighty in war, and routed foreign armies. <sup>35</sup>Women received back their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured and refused to be released so they could gain a better resurrection.

<sup>36</sup>But others experienced public shame by being taunted and whipped; they were even put in chains and in prison. <sup>37</sup>They were stoned to death, they were cut in two, and they died by being murdered with swords. They went around wearing the skins of sheep and goats, needy, oppressed, and mistreated. <sup>38</sup>The world didn't deserve them. They wandered around in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground.

<sup>39</sup>All these people didn't receive what was promised, though they were given approval for their faith. <sup>40</sup>God provided something better for us so they wouldn't be made perfect without us.

**12** So then, with endurance, let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Let's throw off any extra baggage, get rid of the sin that trips us up, <sup>2</sup>and fix our eyes on Jesus, faith's pioneer and perfecter. He endured the cross, ignoring the shame, for the sake of the joy that was laid out in front of him, and sat down at the right side of God's throne.

### **Scripture Study Questions**

1. What examples of faith do you see in Hebrews 11:29–40? What stands out to you about the circumstances these people faced?
2. If you were to add someone from today's world to this scripture's list of faith heroes, who would it be—and why?
3. The writer of Hebrews shifts our focus from ourselves to Jesus, “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.” What helps you stay centered on Christ in a culture that often encourages self-focus?
4. What does it mean to you to “incarnate” Christ in your life and community? Can you name a moment when you saw this lived out?
5. Hebrews 12 encourages us to “lay aside every weight” that slows us down. What kinds of burdens or distractions keep people from running their race of faith today? What would that look like in your own life?

6. What does it mean to “run with perseverance the race set before us” as a *community* of faith—not just as individuals? How can we support one another in that?
7. What is one thing you might do this week “for the sake of the joy”—something that asks for faith, endurance, or trust in God’s promises? How can this group encourage you in that?

### **Additional (Optional) Questions**

1. What feels easy—and what feels hard—about being part of a community?
2. Is there a difference between being *part of* a community and *being* a community? What do you think that difference means for the church?
3. What might we learn from people whose faith looks different from our own?
4. Who do you see leading faithful lives in the world around you?
5. Who in this group or community shows faith through their actions? What do you notice in them?
6. How can we live out our faith in ways that others can see—not for recognition, but to inspire and encourage?
7. Can you think of a time when someone’s faith made a real difference—in your life or in the world? What happened?

### **Weekly Action**

Each day this week, write a simple sentence that begins: “Today I will run with faith by...” Let that sentence shape how you live that day—whether it leads you to show up, speak up, rest, risk, or reach out.

Then take one moment this week to encourage someone else in their race. Send a note, a message, or a word of support. Let them know they’re not running alone.

### **Prayer**

Loving God, thank You for surrounding us with faithful witnesses and for calling us to run this race with courage. Help us keep our eyes on Jesus and endure for the sake of the joy set before us. Amen.