

# THE ANCIENTS | Jacob Blessed

A big question that we need to ask ourselves is “What story do I want to live?” This series is focussed on what it means to have faith and how that helps us live extraordinary lives, so spend some time wrestling with this big question.

- What does that question - what story do I want to live? - mean to you? Have you ever thought about it?
- What is the story that most people in our society live? Is it heroic or out of the ordinary? Is there a pressure just to survive and get by?
- Do you ever feel like life must mean more than *just* this - just getting by and surviving? Is that a question people ask themselves?

The book of Hebrews tells the story of the some key characters in Israel’s history. These are people who lived amazing life by *faith*. Read through Hebrews 11 together.

What jumps out to you about the way Hebrews 11 describes faith? We will be focussing on this passage throughout the series, so now is a good time to spend some time studying it together.

Philip went on to explain the role that faith plays in deciding what story we live. Faith is ‘what you see’ and ‘what you receive’.

## What you see

Faith is about seeing more than what is just in front of you. Imagine the analogy of being a ship on the open ocean, unable to see which direction to head in. Faith is like a telescope that allows you to scan the horizon for a far off ship in the distance. Because of that telescope of faith you can now see something you couldn’t see before and it allows you to head in a direction.

None of the people that Hebrews speaks about actually saw the things that they had faith for, but they still headed in that direction. “They did not receive the things promised; they only saw from a difference.”

So, faith means seeing beyond our surroundings and to the horizon. Philip said: “If you want to live a better story, you need to see a better ending.”

- What does this mean to you?
- How can having this sort of faith that sees beyond our immediate circumstances change our life?

## What you receive

Verse 6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” Hebrews tells us that we can only please God by allowing him to bless us.

This is clearly seen in the life of Jacob, so you may want to explain a little of the background for those who didn’t catch the talk:

Jacob is *desperate* to be blessed by God. He was so desperate to receive blessing that he deceived his brother and father by cheating and a lack of integrity. In the end, he finally comes to a place when he cant go on any more with living as a fraud and turns to God. In the middle of the night he has this wrestling match with this mysterious figure who many believe to be Jesus. Finally, after wrestling all night Jacob says to God ‘I wont let you know unless you bless me’. This mysterious figure replies ‘Your name will no longer be Jacob but Israel’ and blessed him there and then.

In this story we see a picture of faith that is us wrestling with God - it’s not just a blind faith.

- What does it mean for you to wrestle with God?
- Have you got experiences you can share of doing this? What was the outcome?

Philip summed this up: “If you want to give a blessing to others, you need to receive a blessing for you.” If we want to have faith to see extraordinary things, we need to be willing to receive blessing from God.

- What stops us from being to do this?

### **What does this look like?**

The foundation for this series is the idea that:

“If you see it, you can live it. If you receive it, you can give it.” Living by faith means we live a life where we see God’s kingdom - we see beyond then ordinary. Then faith allows us to pass on this blessing to other people.

- So, what does it actually mean for us to live life by faith in this way?
- What areas of life does it affect? Money, career, relationships?

Jamie shared his incredible story of healing. What do stories like this do for our faith?

Often when we hear stories like Jamie’s, they build our faith and help us believe for miracle for ourselves. You may want to spend some time praying for healing for people in your hub. Or you may want to pray for increased faith for us.