

I. Introduction and review: What kind of people does God use?

II. There are numerous examples of faith in the Old Testament. v. 32-35a

A. These men of faith accomplished great things for the Lord. v. 32

1. Gideon and his 300 men routed the massive Midianite army. Judges 6-8
2. Barak led Israel in a defeat of Sisera and the Canaanites. Judges 4-5
3. Samson was a great champion of the Israelites when they were oppressed by the Philistines. Judges 13-16
4. Jephthah defeated the Amorites and Ammonites. Judges 11-12 I Sam. 12:11
5. David lived a life of devotion to God and established Israel as a great kingdom. I Sam 16-31 II Sam; I Kings 1-2 Acts 13:22
6. The prophet Samuel faithfully bridged the eras of the Judges and the Kings. I Sam. 1-16
7. Many other prophets lived for the unseen God, in spite of opposition. Mt. 23:34f

B. By faith, they enjoyed great triumphs. v. 33

1. They conquered kingdoms. Deut. 1:7-9
2. They performed righteousness (administered justice). I Sa. 12:3-5,23 II Sa. 8:15 I Ki. 3:28 10:9,19 18:40 II Chro. 19:6-7 I Chro. 18:14 Ps. 15 92:2 101 Num. 25:7ff How does good government relate to faith?
3. They obtained promises. 11:39 Josh. 23:14 21:43f Judges 13:5 II Sam. 7:11ff
4. They shut the mouths of lions. Judges 14:6 I Sam. 17:34f Dan. 6:21f II Tim. 4:17
5. They extinguished the fury of the flames. Dan. 3:1-30
6. They escaped the edge of the sword. Ex. 18:4 I Sam. 23 17:45-47 I Ki. 19:2-10 II Ki. 6:31-32 Jer. 36:19,26 26:7-24 Ps. 144:10
7. After weakness they became strong. I Sam. 14:6 2:4 Deut. 32:30 Judges 16:22-30 II Cor. 12:8-10 Isa. 38 II Ki. 20 Esther 5
8. They became mighty in war and routed foreign armies. Josh. 10:1-10 I Sa. 17:50 II Chron. 20:1-30 II Ki. 19:35 Ps. 18:18f,29,34f,39,46-48 II Sam. 5:17-25 Dt. 32:30
9. Women received their dead by resurrection. I Kings 17:17-24 II Kings 4:17-37 Luke 7:11-15 John 11 Acts 9:36-41

III. God can use you as He used these great men of faith.

A. God uses flawed men.

1. Gideon was fearful and tested God. Judges 6:15,36ff 8:27
2. Barak was hesitant and wouldn't move ahead without Deborah. Judges 4:6-9
3. Samson was often controlled by his sensual nature. 16:4-20
4. Jephthah made a rash vow concerning his daughter. Judges 11:30-31,39-40
5. David was guilty of adultery and murder. II Sa. 11 Ps. 32 51
6. Samuel was a passive careless father. I Sam. 8:1-3,5

B. The New Testament ignores their failures and honors their faith.

1. Sin is blotted out by God's grace. 10:10,14 Ps. 103:10ff Is. 1:18 Je. 31:34
2. True faith is so precious and rare, it is worthy of being highlighted.

- C. I thank God that He still uses flawed people like us.**
- 1. You may feel like giving up because of your own sins, failures, and shortcomings. Rom. 7:15-24**
 - 2. If these men can demonstrate the faith which pleases God, then such faith is within our reach.**
 - 3. Continue to have faith and serve God no matter what a weak sinner you know yourself to be. I Cor. 1:26ff I Tim. 1:15**
 - 4. Accomplish great things by the Holy Spirit. Phil. 4:13 II Co. 12:9f I Cor. 1:27ff**
 - 5. Look at one another through eyes of grace and faith. Rom. 15:14**
- D. This does not mean, however, that there are no standards for those who would lead God's people. I Tim. 3:1-13 Titus 1:5-9**
- 1. Should immoral men be allowed to lead God's people today?**
 - 2. Expectations are higher in the age of fulfillment. Judges 17:6**
 - 3. The New Testament lays out qualifications for those who lead God's people.**
 - 4. There is a fine balance between our need for grace and the need to uphold God's standard.**
 - 5. Just because someone is not qualified to be a church officer does not mean that he cannot serve God by faith. Ps. 84:10 I Cor. 12:13 I Pe. 4:10-11**
- E. Only Christ perfectly meets God's standard. 12:2 We are to fix our eyes on Him.**
- 1. He has conquered God's enemies. Gen. 3:15 I Jo. 3:8 Col. 2:15**
 - 2. He establishes a government of perfect righteousness. Isa. 9:6-7 Rev. 11:15**
 - 3. He has fulfilled all of God's promises. 8:6 11:13-16 II Co. 1:20**
 - 4. He has overcome death with resurrection. I Cor. 15:55ff John 11:25-27**
 - 5. Our perfection is found in Him. 10:14 11:40**

Discussion questions

- 1. Why doesn't the writer of Hebrews tell more of the faith exploits of the Judges, Kings, and Prophets?**
- 2. Talk about the faith of each man in verse 32.**
- 3. Who is being described in verses 33-34?**
- 4. What does it take faith to administer justice in government?**
- 5. Why does the Bible tell us about the faults of these men?**
- 6. Why doesn't the New Testament speak about their failures of faith?**
- 7. How would you answer a Christian who fears that he is so weak and sinful that he could never be useful to God?**
- 8. How can you expect to accomplish great thing for God?
What great things do you desire to accomplish?**
- 9. How can you see Christ in today's text?**