



## Part 5: The Faith of the Triumphant and Suffering

Hebrews 11:32-40

*Whether triumph or suffering, we are called to a persevering “No matter what” faith.*

A radical hope, surrender and trust in Jesus is really the only way to live.

### The faith of the triumphant:

- Hebrews 11:32 – 35a, Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah, and prophets “conquered kingdom, administered justice...shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, escaped the edge of the sword, weakness was turned to strength, powerful in battle...received back their dead.”
- Gideon (Judges 7:7-25); Barak (Judges 4:8-16); Samson (Judges 13:1-16:31); Jephthah (Judges 10:6-12:7) | 1 Samuel 12:11
- “who shut the mouths of lions” – Daniel (Daniel 6)
- “quenched the fury of the flames” – Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego (Daniel 3)
- “escaped the edge of the sword” – Elijah (1 Kings 19:2-18), Elisha (2 Kings 6:31 – 7:2), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:19, 26)
- “weakness was turned to strength” – Gideon (Judges 6:15)
- “women received back their dead” – widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24), woman of Shunem (2 Kings 4:17-37)
- Gideon - Judges 6:1 “The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord.” Judges 6:14 – 16 “The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” The Lord answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites.”

- Gideon was a flawed character who often doubted and needed confirmation from God. After he defeated the Midianites, he created a golden ephod (elaborate priestly garment) that became an idol to the Israelites. This is consistent with the flawed heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11 - Abraham lied about Sarah; Isaac lied about Rebekah; Jacob was a deceiver; Moses committed murder; the people of Israel were grumblers; Gideon was a doubter and David a murderer and adulterer.
- “Real faith must be expressed by real people, real pilgrims who have yet to reach the heavenly city. They are searching; they have not yet arrived. These are “heroes” not because they are perfect, but because they worked with God in his perfect work. Thus, we too are eligible for enlistment in the life of faith.” - George Guthrie, *NIVAC*
- Flawed faith of Moses – doubts, questioning God, and yet he walked in obedience with what he could see. Faith is not the same as having the feeling of faith. There will be many of times when we won’t feel confident or at peace and yet God calls us to obedience as we follow Him. And this is especially true when we walk through times of suffering and pain.

### **Suffering vs. the Instagram Affect**

- The “Instagram Affect” – our culture as portrayed through social media feeds into a reality that lives for the spectacular and avoids the suffering. It is all about celebrating the good and avoiding the bad. This can create a false reality that life is only the spectacular, avoiding all suffering and pain. This false reality creates a disconnect and dissonance from true reality and has statistically shown heightened mental health issues in many. True life is not a disconnected reality but an integrated reality of the triumphant and suffering.

### **The faith of the suffering:**

“We’ll find that the pain we wish could end...is actually the place we can encounter the most grace. Seated by the ledge where we’ve exhausted ourselves trying to push away suffering, we’ll see that pain embraced and accepted provides a panoramic perspective of the dawning of God’s new world. We’ll watch for the dawn while acknowledging the dark. And as the black and blue of night recede with radiance of the rising sun, we’ll realize we’re in the company of Jesus.” – K.J. Ramsey, *This Too Shall Last*,

- Hebrews 11:35-38 “There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated – the world was not worthy of them.”
- “tortured to death” – Eleazar (2 Maccabees 6:19,28)

- “mocking and scourging, chains and imprisonment” – Jeremiah (Jeremiah 20:2,7-10; 37:15)
- “death by stoning” – Zechariah (2 Chronicles 24:21)
- “sawn in two” – Isaiah (*Ascension of Isaiah*)
  
- Faith of the suffering today - more Christians died for their faith in the 20<sup>th</sup> century than the previous 19 combined. Last year was the worse year on record; 5,500 Christians killed for reasons related to their faith, more than 2,000 churches attacked, and over 4,500 Christians detained or imprisoned (Colson Center Breakpoint).
  
- What if you are suffering right now?
  - Healing Prayer
  - The Prayer of Lament – Psalm 13
    - Turn to God – Psalm 13:1
    - Bring your complaint – Psalm 13:1-2
    - Ask Boldly – Psalm 13:3-4
    - Choose to Trust – Psalm 13:5-6

#### **“No Matter What” Faith:**

- “No matter what” we go through: a broken marriage, financial strain, a wayward child, or a health crisis, we trust in Jesus. We cling to Him for hope and rest in His promises that one day we will finally be home in the fullness of His presence where He wipes away our tears and makes all things new.
- Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego – Daniel 3:16-18, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. **But even if he does not**, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Have you ever felt the tension between the faith of the triumphant and the faith of the suffering? What did that look like for you?
2. How have you experienced God and seen your faith grow in times of suffering?
3. What does it look like for you to have a “No Matter What” faith? Is there something that you are walking through right now that you need to trust in Jesus?