

## LESSON 11

AUGUST 15, 2021

### UNIT III. FAITH GIVES US HOPE

#### KEEP GOING

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 40:1-13

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 10:19-39

PRINT PASSAGE: Hebrews 10:23-36

#### KEY VERSE

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).  
(Hebrews 10:23, KJV)

....

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23, NIV)

#### LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Explore the stories of early believers who suffered for the sake of their faith.
- Resolve to endure suffering that results from your faithful witness.
- Share in the suffering of Christians around the world.

#### KEY TERMS

**Confession (verse 23, NASB)**—Greek: *homologia* (hom-ol-og-ee'-ah): what one professes (confesses); acknowledgment; “profession” (KJV); “profess” (NIV).

**Encouraging (verse 25)**—Greek: *parakaleó* (par-ak-al-eh'-o): calling to or for; positive persuading; strengthening; “exhorting” (KJV).

**Forsaking (verse 25)**—Greek: *egkataleipó* (eng-kat-al-i'-po): leaving behind; abandoning; deserting; “giving up” (NIV).

**Good (verse 24)**—Greek: *kalos* (kal-os'): beautiful, as an outward sign of the inward good; commendable, pleasing, or honorable.

**Love (verse 24)**—Greek: *agapé* (ag-ah'-pay): affection; goodwill; benevolence; compassion.

**Truth (verse 26)**—Greek: *alétheia* (al-ay'-thi-a): facts related to God's will; divine revelation.

## **WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS**

People who are insecure often feel overwhelmed by life's challenges. What is the secret to facing life with confidence? Because believers are confident in Jesus Christ, they can persevere in hope, encouraging others in love and good works.

## **THE LESSON IN FOCUS**

Many of us have known the frustration of working toward a goal that seems impossible to attain. Despite the worthiness of the goal, or the commitment of time, effort, and enthusiasm, the goal itself seems to be perpetually out of reach. Most of us get discouraged and abandon hope when the goal we had in mind continues to elude us. What a relief it is when someone shows up with a better, easier, and more efficient way to accomplish our goal. When faced with the better option, however, some stubborn or closed-minded people reject whatever may be new or unfamiliar to hold even more firmly to their original plan, even though it hasn't worked for them. On the one hand, we must be wise, cautious, and spiritually discerning when it comes to embracing new concepts. While God Himself never changes, He sometimes leads us to new ways of experiencing His presence or opens the doors for new blessings and opportunities.

## **THE LESSON IN CONTEXT**

Hebrews 10 explains that the Law that had governed the Jewish faith was merely a shadow of the good things to come. The sacrifices made under the Law could not make those who offered them perfect. It was never intended to cleanse us completely. The Law did not have the capacity to deliver a permanent or once-for-all atonement, thus it required believers to make continual sacrifices and strictly observe ceremonial rituals. Hebrews emphasizes the supremacy of Christ's sacrifice to any animal blood offering, as well as the superiority of His priesthood to that of any human priest. The old system of sacrifices that compensated for sin was far inferior to Christ's atoning sacrifice at Calvary. To gain access to God on behalf of the people, the Law required the high priest to lift the curtain (veil) that separated the Holy of Holies from the Most Holy Place. The curtain (veil) of the temple was torn from top to bottom at the crucifixion of Christ, demonstrating that access to the holiest is now open to all believers—they may come boldly to God. The ripping from the top was more than a symbolic gesture; it was actual. There is no other explanation for the phenomena other than that God did it. The certainty of having authorized access to God should encourage believers to persevere by faith.

## **OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)**

1. Have you ever felt like you could not go on any longer?
2. How did you sustain or encourage yourself to keep going?
3. What insight or advice would you share with a new believer regarding perseverance?

## **INSIGHTS**

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we search for ways to develop a deeper and more intimate and personal relationship with God through Christ. We are grateful to Jesus for bridging the gap, allowing us to connect to God for the confession and forgiveness of sin. The forgiveness we

experience through Jesus' sacrifice for us shapes and frames our relationship with God. Our receiving God's gracious gift of a Savior qualifies us for the benefits received because of God's loving gift. **EXPLORATION** As Christians, we are forgiven by God's grace through faith in Jesus by faith. Having received such an incredible, undeserved gift, we should be even more committed to sharing the Gospel with those who reject the salvation offered through Christ. As we grow closer to God, we must also grow closer to one another. Our witness is more powerful when we can guide believers to the saving grace we enjoy in Christ Jesus.

## **ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER**

### **COMMENTARY ON *HEBREWS 10:23-25***

#### **KJV**

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

#### **NIV**

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,

25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The writer moves to a series of exhortations to guide believers in what it means to fully embrace the life of faith. The “confession of our hope” is an unwavering profession of trust in the Lord. God validates Christians’ hope with His faithfulness to His word. Beyond the mere profession of unwavering faith is the proof of one’s belief, evidenced by a commitment to encouraging or spurring them to higher levels of love and good works. An additional evidence of commitment is the faithful gathering and mutual encouragement of other believers. Building up others and Christian fellowship are two evidences of vital faith. When zeal runs low and faith weakens, the desire to fellowship with other believers weakens as well. Christians are able to build, bless, and encourage one another to fruitful service and unbroken fellowship when they seize the opportunity to gather together. Apostasy or defection from Christian fellowship arises through believers’ neglect to meet and offer mutual help and support of their brothers and sisters in faith. “Seeing the Day [of Jesus] approaching” is a reference to Jesus’ second coming. Being mindful of the Lord’s return, we must share the Good News of Jesus as we also encourage one another in the faith.

## **DISCUSSION STARTERS**

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:** What are some of the reasons that people give for not attending church services?
- **Young Adult Question:** Do you think Christians are actively spurring one another toward love and good deeds? Identify three people you will actively begin encouraging.

### COMMENTARY ON *HEBREWS 10:26-31*

#### KJV

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

#### NIV

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left,

27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

To be clear, there is no excuse or understanding regarding willful sin among believers. They know better and should, therefore, do better. The basic thought is reminiscent of Hebrews 6:4-6—a deliberate rejection of the Cross by one who knows the way leaves God with no alternative: willful sin has consequences. When mercy is rejected, judgment

must follow—for there is no sacrifice to cover such sin. Verse 27 emphasizes that believers who sin willfully may fully expect to incur the judgment and wrath of God, as their disobedience is tantamount or equivalent to the rejection of God’s grace by His adversaries and enemies. For the believer who sins on purpose, judgment will be harsh. It will be a fearful, frightful judgment for those who reject divine grace (and thereby reject God Himself). The threefold charge against willful sinners are (a) contempt for Christ, (b) rejecting or cheapening the bloodbought covenant, and (c) despising the person and work of the Holy Spirit. From such an ultimate condition there is no remedy and no escape. The vengeance of God awaits such persons, declares the writer—quoting from Deuteronomy 32:35-36 as supporting evidence. This hopeless rejection leads to the fiercest judgment from God. Psalm 135:14 also provides scriptural proof of God’s disposition regarding willful sin.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:** What can you say to weak, overwhelmed believers who have drifted away from serving God with enthusiasm?
- **Young Adult Question:** If a Christian violates the Word of God intentionally and willfully, do you think he or she is unaware that God’s Word is violated and God is angered?

## COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 10:32-36

### KJV

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

### NIV

32 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering.

33 Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated.

34 You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

35 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Again, the writer draws a contrast. Continuing his exhortation, he describes strong faith and patience under trial and difficulty. He reminds the believers of their earlier faith and the first blessing of knowing Christ. In the joy of this newly found faith they regarded the afflictions, temptations, struggles, and reproaches as nothing—similar to an athlete who perceives the engaging challenges nothing more than a part of the process, in practice or in performance. The kind of struggle, whether sympathizing with others under trial or suffering personal loss for Christ, makes little difference. Faith is strong; afflictions are welcome, and confidence in Christ is firm and constant. The writer uses the term gazing stock to describe the public mockery of Christians who remain resilient even amid others' contempt for them and their faith. The writer calls for patience or confidence; believers should not forsake their faith. Bold, daring assurance of an expected victory is the patient, confident hope we need. Rather than turning back to an easier way, believers are to hold firmly to faith and steadfast patience, knowing that the reward is certain. Doing the will of God on earth must become our ruling desire on earth so that our heavenly reward might be more blessed. As we do the will of God, we must be patient in carrying the load and not casting it aside—for we know that as we work, surely God is faithful to come to us as He said (verse 37, not in our lesson).

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:** In a difficult world, what is one of the greatest benefits the church offers Christians today?
- **Young Adult Question:** Early Christians were arrested, persecuted, and even executed because of their faith in God. What are some ways that Christians today experience suffering?

## LIFE APPLICATION

### Refer to Adult Book

*(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)*

—This week, reflect on the times when you have either decided not to attend church, or to not be actively involved in serving and supporting the church. What things block today's Christians from having a strong commitment to the church? Let this week's lesson inspire your recommitment to more faithful attendance and joyful service at church.

*(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)*

—Can you recall the faces and names of persons who used to attend church regularly, but have now fallen away? Pray for them; then, as you are led, reach out and gently encourage them, ask if they have any prayer requests or special concerns, then invite them to return to worship or a

special event at church. Do not be condemning or judgmental; just let them know that the church doors are open and you along with many others would be genuinely glad to see them again. •

### **Refer to Young Adult Book**

*(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)*

—Every Christian will be subject to suffering, trials, and affliction. During those times, pray for courage to endure suffering as a result of your faithful witness and allow affliction to spur you to greater boldness for the Lord and to remember how God has taken care of you in the past.

*(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)*

—Every week, the news is filled with stories of pastors and Christians who commit deliberate, intentional sin—placing themselves in the hands of God's judgment. Do Christians in your own circle sin freely, that is, without guilt? The wrath and vengeance of God are no joke. Pray and encourage the Christians you know to let go of habitual sin and recommit themselves to the righteous living that God requires.

### **NEXT WEEK'S LESSON**

The lesson topic for Sunday, August 22, 2021, is "Perfect Love." The Devotional Reading is John 14:15-24, the Background Scriptures are 1 John 4–5, and the Printed Text is 1 John 4:2-3, 13-17; 5:4-5.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Lord, help us to understand the power in gathering together to worship You in the beauty of Your sanctuary. Help us to look beyond one another's faults and to refuse to be drawn or distracted by anything that could possibly hinder us from gathering to worship You. Keep us humble by reminding us of the grace You have extended to us so freely. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### **HOME DAILY BIBLE READING**

#### **A CONQUERING FAITH**

*(August 16-22, 2021)*

MONDAY, August 16: "Testing Our Love for God" (Deuteronomy 13:1-4)

TUESDAY, August 17: "Love God by Keeping His Commandments" (John 14:15-24)

WEDNESDAY, August 18: "Discerning the Spirit of Truth and Error" (1 John 4:1, 4-6)

THURSDAY, August 19: "Knowing God, We Can Love Others" (1 John 4:7-12)

FRIDAY, August 20: "Faith Is the Victory" (1 John 5:1-3)

SATURDAY, August 21: "Believers in Jesus Have Life" (1 John 5:6-12)

SUNDAY, August 22: "Faith That Loves Overcomes Obstacles"  
(1 John 4:2-3, 13-17; 5:4-5)