The Five "Musts" of our Lives

The key words in Heb. 11:32-36 are, ***"By faith"***. It speaks of Gideon, Barack, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel, ***"Who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war and put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment."***

It isn't enough to have made sacrifices in responding to God's call to go wherever you are. The great temptation is to resume our assumed prerogatives – self-ease, self-interest and self-pity. We must be willing to suffer affliction and endure hardship for the sake of the Lord Jesus. In Hebrews 11 there are wonderful proofs of what faith can do and what faith can suffer.

1. Faith can "Conquer Kingdoms"

We are in combat with great spiritual foes. Their domains of darkness are in countless lives of those who don't live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. As workers, we must not only know **how** to deliver people's souls from these dreadfully evil spiritual powers, we must wrestle for these souls against these spiritual powers and **in faith subdue them** by doing works of righteousness, opposing evil and guiding others into liberty as children of God.

2. Faith can "Obtain Promises"

We are to see our prayers answered. Are we inheriting the promises of God? Do we know and apply their relevance to our individual situations? Every believer needs to know these promises and claim them by faith. But for us as "workers", it is a desperate, vital necessity. Read some of Paul's prayers in his letters to the believers in various cities. For example the last three verses of Romans (Rom. 16:25-27). We obtain promises ***"by faith"***.

3. Faith stopped the mouths of "lions" (1 Pet. 5:8-10)

"Be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brothers throughout the world. … The God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you."

We may be able to resist Satan ***"by faith"***, but what of the plight of immature believers and those recently come to faith? Satan is ready to pounce. The Lord Jesus "muzzled" the storm on the lake when the disciples feared they would drown. We must learn how to "muzzle" Satan. We must learn how to ***"bind the strong man"*** and how to deliver captives from fear.

All this is ***"by faith"***. Ephesians 6 teaches us about the whole armour of God. We read, ***"Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."*** (Eph. 6:11) With the whole armour of God we will be able to stand and even advance in ***"the evil day"***.

4. By faith we can escape the edge of the sword

We read in Psalm 144:1-2, ***"Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle; He is my steadfast love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and He in whom I take refuge who subdues peoples under me."***

David is speaking about his personal deliverance in many attacks. We too will have to endure many attacks that seek to drive us out of the field of conflict or to render us impotent. We must know ***"the way of escape"*** spoken of in 1 Cor. 10:13. We must know the way of personal victory.

Prayerlessness, depression and irritability are just some of the "fiery darts" aimed at us. What quenches the fire and protects us? It is ***"songs of deliverance"***. We read in Psalm 32:7, ***"You are my hiding place. You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance."***

5. ***"Out of weakness they were made strong, became mighty in war and put foreign armies to flight."***

Our human weakness is the condition of divine power. This means times of testing. How little we know of the faithfulness of God to His great promises to us **before** we have to face any difficulties and dangers! Problems and trials draw us close to God in a life of dependence on him. Often God brings us to a place of utter weakness. If we lack love, He places us among the loveless and God's love for them grows in our hearts. Our environment is God's provision to enable us to grow strong in our areas of weakness until we are made strong (mighty) in (spiritual) war.

We read in Hebrews 11:35, ***"Women received back their dead by resurrection"*** – by exercising faith. Read the rest of Hebrews to the end, ***" … None of them*** (the Old Testament People of God) ***received what had been promised. God has provided something better for us, so that only together with us would they be made perfect."***!

So let us ask the Holy Spirit's help to wrestle and fight and pray against all the demonic forces until they are put to flight and a huge number of the people we love have come to faith. This is happening in some places where we are working, but we want to see God doing it everywhere!