

A New Hope

Intro: Axioms for the New Year

[Hebrews 11:1](#) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. NKJ

Book of Hebrews was penned by an unknown author –

We don't know who he was but we do know his source of inspiration

Hebrews was written to Christians who were under heavy duress – Jewish Christians (the Hebrews)
People who were beaten down, discouraged and ready to quit

They were under tremendous pressure to go back to the old ways, the former beliefs and traditions
.... To and abandon their faith in Jesus and go back to the Old Testament ways of Judaism

David Jeremiah writes about the president of a Christian university who was famous for telling discouraged students: "It's always too soon to quit."

What a lifeline of hope those words must have been to students whose dreams were about to be dashed on the rocks of discouragement and despair.

Too many students have given up because they thought they didn't have what it takes – weren't smart enough weren't talented enough

Mike Iarocci ... who went back to school to become a clinical nutritionist sat with tears in his eyes telling me of how he almost gave up ... but God sent someone with a timely word that changed everything

It can happen at any age

Unlike that encouraging University President ... there are many professionals who have told students just the opposite!

In our college days - Jen and I had a common friend named Floyd - Floyd was called into Scholl counselor's office - told to pack his bags and go home – he was wasting his time and money "You don't have what it takes ... not college material"

Floyd was blown away but he refused to give up – the first semester he struggled but after that he made the Dean's List and from then on was on top ten student's academic list every semester

I had a similar experience ...

My Entrance exams were awful – called into a counselor’s office based on scores my success at Evangel I would likely be crash and burn it was DEVESTATING but I believed God wanted me there so I resisted that downward pull

Looking backwards ... I had a teaching career in public education that spanned Thirty three plus years – pretty good for a guy who couldn’t cut it

Elected three times to *Who’s Who Among American Teachers*

You think God knows what He’s doing?

I’m convinced that God wants us to be like the University President—to be an encourager because there are too many others out there doing just the opposite

But we can’t do it without the Holy Spirit - the ultimate helper to help us encourager and help others

The author of Hebrews was trying to do just that - To cheer them on – to not give up in their walk of faith with Jesus

Our church here at Patchogue has taken some body blows of discouragement this year

Some of you have directly absorbed them and are still feeling the aftershock–

Left us feeling unsteady, fearful and worried over the present and immediate future.

Some of our people are missing and others have been thinking of giving up – maybe to stop attending or back off from helping in ministry

[Psalm 23](#) is one of the most beloved scripture passages written by one of our favorite Bible characters – *David*

Why is [Psalm 23](#) so loved? – It’s an amazing source of encouragement

We identify with it – we can put ourselves into that psalm when we are discouraged and going through difficult times

A Psalm of David.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need.

² He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams.

³ He renews my strength.

He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.

⁴ Even when I walk through the darkest valley, **I will not be afraid,**
for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.

You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings.

⁶ Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the LORD forever.

David wrote that Psalm to encourage himself in the Lord –

under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit because of personal experiences ... like running and hiding for his life when the entire army was sent to hunt him down

Look at a few phrases ...

- The Lord is my shepherd – I have everything I need David surrendered to God's leadership and guidance ... God was his shepherd his ruler his provider
- Even though I walk through the darkest valley – shadow of death ... not death itself but something so frightening it threatens our lives
- Surely your goodness and unfailing love will **pursue** me all the days of my life,

David wrote confirming his faith in God and God's faithfulness to him ... and even more to us

The writer of Hebrews was after the same thing David was in [Psalm 23](#)

The same thing that occurs over and over again through the inspired scriptures of the Bible

God wants us to pick up the mantle of encouragement for ourselves and others

[Hebrews 11](#) MSG is often referred to as the *Hall of Faith* – you're about to see why

¹⁻² The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see. The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors, set them above the crowd.

³ By faith, we see the world called into existence by God's word, what we see created by what we don't see.

⁴ By an act of faith, Abel brought a better sacrifice to God than Cain. **It was what he believed, not what he brought, that made the difference.** That's what God noticed and approved as righteous. After all these centuries, that belief continues to catch our notice.

⁵ By an act of faith, Enoch skipped death completely.

⁷ By faith, Noah built a ship in the middle of dry land.

⁸ By an act of faith, Abraham

¹¹- By faith, barren Sarah was able to become pregnant, old woman as she was at the time, because she believed the One who made a promise would do what he said. That's how it happened that from one man's dead and shriveled loins there are now people numbering into the millions.

²⁰ By an act of faith, Isaac ...

²¹ By an act of faith, Jacob ...

²² By an act of faith, Joseph ...

²⁴ By faith, Moses

³⁰ By faith, the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho for seven days, and the walls fell flat.

³²⁻³⁸ I could go on and on, but I've run out of time. There are so many more—Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the prophets. . . . Through acts of faith, they toppled kingdoms, made justice work, took the promises for themselves. **They were protected from lions, fires, and sword thrusts, turned disadvantage to advantage, won battles, routed alien armies.**

All of these people acted in faith all endured hardship all of them received honor and all made God's name even greater

But you get the point – The eternal God, the Everlasting father states His intention to become intimate with us

The bridge that got them from where they started to where God wanted to take them was HOPE

Through this week God has been calling to me telling me through His Word that he is in control and that He is sovereign

Daniel 4

¹⁹ “Belteshazzar replied, ‘I wish the events foreshadowed in this dream would happen to your enemies, my lord, and not to you!’

²⁴ “‘This is what the dream means, Your Majesty, and what the Most High has declared will happen to my lord the king. ²⁵ You will be driven from human society, and you will live in the fields with the wild animals. You will eat grass like a cow, and you will be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses. ²⁶ But the stump and roots of the tree were left in the ground. This means that you will receive your kingdom back again when you have learned that heaven rules.

²⁷ “‘King Nebuchadnezzar, please accept my advice. Stop sinning and do what is right. Break from your wicked past and be merciful to the poor. Perhaps then you will continue to prosper.’

³⁴ “After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever.

His rule is everlasting,
and his kingdom is eternal.

³⁵ All the people of the earth
are nothing compared to him.

He does as he pleases
among the angels of heaven
and among the people of the earth.

No one can stop him or say to him,
‘What do you mean by doing these things?’

³⁶ “When my sanity returned to me, so did my honor and glory and kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored as head of my kingdom, with even greater honor than before.

³⁷ “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and he is able to humble the proud.”

Don't lose hope give up - encourage yourself because God is about to do great things