

HALL OF FAITH

Scripture Reading: Read Hebrews 11

The Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown is only about thirty miles away from where I pastor. If you're a baseball fan, you know how awe-inspiring it can be to stand in the halls of the museum where the greatest in the game are honored: Babe Ruth, Lou Gherig, Honus Wagner, Ty Cobb, Mickey Mantle and so many others.

In today's chapter reading, we find a different Hall of Fame; a Hall of Faith. The folks inducted in this Hall never played baseball on Doubleday field, never hit a homerun or pitched a perfect game. In fact a number of them took their eye off the ball and made some errors along the way. But they still made it into the Hall of Faith because they ultimately trusted God. When you look at their stats, you notice that many of these players experienced exciting victories in their lifetime. Enoch walked with God until God took him to heaven without dying. Noah built an ark. Abraham and Sarah had a child in their old age. Moses led the people of Israel out of bondage to the Egyptians and across the Red Sea. Joshua brought Israel into the Promised Land and witnessed God's hand in bringing down the walls of Jericho. Gideon overcame overwhelming odds and defeated the enemy in battle. Samson brought the house down. David slew a giant with a sling. Daniel was kept safe from hungry beasts in the lion's den. And that's just a few of those honored in the Hall of Faith in chapter 11.

Not every player in the Hall, though, had stat lines like those above. Some suffered greatly and failed to see a supernatural intervention by God in this life. *"Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated--the world was not worthy of them."* These inductees were no less commended for their faith (11:39). In fact, in some ways, they exhibited greater faith. They understood that *"faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."* Even though they couldn't see God at work they trusted in his faithfulness and were rewarded for their faith.

Today, you may be celebrating a recent victory in Christ where he powerfully intervened in a situation and brought you through in triumph. Tomorrow, you may find yourself facing a challenge that will demand every ounce of faith you can find just to hold on. While we may long for the former and run from the latter, both tend to be the experience of the Christian in a fallen world. We are called to trust God no matter what we face and to remain faithful even to the point of death. That's how you make it into God's Hall of Faith.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Examine your faith. Is it like a yo-yo going up and down depending on how easy or difficult your life is at the moment? The Lord is looking for people who will place their faith in him no matter what. Pray for the Lord to develop Hall of Fame faith in your life.

Take-a-way: ***You don't have to be a great athlete to make it into the Hall of Faith. You just need to have faith in a great God.***