

## *“Abraham’s Faith” Part 1*

### **Fixing Our Eyes Upon Jesus, Our High Priest**

Hebrews 11:8-22

Dr. Jeff Stivason

February 15, 2019

**Jeff:** Our heavenly Father, we are thankful for the many things that You do for us in life. But most of all we’re thankful for giving us Your self-revelation. We’re thankful to know You, for without You we would be lost. And yet we also remember the fact that we cannot exist without knowing You. Though men suppress that knowledge, the knowledge of You in unrighteousness, we are thankful that You opened our eyes to the fact that not only that You exist, but You’ve revealed who You are in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that by the power of Your Spirit in us. We’re thankful for that. We do pray for other men as they gaze up at the starry heavens, as they understand the moral law within. And though they suppress those things, we pray that Your gospel would reach them, would reach them through our own lips, would reach them through the lips of gospel ministers or other literature. We pray, Father, that You will conquer and go about conquering as You do indeed promise to do. And we pray that the gospel would conquer.

Father, we ask that You’ll bless us here today. We come, Lord, asking that You will send Your Spirit upon us as we open Your word. Father, we long to understand more of it. We long to understand it not only for intellectual satisfaction, but we long to understand it because we desire righteousness. We desire spirituality. We pray, Father, that You’ll change us and shape us after the image of the Lord Jesus Christ and then use us in the lives of others, those closest to us and those distant from us. Father, as we come, we pray that Your word will indeed be that instrument of change in our lives, taken up by Your Spirit.

Father, we also pray that You’ll be with Rob. We pray that You’ll be with Bruce. We pray that You’ll be with others who are in need of our prayers—men that we know, men that we care about,—and Father, men that we need to know and care about as they are in our group and our community. Father, we pray very much for what Sig mentioned earlier, and that is that we would have fruitful relationships one with another. We pray for that accountability. We pray for that level of intimacy that we desire with one another, that we might be heard and understood. And Father, we know that only comes through a relationship with Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet You manifest Your blessing of that through others, and we pray that we would experience it.

Lord, as we turn now to Your word, bless us, for we ask it in Christ’s name. Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** All right. I’d like for you to turn with me to Hebrews chapter 11. We’re going to look at verses 8-22 today. And Don, do you have that with you?

**Don:** Yes.

**Jeff:** If you do, would you read that when you get it? Hebrews chapter 11, 8-22.

**Don:** *“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and*

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*Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.*

*“By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars in the heavens and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them, and greeting them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city.*

*“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. And he who received the promise was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, ‘Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.’ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.*

*“By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites, and gave directions concerning his bones.” This is the word of the Lord.*

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Jeff:** All right. Today I want us to look at a number of points. I want us to think about some introductory things. I want us to think about *Abraham’s faith*. And I want us to think about *how it had ears to hear, how it had eyes to see*. There’s a brief interlude in this particular text that I think is important for us to pause and to look at. And then *Abraham’s faith was Christocentric*. I think it’s important for us to see that Christ was in the Old Testament. And I think that when we see that he was in the Old Testament, then we can see that there’s a purpose, a Christological purpose, to the Old Testament. If He’s in it, then it purposes to point toward Him. And I think that’s profoundly here in this particular text, and so I want us to look at it.

Let’s take a look at the introduction, some introductory points that I think in some ways are going to be repetitions of what you’ve already heard me say last time.

Several years ago I was ministering. It’s been several years; I think it’s been about 23 or 24 years. I was asked to participate in a memorial service. My family didn’t do a lot of community stuff when I was growing up. It was the first memorial service I’d ever attended, and here I was participating in it. But it wasn’t just any memorial service. Actually it was quite special, because there was a kindergarten teacher in that service who had taught my brother. He had died by that time, and so it was quite special that she was going to be there.

And then there was another man who was going to be there who happened to be the chief of police in a nearby town where I grew up. I’ll leave that go for right now.

*(Laughter)*

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And then there was the main speaker. And the kindergarten teacher went first. And she said that she was going to briefly address the subject of heroes. Now I have to tell you that when I grew up I had in my mind, from the earliest of days, the idea of a hero. I understood what a hero was.

I can remember, and it was one of the earliest memories that I have. My dad came outside and he said, “Come in here a second.” He said, “There’s something on the television set that I want you to see.” And I walked into the doors of my home, and there it was before me on the television set—John Wayne, the cowboy! I’m not kidding you. My dad said, “Watch this movie, son. I think you’re gonna like it.”

I want to tell you something. I knew what a hero was right there. *(Laughter)* I mean, do you know what I’m saying to you? You know, Bruce Stern putting the glasses on? How many remember him? No? *(Laughter)* Come on! *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** I don’t remember the movie. I only remember John Wayne.

**Jeff:** John Wayne, yeah! “We’ve seen what you can do with a boy. How are you when they come a little bigger?” Don’t you remember these? *(Laughter)* Anyway, that was my idea, right? That was a hero.

So this kindergarten teacher stands up. And she starts to talk to us about heroism. And she starts to tell us about children who are five and six years old in her classes. And she’s telling us that these are heroes. And I’m thinking to myself, what in the world is she talking about? These are five- and six-year-old kids! And I think the main speaker thought, *what in the world is she talking about?*, because he had the same idea of a hero that I had.

And I’ll tell you what I thought walking out of there. They were nice stories. They were heart-warming. But do you know what I thought when I walked out of there? I thought that if everyone’s a hero, then no one’s a hero. And the reason that’s the case is because when everyone is a hero, there’s no one worth emulating.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** And that’s what a hero is. A hero is somebody when we consider his life.

Nowadays, I need to tell you that I still like John Wayne and I still love the John Wayne movies. But when I consider his life, I wouldn’t emulate everything about his life. *(Laughter)* But I want to tell you something. When I turn to Hebrews chapter 11, I find heroes. And I’m told to consider their lives so that I can emulate their faith.

Now I understand that we’re brothers and sisters. And it’s like what our brother Sig said. We ought to be in community with one another. But I’ve got to tell you something. There are some men that I look to and I say, “I want to be like that. I want my life to look like that person.” And I think that’s the idea that Paul is getting at when he says to Timothy, “Pour your life into these other men so that they’ll pour their lives into other men.” And I think that when a man has poured his life into you, you can’t help but consider his life and want to emulate him.

Now I want to tell you something. Listen to me. I think I’ve got to be very clear at this point. I heard one of my heroes say that he hated being looked up to by other people, because once someone understood that he too had feet of clay, they would despise him more than they once looked up to him.

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**Participant:** Here, here.

**Jeff:** And I think he’s right about that. But that’s what I would say to you. We need to remember not to turn our heroes into God. Our heroes can be heroes as long as we remember that they’re men and that they have feet of clay, and that they need repentance in Jesus Christ too.

So that’s the idea that we’re thinking of when we think about Hebrews chapter 11. We’re thinking about people whose faith should be considered and emulated.

Now what is faith? Well, this is review, in part. I want you to think about what I said the last time. I want you to think about what the Scripture said last time and what I pointed out to you last time.

What is it? Well, the Scripture says that “*faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*”

Now I want you to remember that there are two things that emerge from this particular quote that I pointed out the last time. And the first is this. *Faith gives eyes to see the unseen.* And you know what I’m talking about. If you have faith, you know exactly what I mean.

I’ll never forget. I was a new Christian. And I was talking to someone who was a little more on the academic side than I was. I had no idea how to argue my faith at that time. And I’ll tell you what I told him. I said, “I’ll tell you what, I can tell you one thing. I believe with all that is in me that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead for my sins. He was on the cross, he was raised, and that for me.”

And I went back and I told my minister at that time who was a little more academic. I told him about my encounter. And I could just see it all over his face. He just thought to himself, *What have I taught here? I thought I taught him to give a better answer.* And I thought to myself, you know what? What better answer could I have given?

**Participant:** Right.

**Jeff:** But here’s what he was thinking. He was thinking that this man needed to hear a well-reasoned apologetic for the faith. And what I was thinking was this. If he has eyes to see, he’ll understand exactly what I’m saying.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** And that’s what we need to understand. Faith gives us eyes to see what the rest of the world can’t see. That’s the first thing that we need to understand.

The second thing is this. *Faith itself is actually the evidence for those realities.* Faith itself is actually the evidence for the reality of the unseen.

Now I want you to think about this. And I know this is a bad example in that it fails at some level. But I want you to think about those glasses, right? You walk into a 3-d movie without those glasses, and you can’t see that movie, right? So first of all, faith is like those glasses. You put them on and you can see what could not be seen earlier.

But when you’re standing out in the lobby holding those glasses because they’ve given them to you,-- Did you see the 3-d version of “They Will Not Grow Old?”

**Participant:** No. Was there a 3-d version?

**Jeff:** No. (*Laughter*) But there should have been. (*Laughter*) But as I hold those 3-D glasses in my hand, they’re evidence, right? They’re evidence that the movie I’m about to

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go in and see is a 3-D movie, and I’ll be able to see it. And so I think that in some way the 3-D glasses kind of help us see that dual aspect of faith.

And that dual aspect of faith I called last time we were together not a definition. That would be more of a definition of faith. But this is a description of faith. So faith gives me eyes to see what is yet unseen. And faith is indeed the evidence that there is that which is unseen.

Okay. So J. B. Philips actually puts it like this. And I gave this to you the last time. I liked it so well that I thought I’d give it to you again. He summarizes it. I think he actually captures the essence of what we’ve been talking about. In his paraphrase of the New Testament he says, *“Only faith can guarantee the blessings we hope for, or prove the existence of the realities that at present remain unseen.”* There are the two ideas right there. Faith guarantees that we can see the unseen. And faith is the proof for there being that which is unseen. I think that’s a really remarkable paraphrase.

So what we are to be doing is that we’re to be considering the faith of the people in chapter 11. And we’re to be emulating the faith that we see there. Any questions about that? Do you want to talk about anything to refresh your memory before we go on? Don, go ahead.

**Don:** Last week Enoch was mentioned in our passage. It says that *“By faith Enoch was taken and did not see death.”*

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Don:** I’m just wondering. How did Enoch’s faith enter into this? Do you think that he expected this to happen? Maybe I’m not making myself clear.

**Jeff:** No, I think you are.

**Don:** Okay.

**Jeff:** I think you are. In fact, I think it’s interesting that at the end of each one of these sections you find that men are sort of bulleted. There’s an exposition of one particular man, or there’s a longer explanation. And then there’s sort of a bullet point at the end. It begins with that sort of bulleting of those three men, not giving them sort of the length of time that we find given to Abraham, for instance.

**Participant:** Right.

**Jeff:** And I think that we’re to expect the fact that there is a faith that was seeing the unseen. And then there was a faith that was to be emulated when we consider the outcome of that person’s life. So I think that we are to expect that Enoch looked to the promise that was given by God to Adam in the garden and then given down through the line of Seth. And so he looked for a Redeemer. And he looked for the things that would come from a Redeemer. And I think that one of those things would be life. And so I think that’s what he was looking for. Whether Enoch had a fully developed sense of what that life looked like or not, I think that he looked for life.

**Don:** Okay, thank you.

**Jeff:** Yes, Bill?

**Bill:** So going back to your point, that faith is a two-pronged approach, that it’s eyes to see something that’s unseen, and then the actual existence of that which testifies to its existence, as the glasses testify. The problem with that definition is that there are people

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who have a belief, and following it doesn’t necessarily make that belief true. When someone uses this definition, he’ll point out people who deny the Holocaust, and there are many of them.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Bill:** And there is a preponderance of them, a number of them who eliminate the Holocaust. So you can relate to people with that kind of a definition who would say things like that. There are flat earth people. There are people that deny the landing on the moon, and so on and so forth. A preponderance of them doesn’t make that situation any more true. I think we need more to this definition than what you’re saying.

**Jeff:** Well here’s what I would say. I would say that this is not a definition. I would say that this is more of a description. And I think that when we talk about a definition, I think this idea of *notitia*, *assent* and *fiducia* is more of a definition. We talked about this being what saving faith is. But with only *notitia* and *assensus*, people have that. I talked to you about the guy from Grove City the last time I was with you, how he believed there was a God. And he believed that God must be sovereign if He exists, and if there is such a God. So he would agree with that. He would say, “I agree that this must be the case.” But we know that even the demons have that much. So what they lack is the *fiducia*. They lack the desire or the inward affection for this God who exists. And that was more of a definition for what saving faith would be. There are other definitions of historical faith and those kinds of things. But when we think about saving faith, that’s kind of what I think that definitionally we need to cling to.

And so, for instance, when you meet the guy that Bill was talking about, you need to understand that he may agree with you. You could tell him all kinds of things and he may agree with you. But if he’s unsaved he doesn’t desire this God who exists.

This, on the other hand, would be more of a description. This would be for our benefit. You may disagree with me. But personally, I’m where Bill is. I think that this is not the definition that you would take to talk to an unbeliever about what saving faith is. I think this is for the benefit of the church. I think that the Pastor is saying, “Look. This is a faith that you need to look to and emulate in your position.” And we’ll talk about what their position is. You know it well by now. But I think it’s a description of faith that actually serves the body. That’s what I think. Go ahead.

**Participant:** Can you give me a description of faith? This actually came up with my children recently. I told them very simply what faith is. So could you kind of elaborate with just a simple thought for that?

**Jeff:** Yes. I’ll tell you what I tell my kids. I say, “Believe it.” Saving faith is believing something. And so I’ll just talk about something very simple. Dad says that he loves you. Now that’s a statement, a propositional truth. I think it’s propositional truth. It comes from your father. Do you believe it?

And they’ll say to me, “Yes, I believe it.”

And I’ll say to them, “That’s as simple as I can get. God the Father has spoken these things in His word, and He has told us to believe them.” And I think that’s a close parallel. And you know, you don’t have to work out all the nuts and the bolts of that. And

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you don’t have to worry about whether or not they have an emotional desire for it, you know?

I’ll talk to my kids and I’ll say, “Do you believe the things that the Bible teaches?”

“Yes.”

And I’ll sometimes say to them, “In your heart do you believe it?”, because they’re old enough.

And they’ll say, “What do you mean?”

And I’ll say, “Well, I mean do you want to think about these things? Are these things that matter to you? You know, even in a small way, do they matter to you? Does it offend you when you hear somebody speak against these things?” You know, that sort of thing.

And then with the older kids you can get into fleshing out whether there’s that desire or not. I think that with your youngest kids it’s just a matter of asking them, “Do you believe it?” Does that help? Yes?

**Participant:** You can tell your children that you love them. But they probably will not believe it if you don’t act it, if they don’t experience it from you. And in the same way with the older kids you can say, “Do you believe it?” But if they’re not acting it out, they actually prove that they don’t believe it. There is a connection between experience and faith that is essential.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** It’s not that experience dictates faith. But the faith must be proved through the experience. Would you say that’s true?

**Jeff:** Well, I would say—

**Participant:** Existentially, on a human level?

**Jeff:** Yes. And that’s really the difficulty, right? It’s trying to talk to them about that existential level. For instance, I think that when you look at a place in Titus. If you want to, look in Titus. If you don’t, I’ll just read it to you. But it’s in Titus chapter 1. And I think this is what you might be talking about, Ted. But it says, in verse 6 of chapter 1, talking about the qualifications of an elder,—

**Participant:** Titus 1, verse 6.

**Jeff:** Yes, 1:6. *“If anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers.”* Now I don’t think that’s a right translation. If you have a note, it will actually say, *“If anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are faithful.”*

Now that’s a huge difference. Some translations will say, *“if his children have faith.”* I’ll tell you what. I think it’s impossible for me to deposit saving faith into my children. I can’t work saving faith into my children. But I’ll tell you what I can do as a father. I can make sure that they’re faithful. I can make sure that their little butts are in church. *(Laughter)* Week after week, morning and evening, I can make sure they’re there. I can be sure that they’re faithful human beings. That’s what it’s in my power to do. I have no power to work faith in them. I have no power to make them believers.

So I think that’s a mistranslation in the ESV, because I don’t think that a qualification for an elder is to make sure that his child is a believer. I think that a qualification for an elder is to make sure that his child is faithful.

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So I think that in terms of experience, it’s really hard. There’s a limit to what we can do with others with regard to experience, savingly. Yes, go ahead.

**Participant:** I’ll agree right here. And this is why it’s confusing, as you’ve pointed out, because it literally says “*children having believing*.” And believing is an adjective of children. So what does that actually mean?

**Jeff:** I think *faithful*. (Laughter)

**Participant:** I would say that’s difficult. That word can imply different things.

**Jeff:** Yes. And that’s why some translations have *believers* in there and some have *faithful* in there. You know, it’s funny. Some have the note at the bottom, *faithful*.

**Participant:** In the opposite sense, I think that there are fathers who can be hypocrites, whose lives can keep their children from becoming believers. And of course God is sovereign with that, too.

**Jeff:** He is. Go ahead.

**Participant:** In the NIV it has a footnote which says, “*children who are trustworthy*.” Just so you know, what was that called? Bible Hub?

**Second Participant:** Bible Hub.

**First Participant:** Bible Hub looks at the Greek from that passage in Titus.

<http://www.biblehub.com>

**Second Participant:** That’s great. Those of us who are Calvinists enjoy it. (Laughter)

**Third Participant:** One other thought too is that if you look at Abraham, he had two children, one believing and one unbelieving. The same with Isaac.

**Second Participant:** Good point.

**Jeff:** Yes, but the twelve-year-old who was unbelieving was forced to undergo circumcision, right?

**Participant:** So he was faithful, yes.

**Jeff:** He was faithful, because the dad said to him, “You’re getting circumcised.” And he’s going, “Uh-uh!” And he’s saying, “Oh yes you are.” Right? Can you imagine that? I’d rather be re-baptized. (Laughter)

**Participant:** The thing about heroes is that they have feet of clay.

**Jeff:** Okay, I got you.

**Participant:** Because when we see it in the Scripture, when the people fall, we don’t want to emulate their lives. We want to emulate their faith. And that thing you brought up about a child believing his father. Isn’t that the same with their faith, that we believe what God has said? Faith is taking God at His word.

**Jeff:** It is.

**Participant:** Like a little child, we take the Father at His word.

**Jeff:** It is. But it’s the Father’s word. So there needs to be just as much devotion to the Father as there is to His word, and vice versa. And I think there’s a parallel in that same regard with faith, right? If somebody emulates someone else’s faith, they emulate someone else’s life, right? Because their faith is manifested through their life.

**Participant:** These people were liars and thieves.

**Jeff:** Monergistically, of course. (Laughter) Anybody else?

**Participant:** That was a good question. Very good.



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**Jeff:** Yes, Dick?

**Dick:** I think this whole discussion is really good for us to learn, because you as a father are going to be representing God almost every single day. That kid is watching you.

**Jeff:** Right.

**Dick:** And so he gets stronger and stronger and stronger. Whereas, if you’re listening to him in the church, and you only get here let’s say, once a week, it’s not as strong as what you as a father say. Back in the back we were talking about how you explain it to your kids. And I really think that the very good thing that we can all do is either from parents, fathers, or extending out to some other people in the family. And who knows? We can get some of those older guys back also, if they were ever there.

**Jeff:** Yes. You know, this is one of the things that I think that people get held up on. It’s this whole idea of believing. How is it that I can believe, especially adults, right? How is it that I can believe this stuff?

And, you know, I’ll never forget the story. I can’t remember who wrote it, but if you ever remember John Newton’s story, published by Crossway. It was an Englishman. He was in Parliament and actually went to prison for his actions, and then came out of that a Christian, I think, and then wrote this book on John Newton. And it’s really a fine book. But one of the things that I was struck by was that Newton says that in the process of his coming to saving faith, he determined that he was going to read the Bible and believe everything it said, regardless of any internal doubt that he might have.

And I thought to myself, *That’s a great example.* Now he may have had saving faith, which gave him the desire to read it like that from the very beginning. But he didn’t think that he had saving faith at the time.

And I thought to myself that if that’s the case, it provides a wonderful example for anyone, because out of that here’s what I’ve said to people. I’ve said, you know, that you can take the first two. You can read the bible. And you can say that Jesus was raised from the dead. That’s a proposition that I must agree with. Therefore I will agree with it. And I’m going to suppress doubt, just like I was suppressing righteousness all my life until I see what God will do with it in my life.

And people say that’s not intellectually honest. Well, if you believe tacitly in authority, well then you can believe that authority without having all the evidence. For instance, if you tell me a mathematical proposition, if you tell me any kind of equation that is principled and true, it’s axiomatic, do you know what I’m going to say to you? All right, I believe it. (*Laughter*) Because I have no way of proving it wrong. But if you’re a mathematician, and you tell me that this is axiomatic, that this is truth, that this formula holds, I’m going to believe it. We do that all the time.

And we can do that with the Scriptures. We can look at the Scriptures. We can look at the Scriptures and we can say, “All right. This is a realm, a world in which I’m not familiar.”

This is what we tell people. You may be an engineer or a mathematician. You may be whatever. Well, right here is a world that you’re not familiar with. You are, but you’re not thoroughly familiar with it. This is an Authority who spoke this word. And so my counsel

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to you is to read it and to believe everything you read in it, regardless of any doubt you have. I think that’s a place to begin with people when you’re talking to them, because you can’t work faith in them. But you can do what you can do. When you tell somebody “repent and believe,” you can say, “Repent of your sins. Be sorry for them.”

“Well, what if I’m not totally sorry for them?”

“Well, are you a little sorry? Start there,” you know? (*Laughter*) You’ve got to start where you start, right? And let God do the rest. Or let God do it all, right? Anything else?

**Participant:** I mean, we all could argue from authority. In my work all the time I go in. I’m dealing with fundraising. And I tell you, it’s really a very difficult subject for people, almost more than any other. Clients will hire architects. They’ll put their complete trust in them. They’ll hire builders and accountants. But when it comes to fundraising, they want to second-guess me all the time.

**Jeff:** Sure.

**Participant:** And so I often say, “You’ve got to believe me. You’ve got to trust. I’ve done this. The procedure works. Stick with the process and it will work. But I’m the authority here.”

**Jeff:** Yes. And you ought to be trained in this; you were a pastor.

**Participant:** What?

**Jeff:** You know this.

**Participant:** Only in a way of speaking. (*Laughter*) But no, we get this in society all the time. We always speak from a position of authority. Just trust it, guys.

**Jeff:** Yes. You’re absolutely right. Okay, well, I’ll tell you what. I’ve got five minutes left. (*Laughter*) And we haven’t started the outline. I’m very hesitant to start. Let’s do it next week, because I’ll rush through it. Do you have anything that you want to talk about for five minutes or so? (*Laughter*) Yes, go ahead.

**Participant:** Bear with me. I’ve got a great anecdote. You’re very fond of J. B. Philips.

**Jeff:** Well, I’ve got a couple of passages that I really like from him.

**Participant:** Philips’ translation of the Bible was the first one I actually read after I was converted in ’67. He’s an Anglican clergyman. I just wanted to point that out. “During World War II, while a minister at The church of the Good shepherd in London, he found that the young people in his church did not understand the Authorized Version of the Bible, which is like the King James Version. He used the time in the bomb shelters during the London blitz to begin the translation of the New Testament into modern English, starting with the epistle to the Colossians. The results appealed to the young people who found it easier to understand.”

And as I’m reading that, I’m thinking that I’m going into the shelter. I’m in the middle of a bombing campaign. The whole town above me is just being incinerated. And what am I to do here except to sit and twiddle my thumbs? Well, you know, God sent me down here to translate the Bible. I mean, it speaks to the fact that we may think that the time is a waste, or a horrible time. But in God Philips started giving us his wonderful translation.

**Jeff:** You know, I think that’s interesting, because when you think about Martin Luther, when he was coming home from Worms and he was captured by Frederick the

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Wise’s orchestrations and taken to the castle. I can’t think of the name of the castle, but he assumed the name Junker George. And there he was alone. He translated the Bible into German.

**Participant:** Wartburg.

**Jeff:** Was it Wartburg? The castle at Wartburg. And I was just reading not too long ago that in the room where he worked, he would write stuff on the walls—something that encouraged him, translations, you know? But he was there alone and he translated the Bible.

**Participant:** All alone, suffering terribly from constipation. And he recreates what is probably one of the finest pieces of German literature; forget the Bible. His translation of the Bible into German affected the way Germans talk today. He gave a gift of the German language—forget the Bible. But he gave us the Bible in German.

**Second Participant:** It was in their common language. They didn’t have a common German language. And it’s the same thing with the King James Version in English.

**First Participant:** So here we’ve got a guy. He says, “I’m wasting my time.” He actually thought that he was. “I’m treading water. I’m constipated. I have no friends. Nobody visits me.” And he creates one of the greatest pieces of literature in the world.

**Jeff:** Yes. Did you guys ever see the 1950s “Martin Luther,” the black-and-white one? If you’ve not seen that, you’ve got to get that. It’s just great. You know, there are just a couple of scenes in there that are wonderful, like when he comes out of Wartburg and he says, “I want my pulpit.” And then when he stopped giving his speech—“Here I stand; I can do no other.” He’s foaming at the mouth and everything. He’s just into it. It’s great!

**Participant:** There was also a man named Clarence Jordan who lived in America’s Georgia. And in the late ‘60s he translated the Bible from the Greek into the common vernacular of farmers and men who lived in the rural areas. It was *The Cotton Patch Version*. It was the New Testament. And then he died in ’69. But that was the same kind of thinking. He wanted the local people to understand it.

**Jeff:** Go ahead.

**Don:** One thing. When we were reading the passage and it was talking about Joseph, I think it’s a good illustration, Jeff, of what you were talking about, of faith having the eyes to see what was not seen. It says that he made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones. It doesn’t say, “He endured imprisonment. He endured the slavery that his brothers sold him into, and the deception of Potiphar’s wife,” and everything like that. No, it was that. I just thought it was interesting that the author refers to that in Joseph, and not the other adversities he went through.

**Jeff:** Yes. What he selects is interesting, isn’t it? And I think that’s part of the point that I want to make with Abraham next time when we get together. What he selects is really interesting. Anybody else?

**Participant:** So we’re using the same outline next Friday?

**Jeff:** Yes, we’ll just use the same outline.

**Participant:** Hey, we’re ready to go, guys! There’s a whole bunch of them back there. Get some coffee, go to the bathroom, and we’ll be back in ten minutes. (*Laughter*)

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**Jeff:** All right. Why don’t we pray as we close. Father in heaven, thank You for the day and the time You’ve given. Lord, bless us. We are so thankful that we have Your word because it’s Your word. And we’re thankful that our lives are shaped by it as Your Holy Spirit takes it up in our lives. Father, we pray that You would do that this very day so that we would be different even from what we were this morning, for we ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Men:** Amen. (*Applause*)