



**Christian Honor**

**September 4, 2022**

**Hebrews 11:13-16**

**Clint Pressley**

*<sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. <sup>14</sup> For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. <sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.*

*(Pastor prays)*

I played football my entire young life, from the time I was in the second grade. Every August meant weigh-ins, shoulder pads and practice. From Mint Hill Athletic Association to Northeast Junior High to Independence High School and then to Wofford College, I played. And at almost every game I played, my mom and dad were there.

Now, my mother is not a football fan. She has no idea how many home runs it takes to win a football game or if double dribble is even illegal in football. But every Saturday come game time, she would be in the stands with a *Southern Living* magazine and when the defense was on the field my dad would say, "Brenda, Clint's on the field." She really didn't know what was going on down there but she would show up at every game with a big soccer-ball-sized button pinned to her sweater that said, "my son is number 56, Clint Pressley." And whether I had several sacks or played a terrible game, she'd be outside the locker room wearing that giant pin and say, "I'm proud of you." She was not ashamed to be called my mother.

And for some reason I remembered that this week as I wrestled with this passage and the remarkable statement down in the middle of verse 16: God, is not ashamed to be called their God. This is said nowhere else in the Bible. That's astounding! We are often told to not be ashamed of the Gospel. I mean the whole point of Romans is Chapter 1:16 where Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation." Or the warning from the Lord Jesus in Luke 9:26, *For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*

But to hear God say he's glad, proud, happy to be the God of these people, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah; to know that He loved you since the foundation of the world; to know that your name is inscribed on His hands; to live with the truth that you were created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand., that when you are a Christian, you are presented to God in the righteousness of Christ and He is happy about that.

God is not ashamed to be called *their* God. Is He ashamed to be called your God? When He looks at you and sees your mind and knows your heart and examines your life, does He see the one shining thing that He loves, the righteousness of Christ? Becoming a Christian means realizing you are a sinner, and then trusting in the perfect life of Jesus in place of your sinful life, trusting the punishment He took on the cross in place of what you deserve so that when you are in Christ, He takes your sin. He gives you His righteousness and then God is not ashamed to be your God because He loves you and accepts you in Christ. I want that for you, the joy of being loved and accepted by God in Christ. So I'll say it like this.

### **There is Great Honor Being in Christ**

How do you know that God is not ashamed to be your God? I think this passage tells us. I'd like to get at it with some questions.

#### **Do you have an obvious faith?**

These all died in faith, who? Everyone he has mentioned: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Abel, Enoch and Noah. My question then is: what does it mean to die in faith? Or literally to die according to faith? It is to die with confidence in the goodness of God and the power of grace

and the truth of the Gospel and the joy of a reward. The fact is that *dying* according to the faith necessitates *living* according to faith. You die how you live. So, then the question becomes are you living according to the faith? Do you have the promises of God deeply engraved in your heart and mind so that regardless of what happens or how you're treated, your confidence is in the good grace and purpose of God in your life? Is your Christianity the driving trait of who you are? Is it the foremost characteristic that people recognize in you?

There was a woman at the gas station, and she might be certifiably insane, I don't know. What I know is she was praising the Lord and picking up trash. Do you sense the sustaining power of God? Do you sense the love of God holding you up through the anxiety and sickness and broken heart? Do you know that God is carrying you through? Do you know the poem of the footprints in the sand? There were two sets of footprints in the sand at times and there's one set when the Lord carries you. Look there's never been two sets of footprints, only one; and those prints are scarred! He was wounded for our transgressions and pierced through for our iniquities.

Joy. Underneath all that you are facing and all that you are doing and all that you are thinking, is there a bedrock of joy that reminds you that your life has been planned by God the Father? Your life has been saved by God the Son and your life is secured by God the Holy Spirit.

Are you able to forgive? Can you put others first? You see, you can't die according to the faith without living according to the faith. So, the first question is, do you have an *obvious* faith?

### **Do you have a solid hope?**

Let's go to verse 13 and read the description.<sup>13</sup> *These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.* They heard the promises of God about the Promised Land and the growth of God's people but never saw them fulfilled. And yet they trusted that God is good. He keeps His word, and he would one day bring His promises home. They didn't get all the blessing but trusted it was coming and were glad. They were looking forward with joy! We do that now. We live in the already/not yet. We are already saved but not yet without sin. We are already a child of God but not fully realized until we are with Christ.

Do you have a solid hope that God is good and working in the world and in your life according to His good counsel and plan, and that all this is actually going somewhere? We do that at church as we worship and pray and make disciples and build and give. We are looking forward to the next generation. We are planning for the future and for all of those who have not yet come to Christ. We build a legacy not on our name but on the Gospel, rejoicing in our context and praising God for the opportunity to share Christ.

In Christ we can be like those described in the passage or like Moses when he prayed and asked God to let him go into the Promised Land. God didn't let him go, he just saw it from afar. You may not see that child come to Christ, but you know God is gracious and merciful and kind. You know the Gospel works, so you take those two truths and put them before God and pray and hope, looking to God's plan for the days ahead. Do you have an obvious faith? Do you have solid hope?

### **Do you have a clear identity?**

Let's read verse 13 again and this time pick up at the end. <sup>13</sup> *These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.* They acknowledged. They knew they were strangers and exiles or aliens. They knew they did not belong and didn't try to fit in. This speaks to the social pressures that face so many of our students today. Such pressure to conform, to state your pronouns, to accept a fluid sexuality, or to apologize for your gender. Our maleness or femaleness is a reflection of the glory of God. The way God made men to think and work and live and act, to protect and shield and fight and respect, to give and to sacrifice. The way God made women to nurture and love and to be smart and beautiful and kind and resilient, to be discerning and hopeful and sacrificial, that is God's design. It makes us strangers and aliens. To regard marriage as a picture of the Gospel, to affirm objective truths, to value hard work and to love the church, to respect elders, all these traits and thousands more stem from a love of God and a Biblical worldview that makes us different. To have all your hopes and dreams and ambitions subjected to the lordship of Jesus makes you completely out of step with the world you live in.

Go into Lancaster County, Pa., and you see people riding in horse-drawn buggies, wearing black hats, and having strange beards. It's like they're from another world. I'm not saying we should

be Amish, but what I'm saying is that our lives should be so distinct that it becomes obvious that we don't belong here. It should be obvious that we are in fact looking for something else.

Let's read verse 14 - 16 and look for two words, seek and desire. <sup>14</sup> *For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.* <sup>15</sup> *If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.* <sup>16</sup> *But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.* *Patris* – It means “fatherland”; it is more than a place of habitation, it is home. It feels good to be home where you're loved and secure. It just feels right. Then down in verse 16, they desired a better country, a heavenly one. That was their quest. What is yours? Do you pursue a goal of ambition? What do you want? This life with all its struggle and hardship and frustration and sickness and disappointment reminds us there is a better Kingdom and we are citizens of that one. How did Paul say it in 2nd Corinthians 4: 17? *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison*, every ache and pain and disappointment and hurt prepares us for eternity.

There is great honor being in Christ. Do you have an *obvious* faith? Do you have a *solid* hope? Do you have a *clear* identity? Is God ashamed to be your God? It doesn't have to be like that. With that in mind, join me just for a moment in prayer.

Is God ashamed to be your God? When you hear that do you wonder, you are not sure? It's the Gospel, trust the Gospel. What is the Gospel? God is holy, you are not. Your sinfulness against God isn't just offensive, it must be punished. God is also loving. That punishment He placed on Jesus, who lived the righteous life; He gained righteousness and goes to the cross as a substitute for sinners. And the free offer of the Gospel is if you'll repent, turn away from your sin and put your faith in Jesus, then He takes your sin and gives you His righteousness. And then when God looks at you, He is not ashamed to be your God.

Will you come to Christ today? We are going to sing one last worship song. This song is an invitation for you if you'd like to come pray and to find out what it means for God to be happy to have you be His child.

Pray with me.

*(Pastor prays)*