



## Bold Experiments

### Main video

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

Hebrews 11: 1 and following has a list of famous heroes of faith in the Old Testament. Have a read through it and pick out some of your own favourites if you know these characters. Verse 1 says, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

One common theme in all of those heroes is that they don’t know exactly what is going to happen, all of the outcomes of the basis of their faith, otherwise it wouldn’t be faith – it would be some level of certainty that didn’t require their faith.

I’m convinced that the times that we live in call for bold experiments and the purpose of those bold experiments, or rather what is built into them, is the idea that they might not work and that it’s OK to go for things for the sake of rescue that may or may not work.

When I think of the word “rescue” I think of something that hit our news that happened last summer (we are filming this in the autumn of 2018). One news item that rolled for days and days in this last summer was the rescue of that football team, called the Wild Boar football team, in Thailand. They were stuck in a cave and then some flooding came. People didn’t know whether they were alive or not, and it was a rescue story. It wasn’t portrayed as a Christian rescue story and I’m not trying to say that it was, although it might have been somewhat more Christian than our news media generally portrayed it. At least one of those boys, one in particular, was a Christian. In fact he was, and is, sponsored by the charity Compassion. He’s the one who spoke English and so when the rescuer first found them and asked, “Are you all alive?”, and somebody answered, “Yes we are, all thirteen of us.” – that was this boy. His name was Adul and when a ceremony took place that was portrayed in our media of the rest of the boys having a Buddhist ceremony to celebrate their rescue, there was also a service and a ceremony with this boy’s church and him celebrating and giving his testimony of his rescue and the prayer that was involved.

If we take this story as an illustration of rescue, I think there are ten things at least that we could learn from it:

- Firstly, a lot of prayer was involved in that rescue - maybe you were praying; I know a bunch of people were and I know that Adul's church were
- Secondly, it's a genuinely life-saving rescue taking place
- Thirdly, and this might be hardest for us to hear in the comfortable West when we’re thinking of our own rescue business that we’re called to in Christ Jesus, it was risky and costly. It cost someone their life, didn’t it?



- It involved the best skills and plans available globally. It is arguable that if only those in Thailand had been involved in the rescue that might not have been enough and those boys and their coach might not have been saved.
- They went for more than one plan at once. Maybe that's a lesson the church needs to learn. In addition to the divers trying to get to them they were also, at the same time, trying to dig a tunnel to get to those boys. If they'd only gone for the tunnel, then those boys and the coach would probably not be alive today. Maybe, in the sense of bold experiments, we are called to try more than one thing at once too.
- There was a sense of urgency.
- At the same time as all of this, there were others saying, "It can't be done", "Maybe those boys are dead already", "Maybe what we are trying is pointless."
- In addition to that, we can simply remember that the rescuers came to them. That is part of our story too, isn't it? Jesus came to us – that's the Christian, Christmas message - but maybe we are called to go to where people are rather than expect them to come to us.
- Lives were saved one at a time
- Even when those lives were saved and there is this fantastic celebration, there is still somebody right at the end of it all, at least one person, saying, "I wouldn't have done it like that!"

That's one example of rescue and we're just using it as an analogy or an illustration. In what way do the lessons we have just listed apply to your situation, and in what way can you take them and learn from them and put them into practice?

### *Feedback video*

So, one of the points we drew out from the lessons, very near the end, was even after that fantastic rescue somebody was saying, "But I wouldn't have done it like that."

We recognise that in the life of our church, when we do different things, that exists – there are people who do that. But we also need to be honest and say there's a bit of us that self-doubts and says, "That's not what we should be doing"; "Is it really working?"; "Should we just revert to the way we've always done things?"

We should honestly question things but the purpose of this application - this lesson - is that we're all called to bold experiments.

Some of us feel this more naturally than others - we like something new and scary and different; others of us are more hesitant. But in that lesson in Hebrews about people of faith ... they didn't know the outcomes. Some of us warm to this more than others, but we are all called to it.