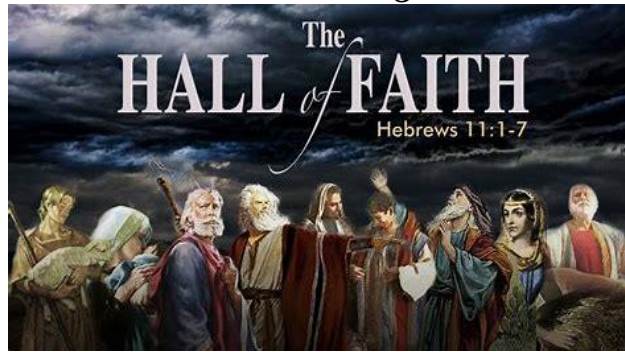




July 17, 2022
The Common Thread Pause
Hebrews 11:13-16



13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

¹³⁻¹⁶ Each one of these people of faith died not yet having in hand what was promised, but still believing. How did they do it? They saw it way off in the distance, waved their greeting, and accepted the fact that they were transients in this world. People who live this way make it plain that they are looking for their true home. If they were homesick for the old country, they could have gone back any time they wanted. But they were after a far better country than that—*heaven* country. You can see why God is so proud of them, and has a City waiting for them. (The Message)

Alligator alley in Florida
California, Yankee stadium, Texas, Canada
Roatan Honduras
St. Lucia
England
Germany
Haiti
*Riding horses in the Caribbean Sea!

I love to travel to new places! Grand canyon, red woods and sequoias of California, Yellowstone National Park, Alaska, Hawaii, Paris, Israel- the list goes on and on!

Going to Israel

I always looked forward to these experiences.

We live always looking forward to things.

Other things we do not look forward to- dentist visit, surgery, hard day of work upcoming.

Hebrews 6:9-12 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish (slothful), **but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**

H.L. Mencken said faith is the “Illogical belief in the occurrence of the impossible.” This would only be true if there is no God or if He does not matter. Since God is and since He does matter, faith is entirely logical.

They Saw Them

Seeing

to see with the eyes
to see with the mind, to perceive, know

They were assured of them

Assuring

agree, assure, believe, have confidence, be (wax) confident, make friend, obey, persuade, trust, yield.

Act 13:43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

They embraced them

Embracing

to enfold in the arms, i.e. (by implication) to salute, (figuratively) to welcome:—embrace, greet

3 John 1:14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends **salute** thee. **Greet** the friends by name.

They confessed

Confessing

homologéō, hom-ol-og-eh'-o; to assent, i.e. covenant, acknowledge:—con- (pro-)fess, confession is made, give thanks, promise.

**THE WEAKNESS OF
SO MANY MODERN
CHRISTIANS IS THAT
THEY FEEL TOO MUCH
AT HOME IN THE WORLD.**

A.W. TOZER

A W Tozer - *If we are genuine, committed Christians, intent upon walking by faith with our Lord Jesus Christ, then we are continually confessing that we are pilgrims and that we are strangers! The Holy Spirit, who is the real author of this Letter to the Hebrews, uses the terms pilgrims and strangers to remind the early Christians that they were not yet at their final home. The message still reads the same today. Christian pilgrims are journeying by faith from an old city that is cursed and under threat of judgment to a blessed and celestial city where dwells Immanuel!*

[1 Peter 2:11, 12](#) Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

[Revelation 21](#) Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Their present position They are dead now, but this is how they lived daily.

A Declaration

*14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.
They seek a homeland*

Hebrews 13:14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Colossians 3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

There is a major difference between the Christian and the non Christian. We must never forget that.

- Moral views, ethics, political views, social views, parenting, marriage etc.

An Observation

15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.

They would have opportunity to return

The issue of the Israelites wanting to go back to Egypt. How foolish!

AN EAGLE IN THE BARNYARD - The Scottish preacher John McNeill liked to tell about an eagle that had been captured when it was quite young. The farmer who snared the bird put a restraint on it so it couldn't fly, and then he turned it loose to roam in the barnyard. It wasn't long till the eagle began to act like the chickens, scratching and pecking at the ground. This bird that once soared high in the heavens seemed satisfied to live the barnyard life of the lowly hen. One day the farmer was visited by a shepherd who came down from the mountains where the eagles lived. Seeing the eagle, the shepherd said to the farmer, "What a shame to keep that bird hobbled here in your barnyard! Why don't you let it go?" The farmer agreed, so they cut off the restraint. But the eagle continued to wander around, scratching and pecking as before. The shepherd picked it up and set it on a high stone wall. For the first time in months, the eagle saw the grand expanse of blue sky and the glowing sun. Then it spread its wings and with a leap soared off into a tremendous spiral flight, up and up and up. At last it was acting like an eagle again. Perhaps you have let yourself be comfortable in the barnyard of the world—refusing to claim your lofty position as God's child. He wants you to live in a higher realm. Confess your sins, and "seek those things which are above." You will soon be longing to rise above the mundane things of this world. Like the eagle, it's not too late to soar to greater heights again.

There is a danger of being religious as a routine and not as a result of a close, thriving relationship with God.

Numbers **14** So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. ² And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" ⁴ So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." ⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. ⁶ But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *who were* among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; ⁷ and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out *is* an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they *are* our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD *is* with us. Do not fear them." ¹⁰ And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.

A Realization

16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

They desired a better country

to stretch one's self out in order to touch or to grasp something, to reach after or desire something

1 Timothy 6:10- coveted after (love of money)

Many Christians become frustrated and defeated because their needs, wants, expectations, and demands are not immediately met when they believe in Christ. They become impatient and want to quit. They expect instant, not distant, answers. Take courage from these heroes of faith who lived and died without seeing the fruit of their faith on earth and yet continued to believe

Jonathan Edwards America's greatest theologian prayed "**O Lord, please stamp eternity on my eyeballs!**" Jonathan Edwards was saying that he DESIRED that every choice he made WOULD BE ASSESSED IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS POTENTIAL ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES.

R C Sproul - One of the most important advantages the Bible gives us is that it provides information that is not available anywhere else. Our universities provide us with a wealth of knowledge acquired by human investigation of the natural world. We learn by observation, analysis and abstract speculation. We compare and contrast varied opinions from notable scholars. But with all the skills of knowledge that we have at our disposal in this world, there is no one who can speak to us from a transcendent perspective, no one who can reason with us, as the philosophers say, *sub specie aeternitatis* (from the eternal perspective). Only God can provide us with an eternal perspective and speak to us with absolute and final authority.

Fanny Crosby lost her sight as an infant. Yet, amazingly, she went on to become one of the most well-known lyricists of Christian hymns. During her long life, she wrote over 9,000 hymns. Among them are such enduring favorites as "Blessed Assurance" and "To God Be the Glory."

Some people felt sorry for Fanny. A well-intentioned preacher told her, "I think it is a great pity that the Master did not give you sight when He showered so many other gifts upon you." It sounds hard to believe, but she replied: **"Do you know that if at birth I had been able to make one petition, it would have been that I was born blind? . . . Because when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior."** Fanny saw life with an eternal perspective. **Our problems look different in light of eternity:** "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" ([2 Corinthians 4:17-18](#)). All our trials dim when we remember that one glorious day we will see Jesus!

Steven Curtis Chapman song Not Home Yet. (1997)

To all the travelers
Pilgrims longing for a home
From one who walks with you
On this journey called life's road
It is a long and winding road

From one who's seen the view
And dreamt of staying on the mountains high
And one who's cried like you
Wanting so much to lay down and die
I offer this, we must remember this

We are not home yet
We are not home yet
Keep on looking ahead
Let your heart not forget
We are not home yet
Not home yet

So close your eyes with me
And hear the Father saying, welcome home
Let us find the strength
In all His promises to carry on
He said, I go prepare a place for you
So let us not forget

Think of all of the businesses and jobs that will not be needed in heaven! No doctors or nurses, no police or armed forces, no locksmiths or keys, no need for anti-virus for your computer!

Heaven will be beautiful beyond our imagination. Golden streets, walls and gates made out of precious stones, and the clear river of the water of life flowing through it are mere earthly pictures to give us a dim idea of how magnificent it will be. But the best part of heaven is that God Himself will dwell among us as His people! There will be no need of sun or moon, because the glory of God will illumine it all the time.

1. Sometimes the day seems long,
Our trials hard to bear.
We're tempted to complain,
to murmur and despair.
But Christ will soon appear
to catch his bride away!
All tears forever over
in God's eternal day!

CHORUS:

It will be worth it all
when we see Jesus!
Life's trials will seem so small
when we see Christ.
One glimpse of his dear face,
all sorrow will erase.

So, bravely run the race
till we see Christ.

2. At times the sky seems dark,
with not a ray of light;
We're tossed and driven on,
no human help in sight.
But there is One in heaven,
Who knows our deepest care;
Let Jesus solve your problems,
just go to him in prayer.

3. Life's day will soon be o're,
all storms forever past;
We'll cross the great divide
to Glory, safe at last!
We'll share the joys of heaven:
a harp, a home, a crown;
The tempter will be banished,
We'll lay our burdens down.

There Is Coming A Day When No Heartaches Shall Come,
No More Clouds In The Sky, No More Tears To Dim The Eye;
All Is Peace Forever More On That Happy Golden Shore,
What A Day, Glorious Day That Will Be!

What A Day That Will Be When My Jesus I Shall See,
And I Look Upon His Face, The One Who Saved Me By His Grace;
When He Takes Me Be The Hand And Leads Me Through The Promised Land,
What A Day, Glorious Day That Will Be!

There'll Be No Sorrow There, No More Burdens To Bear,
No More Sickness, No Pain, No More Parting Over There;
And For Ever I Will Be With The One Who Died For Me
What A Day, Glorious Day That Will Be!

Verse 16b- *Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*- This is an amazing verse!

In Hebrews 2 there is another amazing statement...

For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

We are headed to a destination like no other. Keep your eyes on it and your life on earth will be like those mentioned in this chapter!