



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

October 12, 2021

DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1)

Did You Know?

- The Letter to the **Hebrews** was commonly called “*The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews*” from about AD 400 to 1600. Since the Reformation it has been widely recognized that Paul could not have been the writer.
- There is no disharmony between the teaching of Hebrews and that of Paul's letters, but the specific emphases and writing styles are markedly different. Contrary to Paul's usual practice, the author of Hebrews nowhere names himself in the letter. The readers, however, certainly knew who he was, as evidenced by his personal comments.
- The scholars think that the author might be Barnabas or Apollos; both were associated with Paul. Theologians date the letter about AD 67-70, before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Their reason is that if it had been written after this date, the author almost certainly would have mentioned this significant event.
- The recipients of this letter were primarily Jewish converts who were familiar with the Old Testament and who were being tempted to revert to Judaism or to Judaize the gospel. (The NIV Study Bible; Philippians)

Personal Insight

As I can see, - even if we don't belong to the younger generations to whom fame, or being an influencer or a celebrity means a lot - the majority of us yearn for some recognition of our 'uniqueness'. We would like to be special, and we really are, regardless if it doesn't manifest in being celebrated.

I believe we all should remember the following quote: *“I'm unique, I'm different, I'm limited edition. Because there is only one me in the middle of a billion people on this earth.”*

(quotesgram.com)

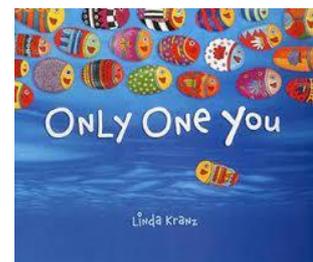


Image: goodreads.com

This uniqueness of ours is also lived out in our relationship with God. Moreover, as we put our faith in the Holy One, we can grow in the awareness of how special we are. We are reminded of our worth as we daily connect with Jesus who is the proof how much God loves us. Even if we live and die in quietness, just as Anita in the story below, the eternal God holds us in his everlasting hands forever. By persevering in our love towards God we might inspire others to recognize their value - visible or not - as well.

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



No Such Thing as Ordinary

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.

Hebrews 11:39

READ Hebrews 11:1, 32–40

When Anita passed away in her sleep on her ninetieth birthday, the quietness of her departure reflected the quietness of her life. A widow, she had been devoted to her children and grandchildren and to being a friend to younger women in the church.

Anita wasn't particularly remarkable in talent or achievement. But her deep faith in God inspired those who knew her. "When I don't know what to do about a problem," a friend of mine said, "I don't think about the words of a famous preacher or author. I think about what Anita would say."

Many of us are like Anita—ordinary people living ordinary lives. Our names will never be in the news, and we won't have monuments built in our honor. But a life lived with faith in Jesus is never ordinary. Some of the people listed in Hebrews 11 were not named (vv. 35–38); they walked the path of obscurity and didn't receive the reward promised to them in this life (v. 39). Yet, because they obeyed God, their faith wasn't in vain. God used their lives in ways that went beyond their lack of notoriety (v. 40).

If you feel discouraged about the seeming ordinary state of your life, remember that a life lived by faith in God has an impact throughout eternity. Even if we're ordinary, we can have an extraordinary faith. – By **Karen Huang**

REFLECT & PRAY

Faithful God, please help me to trust and obey You always. Amen.

In what area of your daily life might God be calling you to exercise faith in Him? How can He help you be more obedient and faithful in what you do every day?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Hebrews 11 is referred to as the "Hall of Faith." Writing to encourage Jewish believers in Jesus to remain faithful in the midst of suffering brought about by severe persecution, the unnamed author lists specific examples of people who've lived "by faith" (vv. 4–31). He closes this chapter with an overview of countless unnamed faithful people (vv. 32–38) "commended for their faith" but who haven't yet "received what had been promised" (v. 39). Hebrews 11 is a reminder that the only way to live and to please God is by faith (v. 6). Those who lived "by faith" chose to live as "foreigners and strangers on earth" (v. 13). They refused to return to the sinful life they'd left behind but longed "for a better country—a heavenly one" (v. 16). – By **K. T. Sim**

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