Greetings: I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our team from Petaluma California greets you today, and we bring greetings from our home Church New Life Christian Fellowship

This week in Pastor’s study we have been working through the Book of Hebrews

Hebrews chapter 11 tells us about faith

Hebrews 11:1-3

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

The chapter continues, starting with the earliest believers and taking us through many of the main believer in the Old Testament to show how each lived by faith.

From this example we learn:

Hebrews 11:6

6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Today we find that you and I, as followers of Jesus, are part of a great unbroken human chain of believers which extends from the earliest believers many thousands of years to our time, and which started in a small area but now covers the earth in all places.

Today we are not only part of that living chain on earth but Hebrews chapter 12 tells us that we are surrounded by all the faithful who went before us.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In many of the longest races each team has many runners, and as each runner finishes their part of the race they hand their baton to the next runner.

As Christians we run in the highest race, heading forward to the Glory of God, salvation, and eternity, passing the baton of our faith in Jesus to as many persons as we can so that they may join us as fellow believers and followers of Jesus.

As we run, God, our God is with us and He sees and knows about everything that happens to His Church on earth and each one of His believers. We can take great peace and comfort in this, knowing that God is in control.

Heb 4:13

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Brothers and Sisters we all have our own difficulties in this life, both big and small.

It is good for us to take time to consider that we are all part of the Lord’s bigger picture in history.

Map:

* How did this faith we have in Jesus begin and how did it spread into the world?
* What is happening around the world for Christian believers today?
* What does the Bible show us about the future of those running the race with Jesus?

Turning back to Hebrews chapter 12-

Hebrews 12:18-29

(Talking about the times of Old Testament faith-)

18 For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20(For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")

(Talking about the times of our New Testament faith-)

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." 27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

(Once again) Hebrews 12:1-3

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

Are you in the faith today? God is calling every person to turn away from sin and become a follower of the only One Who can save us from sin and restore us to peace with God, Jesus Christ.

Jesus took our sin upon Himself on the cross, Jesus endured God’s punishment for sin for every person.

Come and join us as believers and follower of Jesus, come and be part of this great unbroken human chain.

Are you a Christian who is weary and tired? The race God has called us into can be hard. The way can seem so long. When will I get there? How am I doing?

Take courage by understanding that you are part of God’s plan, His plan for today, His plan through time, His world-wide family of believers.

Run the race with endurance and pass the baton of your faith to those who God has put in your life

* By telling them of your faith
* By living the life of Jesus
* By showing them love, acceptance, and simple kindnesses
* By praying for their salvation
* By continuing the race in Christ

After we pray, if anyone feels in need of prayer please feel free to come forward and someone will minister to you