

Week 3 of “Living By Faith” Sermon Series

“Faith That Cannot be Shaken”

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Sermon Preached: Sunday 24th August 2025

Preacher: Pastor Jason Sander

Location: St Peter's Lutheran Church, Loxton

Sermon Text: [Hebrews 12:18-29](#)

My friend's grace, mercy and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let me pray. Father God, as we gather here around your word, may your Holy Spirit grow faith in us and our trust in you to transform us to be more like your son, Jesus. May the words that I speak be pleasing to you, Lord God.

So this morning we're continuing that series I set at the start on Living by Faith and we've been looking at, this is week three and we've been starting at Hebrews chapter 11 where faith is described as confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. And we explored how the different characters in the Old Testament, the heroes of faith and such, how they were commended for their faithfulness, for their trust in God.

And then last week we looked at the idea of fixing our eyes on Jesus as our hope where it says, therefore we're surrounded by these witnesses, by these heroes of faith. Let us throw off everything that hinders us. Let us be free from worries, doubts, troubles, even materialism, things like that, and fix our eyes on Jesus and run that race, run that marathon in faith, both here, in the now and into that eternal hope that we have.

And then this morning we heard about two different mountains of faith that cannot be shaken.

I didn't know you went on holidays to America and visited Churchmark. Look what happened. I can have that banter with him, he does the same to me.

It's interesting though, even though it's a bit of a joke, we often might say, well, who walked in and made this happen? Or there's that thought in culture, particularly in Australia, it's like, if I go into a church, the roof's going to fall on me, or I'm going to be struck by a bolt of lightning. Maybe you've thought that before, maybe you have heard other people say that.

And I know I've definitely heard that many, many times as a pastor, particularly around times of preparing funerals and people saying, oh, they just stand out in the back, oh, I can't go in there because the roof might fall in on me. And it's interesting, it's interesting. Why do people think that? Why do people think that? What is the reason behind that? Yeah, it's not time to do your psychology lesson, but it's interesting how there is this, maybe it's a respect and awe or a fear of coming into a building.

There's an understanding that is a sacred place and that I'm not worthy to go in there because the roof might fall in on me as such, I'm not good enough. Yeah, it's interesting. What could we say to people who say that to us? How might we respond? And I think that's what Hebrews can help us to understand this morning, because we have two mountains.

The first mountain is described as Mount Sinai. It's Mount Sinai. And Sinai is the mountain that Moses went up to get the Ten Commandments from.

And as the people of Israel, so just take them out of Egypt, they'd be wandering through the wilderness across the Red Sea and they'd come to Mount Sinai and they're gathered around the bottom of the mountain. And this mountain is described as being like fire and lightning and thunder and it was shaking, the mountain was shaking as an earthquake. And this invoked fear in the people.

They were scared. And it even says that Moses was trembling, trembling in fear as he went up to the mountain. Such was his understanding of the holiness of God.

And we have a line in it that God is like a consuming fire. His holiness consumes that which isn't holy. And even though God here gives access to himself, so he allows the people to be in his presence through following certain rules and rituals and they were still scared.

They were still scared. And there's many stories throughout the Old Testament where we find this coming about, where people are consumed by God's holiness, where they live in that fear of, can I actually come before God to be in his presence? And so God was contained in the temple to the holy of holies. And so there's so much fear around that and that's the mountain that the Hebrews writer describes.

Is your faith based on fear? Is your faith one of trying to please God, thinking I'm not good enough, I need to keep doing this, this, and this, and this, for God to love me. Or even to walk into a church where it doesn't fall, and all he's thinking that. I think even in some ways it's people, it's like, well, I don't really care about this God stuff because God is just some distant idea.

He is that angry bearded dude up in the sky. If there is a God, I don't like him. He's that picture of Sinai.

But then there's the second mountain, the city of God. And the writer to Hebrews, they paint this picture of, the people aren't down at the bottom of the mountain looking up going, oh crap, sort of idea. No, we're brought up to the mountain.

God's people are taken up to the top of the mountain where this is God's city, it's that image of God being up on the mountain top, up in that height and that panoramic view such as that image that stirs those emotions. And it's at this mountain top that we have this picture of angels, thousands upon thousands, it's innumerable in great assembly welcoming God's people. There's an acceptance of God's people to be in his city, not to be down at the bottom level scared of what's going to happen, but no, we're brought up to the mountain.

Why is that? Because of what Jesus has done. We don't need to live in that fear because it's through his sacrifice and through the image of his blood because of the image of sacrifice that we've been made right with God. And then there was that line about Abel and how Abel's blood cries out, cries out for vengeance.

That goes right back to the beginning of the Bible of Genesis 4 with Cain and Abel and Cain murdered his brother Abel because he was jealous of him. And then there was the line that

from the earth, his blood pours into the ground and that blood cries out for revenge or for vengeance. And so the writer to Hebrews is contrasting that with Jesus.

Jesus' blood doesn't cry out for vengeance, rather it cries out forgiveness. It cries out, it is finished. It cries out, welcome to my kingdom.

And that's the contrast again between those two mountains, those two different thinkings. Back in 2011, there was the earthquake in Christchurch. And there's a story.

I'll just bring it up here so I get it right. You remember the 2011 earthquakes in Christchurch and many buildings were completely destroyed. Lives were lost as well, very sad.

And there was a story about this church. A building that stood for decades in utter ruins. And many different stories came out from the community and one was about this church that had completely collapsed.

And the story where the congregation, they didn't stop meeting, they gathered in a park, sitting on camping chairs, worshipping under the open sky. And one of the members said in response to what they were doing, we lost our building, but we didn't lose our church. We didn't lose Christ.

And that's what really matters. See, the writer to Hebrews talks about this shaking, this shaking at the end of time. It comes from this idea that in Jewish thought, that God will shake the earth and everything that doesn't matter will be in ruins, in rubble.

And the writer to Hebrews is saying that at this end time, everything will be shaken and everything that doesn't matter will not disappear, will stay strong, will stand. God's final shaking will remove everything that is temporary, everything that does not last, until only what cannot be shaken remains. What cannot be shaken? Our faith.

Christ, His kingdom, His promises, His people. And that's what an unshakable faith is. It's not about us, it's about what Christ has done.

He's the unshakable one. And when all that is temporary is removed, He is the only thing that stands, that lasts. And that's what our faith is built on.

That's where we can find our security, our foundation. That's the God that we speak of to those who may be scared of the roof falling in, or a lightning bolt. A God that has done everything for us in Christ, one that we don't need to be afraid of.

And I think there's this last verse here which we'll finish up on where it says, come on, therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe for our God is a consuming fire. So what does this all mean for us? How do we put this into action? Well, it says, let us be thankful. What does thankfulness to God look like in your life? What does gratitude towards God look like? How do you show that? How do you live that out? How do we respond to God's grace? How do we worship God acceptably with reverence and awe? I think sometimes for established Christians, at least, we lose that sense of reverence and awe for God.

It's very easy for us to do that. We lose the wonder. God becomes very familiar rather than holy.

And this reverence and fear is not Mount Sinai living, it's rather that respect of who God is, of His awesomeness, and to worship Him with that reverence for who He is. For our God is a consuming fire. He still is.

Just as He was back in Exodus, He still is today. But that's not a fire for fear. Because He has consumed our sin through Christ and through that we are people on Mount Zion.

That's where we belong. That's where we are welcome to. So let us live with joy.

Let us live with gratitude and awe, receiving the unshakable Kingdom of our God.

Let me pray. Loving Father, we give you thanks for your word, which again reminds us of your faithfulness, your love, and that we are your beloved children.

We are your beloved children. Help us to keep trusting in you so that our faith can be unshakable, unshakable because of what Christ has done for us.

So help us to lean into His faithfulness and the work that He's done so that we can continue this journey in life, following Him.

Help us to do this, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.