

**SERMON NOTES SERIES**

**PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY NOTES**

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**FAITH'S GREATEST  
CHALLENGES**



**DR. JOHN PELIZZARI, PH.D.  
SENIOR PASTOR**

Hi,

Over the years I have had numerous people ask me for a copy of my sermon notes for their own personal Bible studies. I am glad to be able to present them to you. You have in your hands an exact copy of my sermon notes for your very own personal studies. I pray that as you study the Word, that the Holy Spirit will add even more than what you have before you. Put yourself there in what you are studying. What were they feeling, what were they facing...make the Word come alive by placing yourself there.

I am also including a list of the resources that I use to obtain my information, but I will say this, without the Holy Spirit guiding and teaching you under the anointing all you have is just a bunch of books. I always pray before, during, and upon deliverance of each message I receive. I pray that...*you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (Colossians 1:9)*. I am both honored and blessed that you have selected a Sermon Notes Series and I pray that it will be a blessing to you!

With Much Love,  
Pastor John

## RESOURCES USED

- \* The Companion Bible
- \* Dake's Annotated Reference Bible
- \* Young's Analytical Concordance To The Bible
- \* A Dictionary Of Bible Types
- \* Vine's Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words
- \* The American College Dictionary
- \* World's Bible Handbook
- \* The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary
- \* Nelson's Three- in- One Bible Reference Companion
- \* The Word -The Bible In 26 Translations
- \* God's Plan For Man
- \* Harper's Encyclopedia Of Bible Life
- \* Nelson's Expository Dictionary Of The Old Testament
- \* Manners And Customs From the Bible
- \* What The Bible Is All About
- \* Halley's Bible Handbook

*These are just a small listing of the study aides that I use. The greatest study aide available is letting the Holy Spirit be your teacher. May you get to know Him!*

Words translated from the Gk = Greek and Hb=Hebrew.

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## OUR VISION

“My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge;”

*Hosea 4:6*

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:”

*Proverbs 23:7*

“...and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;”

*Colossians 1:9*

“Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.”

*Proverbs 24:3-5*

“And the Gospel must first be published among all nations.”

*Mark 13:10*

As the Scriptures speak for themselves, our vision is to empower Believers everywhere to live a victorious abundant lifestyle that can be obtained through wisdom and understanding. If you are willing to change the way you think, you can change the way you live. A renewed mind towards the Word of God established you firmly in the faith and opens the door for the blessings and benefits of God to become evident in your life.

Because We Believe In You,  
*John and Karen Pelizzari*

## FAITH’S GREATEST CHALLENGES

**Hebrews 11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:**

1. We recently covered a teaching entitled the “***Characteristics Of Faith***” in which we went line by line of this company of people who showed us some things about faith in their life.
2. Here we see a list of several more that will show us the characteristics of faith before we dive into the challenges of faith.
  - a. **Gideon** - shows us that a person of faith can accomplish mighty things when they choose to believe what God says about them.
  - b. **Barak** - shows us that a person of faith can receive the victory even though they are unsure of themselves.
  - c. **Samson** - he shows us that a person of faith that willfully compromises can still be used by God to accomplish God’s will but can forfeit the benefits and rewards if they would have been obedient.

- d. **Jephthae** - he shows us that a person of faith will display boldness even though they tend to make rash decisions.
- e. **David** - shows us that when a person of faith relies on God for everything, that God will promote them to higher standards of living and prosperity.
- f. **Samuel** - he shows us that a person of faith will maintain their integrity despite those around him who do not.
- g. **The prophets** - their faith shows us that people of faith will say what God wants said and will do what God wants done even if they don't have the approval of others.

3. Now I want you to see the challenges that these people faced throughout bible history and how we can glean from them.

**Hebrews 11:33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,**

4. Notice what having faith brought them up against:

**Subdued kingdoms** - Joshua comes to mind here.

- He had to take a rag tag group of people with a slave mentality and form them into a great army.

- Moses was dead and he had to wrestle with the idea whether he was even qualified to lead these people much less take on the responsibility of thrusting them into war.
  - Would they listen, were they willing to follow him, did they compare him to Moses and conclude that he was nothing like Moses?
5. **The challenge of faith** is to get you past yourself and the opinions of others and take charge of what God has called you to do.

**Wrought righteousness** - Abraham comes to mind.

- He chose to believe that His encounter with God was genuine even though he grew up believing in other gods.
  - He had to convince his family that he heard from God risking ridicule and rejection.
  - He chose to obey God when it seemed like God was about to take away from him the very thing that he promised that he could have, a son by promise.
  - But because he obeyed, God considered him as righteous.
6. **The challenge of faith** is to obey God despite personal feelings and the approval of others.

**Obtained promises** - the list is too numerous to mention.

7. But, **the challenge of faith** is to face any obstacle or barrier that the enemy may throw your way, no matter how long it may take, until you finally have in your hands what God said was yours from the very beginning.

**Stopped the mouths of lions** - both David as a youth and Daniel come to mind.

- In both cases, both of them faced the lions head on and God delivered them from being mauled to death.

8. **The challenge of faith** is to understand that you will face an enemy stronger and more intimidating than you can imagine, but an even greater One is with you with plans that include your enemies' defeat, no matter how loud he roars and tries to fill you with fear.

- Most believers either run, gripe, complain or walk out on God when opposition comes.

**Hebrews 11:34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.**

**Quenched the violence of fire** - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego come to mind

- They didn't cry out that it wasn't fair because they were serving God and everyone else around them wasn't.

- They didn't murmur and remind the Lord how they had dedicated their lives to serving Him and this was the thanks that they had gotten in return.

- They didn't compromise their walk with God despite threats.

- They didn't complain as they were being thrown into the fiery furnace.

9. **The challenge of faith** is to maintain your peace despite unfair and harsh treatment by others.

**Escaped the edge of the sword** - Moses and David come to my mind.

- King Saul pursued David while Pharaoh pursued Moses.

- Both men were acquainted with their pursuers.

- Both men had lived in the same household of the very ones now desiring their deaths.

- Both men lived looking over their shoulders from time to time.

10. **The challenge of faith** is to walk in love when the very ones you had fellowship with at one time are ready to serve your head to the vultures.

**Out of weakness were made strong** - Sarah comes to mind with this one.

- She had to believe that her body could respond even though biologically it was impossible.
  - She had to trust that this new God that neither one of them knew anything about actually existed and had really spoken to her husband.
  - She went through the motions for years before her body finally conceived a child.
  - She had to subdue self defeating thoughts. She had to ignore the whispers and knowing looks from the other women in the villages because she was past her prime.
  - She had to wrestle with embarrassment when her husband would tell others that they were going to have a baby because this new God who had introduced Himself to Abram in the hot desert sun had promised them children twenty something years ago.
11. **The challenge of faith** is to remove the time constraints and believe that He will come through in due season, when He knows its time, not when you think the time should be.

**Waxed valiant in fight** - here I think of David's mighty men.

- These guys were whining, complaining, angry, bitter and financially broke.
  - They were unpleasant to hang around with because all they ever talked about was their problems, their pain and their persecutors.
  - They would get offended in a heartbeat.
  - But they allowed David's mentorship to turn into their leadership.
  - They went from being whiners to being winners and from being mouthy to being mighty.
12. **The challenge of faith** is to allow someone to mentor you whether you like it or not.
13. How can you tell you need mentorship?
- a. Do you still whine and complain, get bitter or are you easily angered?
  - b. Are you bitter?
  - c. Does financial pressure still shipwreck your faith on the inside despite what you try to make it look like on the outside?

- d. Do you know so much that you don't need a mentor and you can't be told what to do..... 'nuff said on that.

**Turned to flight the armies of the aliens** - (video games come to mind) not really, this reminds me of David running to face Goliath.

- David took on not only Goliath, but he was willing to take on the whole Philistine army.
14. Understand that an alien symbolizes someone who is unknown or foreign to your knowledge but they are trying to capture what rightfully belongs to you in this incident.
15. **The challenge of faith** is to stand your ground and remind yourself of what God promised you even if it means taking on all of hell itself while everyone is watching you go through it.
- a. The children of Israel watched David in fear as he ran towards Goliath.
  - b. They already had defeat in their hearts.

**Hebrews 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:**

**Women received their dead raised to life again** - I think of the numerous women in the scriptures who had lost their most precious delights.

- Understand that nothing can replace a physical loss of a child.
  - And yet some of these women have the assurance that in heaven, they are alive and well and see them as being resurrected.
  - But this does not exclude the ones who currently have no contact or knowledge of their children's whereabouts but yet still trust God that they are alive and well and that they will see them in the rapture.
16. **The challenge of faith** is to believe and trust God when everything inside of you is crushed and broken and relief never comes.

**Others were tortured** - I think of Joseph in prison where they would beat the bottom of his feet so he could not walk. I think of Samson, chained to the pillars having his eyes gouged out as an act of amusement for others.

- I think of the men and women who sacrificed their lives for this great nation who went through the ravages of war only to be boycotted upon their return by a bunch of unappreciative people that picket their graves.
17. **The challenge of faith** is to accept the fact that your efforts and sacrifices will not always gain the acceptance or approval of others.

**Not accepting deliverance** - I think of Moses, walking away from the comforts of Egypt to suffer with an

ungrateful, gossiping, slandering, accusatory, unappreciative people.

- I think of Jesus, who came to His very own creation but was rejected by the very ones he loved and came to save.
- He could have come down from the cross but He didn't.

18. **The challenge of faith** is to keep your mind on the eternal reward, not the temporary reprieve.

- Keep your eyes on the eternal benefits, not the temporary blessings.

**That they might obtain a better resurrection** - a better resurrection?

19. This reminds me of people of today, that when God tells them know, they trust His decision and wait. Then, someone or something better does come along and they are grateful that they waited and trusted instead of hesitated and got busted.

- a. That's why some have multiple marriages, you don't know how to wait.
- b. You reason in your mind physical factors instead of spiritual truths.
  - If you still show interest in someone based on how they look...well let me not go to that shallow end of the pond.

**Hebrews 11:36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:**

**And others had trial of cruel mockings** - honestly, the first person that comes to my mind and spirit are pastors; ministers who give their all to a person or family for years only to have them turn without even an honest explanation.

- Then they go and spread their poison, affecting others evidenced by suspicious looks, apprehensive giving and minimal involvement.
- They know that others are talking about them and they feel as if they are on trial all the time, having to prove themselves time and time again.
- How most church folks don't care if the bills get paid, if the minister gets a salary or has groceries.

20. **The challenge of faith** is to stand on trial and say nothing like Jesus did even though accusations are flying everywhere and fingers are being pointed.

**And scourgings** - I think of Paul and Silas who were so beaten, put in jail and then decided to sing about it.

21. **The challenge of faith** is to keep the songs of God alive in your heart when everything else around you is trying to beat you down.

**Moreover of bonds** - I think of Jeremiah, saying what God wanted him to say despite popular opinion, acceptance or approval and ended up in stock to be ridiculed and have rocks thrown at him.

- Jeremiah was obedient.
- Most people act like the ones who put Jeremiah in bonds...if they hear something that does not line up with their belief or idea of what they want God to do in their life, immediately they are told they are missing God, putting that prophet in bonds.
- Next time that prophet will hesitate to prophesy until they eventually talk themselves out of ever doing it again.

22. The challenge of faith is to obey despite whether people receive what you have to say.

- a. Being popular or accepted is not on God's agenda for your life.

**And imprisonment** - I immediately think of John the Baptist who spoke out against a couple's behavior.

- That man then used his position, wealth and power to retaliate against John.
- Eventually, John's disciples questioned his ministry.

- And John ended up being beheaded for telling the truth.

23. **The challenge of faith** is to be powerful for God, not popular with man.

**Hebrews 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;**

**They were stoned** - Stephen comes to mind.

- He was in charge of the food pantry ministry.
- And yet Paul (Saul) was one of the ones who resided over his death sentence.

24. **The challenge of faith** is to be faithful to your ministry despite the fact that others are throwing rocks at you.

**They were sawn asunder** - they were put into hollowed out tree trunks and cut in two in the Roman coliseums.

25. **The challenge of faith** is to remain faithful until the end even when the end is not favorable.

**Were tempted** - here, I first think of Eve, and then I make the connection to you and I.

- How we, like Eve, tend to be easy marks from time to time to give into the impulses of the flesh.
- Like Eve, we do so because we like what we see.
- Like Eve, we fall into sin because we want it based on how it can make us feel.
- Like Eve, because we feel we know better than God (to make one wise).

26. See, Adam and Eve already had everything. So their temptation was the lie that God must be holding out on them.

**Were slain with the sword** - I think of King Saul, who started out as a man of God's choosing but ended in a tragic way by falling on his own sword.

- It takes me to the countless ministers and believers that I have seen start out powerfully with God only to allow some man/woman ruin their greatest opportunity and shipwreck their faith.
- Most people will pick someone hoping that they will support their ministry instead of doing their ministry and allowing God to send them someone to support their ministry.
- Others have started out strong but humble only to let their ministry gift get to their head.

**They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins** - in the Roman coliseums they would take christian children and put skins on them and release them into the arena.

- The lions and tigers would smell the skins and maul the children right in front of the eyes of their parents.
- This "game" was called "*the good shepherd*."

27. The challenge of faith is to understand that satan wants to put you in sheepskins so that others will think that you are the wolf in sheep's clothing.

- And he will ensure that everyone sees you in the arena going through something that proves their suspicions about you.
- The enemy would love nothing better than to turn the tables on you and use scriptures to convince others that you're the problem.

**Being destitute** - destitute means to fall short, to always be lacking, to have to struggle to make ends meet, doing without.

- This makes me think about us; how most of us struggle, are barely making it and feel from time to time that we are making excuses for God more than we are standing in faith.

28. **The challenge of faith** is to believe that this is only for a season, things are always subject to change.

- a. You have to keep a “ this too shall pass” mentality whereas most would want to quit or give up or blame God for not loving them.

**Being afflicted** - afflicted means to be knocked around so much that it brings pain and suffering.

- Here I think of the church as a whole. Everyone going through something only to face another thing before the dust settles on the last trial we faced.

29. **The challenge of faith** is to get back up, again and again no matter how many times the enemy knocks you down.

**Being tormented** - torment is severe mental or physical pain.

- I think of believers on a world wide scale, how we have suffered persecution simply because we believe.

30. **The challenge of faith** is to stay in faith when the pain speaks louder than the promise.

**Hebrews 11:38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.**

31. These people of faith were too good for this world.

**They wandered in deserts** - I am reminded of the children of Israel in the desert for 40 years.

- They wandered because they murmured, griped and complained.
- This reminds me of some of *you*, who despite having heard teachings on faith, watching what you say, putting a guard over your mouth, still don't get the concept of what faith and confession is all about.
- So I have watched you wander, in and out, back and forth, up and down.

32. **The challenge of faith** is to be a worshipful receiver, not a doubtful unbeliever.

**And wandered in mountains** - again, Moses comes to mind and how God asked him to come up higher on the mountain.

- He ended up being gone longer than expected.
- He didn't worry about what the others were doing.
- He had to climb, he had to make physical efforts to obtain spiritual benefits.

33. **The challenge of faith** is to continue to go higher with God and leave the rest of *your* world in His capable hands.

- a. Let Him take care of them.

**And in dens and caves of the earth** - I think of the apostle John, who at the age of about 93 was banished to the isle of Patmos, ended up living in a cave even though he was the disciple that Jesus loved.

- 34. This reminds me of all the believers who have lived their life for Jesus, serving the Lord with every fiber of their being, and never complained about the hardships involved.

**Hebrews 11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:**

- 35. **The challenge of faith** with this verse is to understand that the approval of God's heart is more valuable than the manifestation that comes from His hand.

**Hebrews 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.**

- 36. God had something better in store for them but they cannot get it until you and I join them. That something better is the new covenant with better promises.
- 37. **The challenge of faith** is to remind yourself that in the light of eternity, this walk on this planet will have been a breeze in comparison to the glory to come.