

“Radical Story, Radical Faith”: Study Guide

The story of God in humanity’s history, even though it has been known for thousands of years, is still unique, incredible, revolutionary... and radical. The extremes of a perfect relationship being broken and the offended pursuing the offender relentlessly to the point of ultimate sacrifice make a love story that is unmatched in any other story. God weaves His purpose intentionally through a series of servants from different backgrounds, historical eras, and personalities, who are unified by a shared radical faith.

This all leads to the cross. This symbol of death, where our savior was crucified, becomes a symbol of hope as our sins are defeated and death loses its grasp on us. God plays a starring role in His own story as Jesus exemplifies a radical faith, trusting the Father, even to the point of death. As Good Friday and Easter approach, we remember the cross, the sacrifice, and the resurrection of Jesus, but we keep in mind the bigger picture of God’s redemption story and how we can continue the legacy of the life of Jesus in living a radical faith for God’s glory.

Study Guide Week 1: Part I the Old Testament

Hebrews Chapter 11

Opening Discussion Question:

- What is a life event that has challenged or threatened your faith in Jesus?
- If you could not think of an example for the question above, what type of event could you imagine might challenge your faith?

Hebrew Chapter 11 is a New Testament guide to radical faith found in the Old Testament. In this chapter the author selects some of the great heroes of the Old Testament as examples of how great faith led them to great acts in spite of the difficult circumstances they face. These examples can be used to teach and encourage today’s reader to press onward with perseverance, trust, and courage in the face of daunting circumstances. Hebrews points us to faith in God as the source for our ability to heroically overcome every, and any, circumstance.

Scripture:

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV 84)

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Hebrews 11:7a (NIV)

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.

Hebrews 11:17 (NIV)

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son,

Hebrews 11:31 (NIV)

By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

Hebrews 11:39-40 (NIV 84)

³⁹ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, ⁴⁰ God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Observations and discussion from the passages above:

- In your own words how would you explain or define the word faith to a non-believer?
- Noah's radical faith allowed him to persevere for somewhere between 55 to 75 years (the amount of time scholars believe it took to build the ark). Do you have a personal example of how your faith in Christ gave you the perseverance to make it through a difficult period in life?
- Abraham's radical faith helped him to trust God even when asked to give up the thing he valued most in life (his one and only son). Can you give an example of how your extreme trust in God's plan and provision has given you a radical life story?
- Rahab's radical faith gave her the courage to hide the Israelite spies from the Canaanite soldiers (risking her own death). Do you have a personal example of your faith in Christ giving you the courage and boldness to act in way that you normally would not have?

Share, Reflect, and Pray:

- Verses 39 and 40 give the reader an indication that all believers are included in God's epic story of redemption. God will perfect nothing until all the parts and players have completed their purpose. This is God's story and He is the main character, but how amazing is it that we, like the Old Testament heroes, have an important role to fulfill before God is finished with His epic.
- Considering today's study are there areas of your life that warrant some reflection and prayer?
- In what ways can you apply what you studied today into your life?

Additional Going Deeper Passages (if you so desire):

- You can find Noah's radical story in Genesis chapter 6 if you would like to read the whole adventure.
- You can find Abraham's radical story in Genesis chapter 22 if you would like to read the whole adventure.
- You can find Rahab's radical story in Joshua chapter 2 if you would like to read the whole adventure.



Study Guide Week 2: Jesus' Captivity Mark 15:1-5

Opening Discussion Question:

- What is your dream job, if money and experience are not factors?
- Would you rather work for and under someone, or have people work for and under you? Why?

Oftentimes we look at Jesus and His crucifixion as well as His resurrection. But we do not discuss too much about His captivity, which was when He was betrayed, arrested, and then brought before the leaders and rulers for questioning.

This language and idea of captives is used throughout the Bible. The Bible interchanges this word "captive" with words such as slave, servant, and prisoner. God warned Cain to not be mastered by his sin and anger. The Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians. The Apostle Paul was a prisoner for the gospel message. As believers, we are called to take every thought captive in order to obey Christ. And those in Christ are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness.

Scripture:

1 "Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. 2 "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate. "You have said so," Jesus replied. 3 The chief priests accused him of many things. 4 So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of." 5 But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed" (Mark 15:1-5, NIV).

Observations and discussion from the passages above:

- What is going on in this passage?
- Who are the people involved and who are they?
- Why did Jesus make no reply when given the opportunity to?
- There are several speculations and reasons as to why Pilate "was amazed" by Jesus. What do you think caused Pilate's amazement?
- How does Jesus show a radical faith and radical story here?
- Jesus' captivity showcases a radical faith and radical story. Jesus was a captive to His Father and His Father's will. Jesus trusted in His Father's plans and purposes. Jesus obeyed and submitted to His Father because He was captivated by His Father's love and goodness.

Share, Reflect, and Pray:

- Who or what are you a captive to? Who do you serve and who is your master?
- Learning from Jesus, what would it look like to live your life as a captive to God and His will for you?



- Have you ever experienced God as your loving and good Master?

Additional Going Deeper Passages (if you so desire):

- John 4:31-34; 6:38-40.
 - o Jesus' commitment to and fulfillment from obeying His Father's will.
- Romans 6:15-23.
 - o Believers are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness.
- Hebrews 12:1-11.
 - o God as our loving Father and Master.

Study Guide Week 3
Col 1:24-29, Hebrews 11:1, 39-40

Opening Discussion Question:

- We have to start the post Easter message with someone saying “He is Risen!” And everyone responds with. . . ?
- What is your favorite movie/book series? Something you where you know the story from beginning to end, but each movie/book is it’s own experience? Explain or describe that series.

We have spent the last 4 messages going over God’s epic story from before time began, through Jesus on the cross, and into a changed eternity for those that come to know Jesus. The question is, how can you fit into God’s Radical Story, and what kind of Radical Faith will it take for you to do so?

Scripture:

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV 84)

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Hebrews 11:39-40 (NIV 84)

39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Colossians 1:24-29 (NET)

Paul’s Labor for the Church

24 Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. 25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— 26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. 27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

Observations and discussion from the passages above:

- Paul lived a radical faith going on mission after mission, planting and encouraging churches, even while in prison. Take time to read his words from Colossians chapter 1 above.

- How do the words “I rejoice in what I am suffering” make any sense? What kind of radical faith does that show?
- What do you think this phrase means, “I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions?” It is strange to hear that anything would be lacking in Christ. Take time to discuss this
 - It is important to state that the works of Jesus on the cross are complete. There is nothing that is incomplete when it comes to the penalty of our sin and the price that Christ paid on the cross.
 - So what is incomplete?
 - In Philippians 3:10-11, Paul writes that he wants to know Christ more by sharing in His sufferings, even to the point of death and so somehow to attain the resurrection. Paul also suffers now in Colossians for the sake of the church and those who come to know Jesus.
 - There are still those that have yet to come to receive the forgiveness of their sins, and the church that God is redeeming has not reached the moment of eternal unity with Jesus. There is still work for us to be done.
 - Constable writes, “the afflictions of Christ [are the] actual sufferings now, not on the cross but in and through Paul whom He indwelt (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23-28). When believers suffer, Christ also suffers because He indwells us (cf. Acts 9:4).
 - If this is the case, we too as believers should rejoice in the sufferings that we face as we live and sacrifice for the sake of our calling in the church. It takes a Radical Faith for Jesus to rejoice in his sufferings, for Paul to follow, and for us to imitate Paul. (1 Cor 11:1)
- In light of that thought, reread Col 1:28-29!
- Now think about Hebrews 11 and the hall of faith. Can you see how our memory verse of Hebrews 11:40 makes all the more sense? God has prepared something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect!

Share, Reflect, and Pray:

- Our faith in Jesus is a call to action. We are to love as Jesus loved. Pathway’s mission is to live and love like Jesus by sacrificially meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of people. How is God calling you?
- What has God put on your heart that you have been hesitant to take steps forward in? Share that openly with your group for encouragement, ideas, and accountability.
- As we begin our evangelism series next week, will you pray over the people that God has put in your life to share His truth with and will you be ready to live a Radical Faith out to fill up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions?
- Pray together.