

**MOUNTAIN-MOVING**

# **FAITH**

**a sermon series by  
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# "COMPLETE YOUR CHORUS"

**TEXT: I Pet. 1:4-8**

**INTRO: A.** Peter lived in a culture where drama was an important part of the entertainment world and he borrowed terms and concepts from the dramatists vocabulary to make spiritual applications.

**B.** Such is the case here. Peter uses the word "add" in that way. The word in Greek is "epichoregeo" which literally means "to supply a chorus."

**ILLUS:** In Greek drama the "chorus" was a company of performers which provided explanation and elaboration of the main action. Websters Unabr. Dict.

It was the most important part of the drama. It was supplied with great outlays of money by the rich. Rigorous, disciplined rehearsals were held until it was near perfect!

**C.** Peter says here that we need to "supply a chorus" (Add") for our faith which leads to spiritual perfection or maturity...

**NOTE:** Faith is the main actor in the drama of the believer's life, but faith cannot stand alone...the chorus is a necessity. As the main actor gave direction in Greek drama, so faith will get us to heaven, but that is only the beginning.

**ILLUS:** Salvation is just the beginning of life in Christ. It's like the "I do" in a wedding. The groom doesn't say "I do" and then say "Now that I'm married I'll see how unfaithful I can be and stay married." Being married includes faithfulness...fidelity. Getting married is just the beginning.

**TRANS:** God says FAITH is the main actor, but we need to add the chorus to translate that faith into something which reaches to perfection or maturity.

## **I. ADD TO YOUR FAITH...VIRTUE (PURITY):**

### **A. The First Member in the Chorus: "virtue"**

1. To be clean is the first prerequisite toward maturity.
2. This deals with the doctrine of personal separation.

**ILLUS:** Daniel "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself..." If you wait till you are confronted with temptation to make the decision to be clean, you will fall. The girl who dates a promiscuous boy will not stay clean...she needs to decide not to date anybody like that in advance.

## **II. ADD TO YOUR FAITH...KNOWLEDGE (UNDERSTANDING):**

### **A. The Second Member in the Chorus: "knowledge"**

1. Some try to add knowledge to faith before adding virtue.
2. God reveals His Word and His will to those who are first clean.
  - a. We can find His will in His Word, but we must first "come out" ...separate.
  - b. Our knowledge must be first-hand not second-hand, i.e. those who depend on others (preachers, etc.) for their spiritual food are often led astray by his errors.

### **III. ADD TO YOUR FAITH...TEMPERANCE (SELF-CONTROL):**

#### **A. The Third Member in the Chorus: "temperance"**

1. As we learn what the Bible teaches we are to control our lusts and passions.
2. When we find out what God says is wrong and fail to break those habits or change our lifestyle we have wasted our knowledge.

**ILLUS:** Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. Yet he did not add "temperance" to his chorus of graces and so he fell thru sexual lust!

Paul said "I die daily". Every morning you need to die...so you can live for Christ. Because every night while you sleep your old man gets resurrected again. You need to get under the Spirit's control every morning so you can defeat the lusts of the flesh.

### **IV. ADD TO YOUR FAITH...PATIENCE (ENDURANCE):**

#### **A. The Fourth Member in the Chorus: "patience"**

**NOTE:** This word literally means endurance, perseverance, continuance.

1. Nearly anyone can run the 100 yd. dash!
2. God is looking for "cross country Christians"!

**NOTE:** How you respond to trouble and trials speaks volumes about the depth of your commitment.

*Mt. 13:20-21*

*20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;*

*21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*

**QUES:** When you think of patience, which character do you automatically think of? Job...the PATIENCE OF JOB. Why? Because of his trials! Only the Christian who goes thru the fires of testing can "come forth as gold."

### **V. ADD TO YOUR FAITH...GODLINESS (PIETY):**

#### **A. The Fifth Member in the Chorus: "godliness"**

1. The Bible speaks of a false godliness, i.e., "a form of godliness".
2. Those who say "I'm saved, but I don't think it is important to go to church...be baptized...tithed..." have a "form of godliness" but it is not God's form!
3. Godliness is reverence, sincerity, faithfulness.

**ILLUS:** Overheard...one man explaining what faithfulness is. He asked if I go to church most of the time, am I faithful? Then he asked If God only made the sun to rise most of the time would you call Him faithful? If God only kept His Word most of the time...

4. Godliness will make the ungodly uncomfortable in your presence!

### **VI. ADD TO YOUR FAITH...BROTHERLY KINDNESS (AFFECTION):**

### **A. The Sixth Member in the Chorus: "brotherly kindness"**

1. God's children are all in the same family, so they ought to "phileo" each other("philadelphos" phileo: love, aldephos: brother).
2. Family members are not to share faults outside the family!

## **VII. ADD TO YOUR FAITH...CHARITY (LOVE):**

### **A. The Seventh Member in the Chorus: "charity"**

1. This word for love is "agapao" or "agape" and speaks of sacrificial love.
2. This is the attitude that sees and loves in spite of faults and with faults.

**NOTE:** You can love someone even if you can't LIKE them (or embrace them as friends).

3. Since God is Love, if I let God rule in my heart the natural result will be love toward others...the kind of love that gives: "charity".

**ILLUS:** Greek dramas lasted for hours and endurance was needed on the part of the audience if the performance was not good. Their reaction was either applause or throwing of the food they brought for lunch! So with the world toward carnal Christians.

4. Seven is the number of perfection or maturity in the Bible...how mature is your faith?

**CONCL:** One measure of your maturity is fruitfulness. v.8 A second one is spiritual discernment. v.9 How is YOUR chorus coming? Do you have choral members missing? Which ones?

## **"A STATEMENT OF FAITH FOR THE STORMS OF LIFE"**

**TEXT:** Mt. 14:22-33

**THESIS:** To show that when our faith is tested we must trust in His love and compassion for us to get us through.

**INTRO: A.** A faith that can't be tested can't be trusted! Whether we like it or not, our faith in Christ WILL be tested in the storms of life. The question is, how do we respond to these storms?

**B.** We need to work out "A STATEMENT OF FAITH FOR THE STORMS OF LIFE." Then when we find ourselves in the middle of the storm we can turn to our "Statement of Faith" and remind ourself that...

### **I. ARTICLE I: HE BROUGHT ME HERE: v.22**

#### **A. Our Storms Are His Appointments:**

1. A FAITH THAT CAN'T BE TESTED CAN'T BE TRUSTED!
2. So the Lord tests our faith by sending us into the midst of the storm.

**ILLUS:** The disciples had just witnessed the spectacular miracle of the feeding of the 5000. No doubt they would have preferred to linger at that spot and savor the heady wine of popularity they were no doubt enjoying. But Jesus "constrained" them to leave so He could disperse the multitude. (The people were so affected by the miracle that they were about to take Him by force and make Him their King.)

**Jn. 6:15**

*When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.*

- a. When things are going well and the Lord is blessing our lives, we have a tendency to become satisfied and our faith doesn't grow.
- b. The Lord must often push us out of our complacency and comfortable state in order that we might grow.

**NOTE:** The next time you find yourself in a storm remember that it was not an "accident" but a Divine appointment. There are no "accidents" for God's children, there are only appointments that need to be kept. You need to remind yourself: HE BROUGHT ME HERE!

## **II. ARTICLE II: HE SEES MY CIRCUMSTANCES V.24-25**

### **A. Our Storms Are His Concern:**

1. A FAITH THAT CAN'T BE TESTED CAN'T BE TRUSTED!
2. No doubt they wondered why:
  - a. ...He sent them away when things were going well.
  - b. ...The weather was calm when they left and now the storm came; surely He could have prevented the storm.
  - c. ...He didn't come with them to protect them at least.

**ILLUS:** Jesus was obviously developing their faith, testing them. This is their 3 lesson. The first lesson took place in calm water in the morning, with Jesus in the ship (Lk. 5:1-11 - the miraculous draught of fish). The second lesson came in stormy weather at night with Jesus asleep in the ship (Mt. 8:23-27). Now comes the 3 lesson at night, with stormy weather, with Jesus no longer with them! Each new test required more faith on their part: Jesus present, Jesus asleep, Jesus absent. How would they handle this new test of faith?

3. Our response to our storms is crucial; we **MUST KNOW** that He sees our circumstances, and our storms are His concern!
4. We are **NOT** adrift at sea in the storm with out His awareness and we must trust that He knows what is best for us.
5. The disciples are to be commended at least for not turning back; He had ordered them to go to the other side and in spite of the storm they continued.

**NOTE:** Trouble and testings must never deter us from duty.

## **III. ARTICLE III: HE IS PRAYING FOR ME V.23**

### **A. Our Storms Become His Burden:**

1. A FAITH THAT CANNOT BE TESTED CANNOT BE TRUSTED!

2. Sandwiched between Jesus' sending His disciples away in the ship and the howling winds and contrary waves is a prayer vigil.
3. When His disciples went to sea, He went to prayer.

**ILLUS:** Jesus is our High Priest and our Intercessor and He "ever liveth to make intercession" for us. Between His leaving and return He is praying for us.

There is no doubt that the subject of Jesus' prayer included His disciples. While they were on the water and in the storm, He was on His face before the Lord.

4. He is always above our storms and though touched with the feeling of our infirmities, He is not in danger of being overwhelmed by our storms.

#### **IV. ARTICLE IV: HE WILL SPEAK TO ME V.25-27**

##### **A. Our Storms Are His Opportunities:**

1. A FAITH THAT CANNOT BE TESTED CANNOT BE TRUSTED!
2. In the storms we seek Him out.
3. In the storms He comes to us.
4. In the storms He speaks to us...thru His Word. v.27

**NOTE:** We are never alone in the storm! He will meet us in the midst of it and speak to us if we avail ourself of the opportunity.

I am often dismayed when I visit someone in the hospital or at home sick when I don't see a Bible nearby. There are often magazines and novels, but no Bible...

If you can't read the Bible, then He may speak to you through His Spirit. In either case you must be open to His voice.

It is interesting that when they were afraid, His voice gave them peace. It is also interesting that He only said "It is I" not "It is the Lord."

Apparently they knew Him well enough that "I" was all that was necessary. (Someone calls you on the phone and they say, "Hi, it's me!"...)

#### **V. ARTICLE V: HE WILL HELP ME GROW IN FAITH v.28-30**

##### **A. Our Storms Are His Classroom:**

1. A FAITH THAT CANNOT BE TESTED CANNOT BE TRUSTED!
2. First Peter tested the Lord: "If it be thou, bid me come..."

**ILLUS:** Peter is often criticized for not having much faith, but none of the others asked to try to walk on water! Only 2 men in history ever walked on water! Peter was one of them.

3. Some of the lessons taught in this classroom:
  - a. A lesson of love; He sent them into the storm because it was good for them.
  - b. A lesson of faith; so they would learn to trust Him in storms.
  - c. A lesson of hope; for when their storm was at its worst, He came to rescue them.
4. Peter learned to walk on water! "he walked on the water..."
  - a. Talk about growth in faith!

- b. Yes, his faith failed when he measured the circumstances and he began to sink, but even then He called on the Lord...he didn't try to save himself! v.30
- c. Peter's faith grew more than the others, in spite of his lapse.

**ILLUS:** The other fishermen didn't get out of the boat! John, the beloved Apostle didn't jump overboard! Only Peter went water-walking!

## **VI. ARTICLE VI: HE WILL SEE ME THROUGH v.31-33**

### **A. Our Storms Are For His Glory:**

1. A FAITH THAT CANNOT BE TESTED CANNOT BE TRUSTED!
2. He has just given Peter a lesson on water-walking He could not have done with out the storm!
3. When Peter began to sink, Jesus "caught him" and saved him; it is doubtful that Peter was ever the same again.

**ILLUS:** Perhaps later on the other disciples would joke with Peter about his lapse of faith. No doubt Peter would boast that at least he walked on water for a little while when they didn't, but surely he would praise the Lord for His saving and sustaining power and give Him the glory! (As WE should do every time He bails us out of trouble!)

4. When He calmed the winds and waves, the disciples were no doubt in awe of Him.

**Mt. 8:27**

***But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!***

5. Everyone on board gave Him the glory and WORSHIPED HIM!

**NOTE:** That's what He desires: our worship. Nothing less will do! He is God! God alone deserves and demands worship from His creatures and His children. Only then will HE get the glory He deserves.

**CONCL:** Here then is "A STATEMENT OF FAITH FOR THE STORMS OF LIFE" which every believer has access to when ever he is being tested. We need to remember that A FAITH WHICH CANNOT BE TESTED CANNOT BE TRUSTED! What about yours? Are you in a storm now? Review your "STATEMENT OF FAITH" - it will help you get through it.

**“YOU’VE GOT TO BE WILLING TO GET YOUR FEET WET!”**

**TEXT: Joshua 1:2**

**THESIS:** To show that to live for the Lord, you must be willing to trust Him for the impossible.

**INTRO: A.** Because of unbelief Israel had been wandering in the desert of Sinai or, appropriately, “the wilderness of Sin.” (Ex. 16:1) On that side of the Jordan River was a howling wilderness, a dry desert, harsh conditions. On the other side were houses, lands, flocks, herds, fruit, vegetables, water, oil, milk, honey...all promised to them by the Lord. *What God had for His people was across the river!*



**B.** They had experienced daily miracles but were still on the wrong side of the river. They needed to obey God's command and "go over this Jordan" to possess their promised possessions. They needed to remember that Caanan was called by God the PROMISED LAND, i.e., the God Who cannot fail, PROMISED to give them the land and all its possessions if they would just "go over this Jordan." But "SOMEONE HAD TO BE WILLING TO GET THEIR FEET WET!"

## **1 BARRIERS TO CLAIMING THE PROMISES:**

### **A. Fear: 7 Mighty Nations (Josh. 3:7-10)**

1. Fear is the opposite of faith, so faith is the cure for fear.
2. Naturally speaking they had every reason to fear.
3. Supernaturally speaking they had nothing to fear for God had spoken! ("Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.")

**ILLUS:** Our problem is the same as theirs; we see the barriers but fail to claim the promises revealed in His Word.

### **B. Lack of Faith: "an evil report"**

*Num. 13:31-33*

*31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.*

*32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.*

*33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.*

1. Israel failed to believe the promises of God and experienced defeat instead of victory.

**ILLUS:** Is the gap necessary? Is it necessary to have a period of defeat between salvation and a life of victory? No...no more than it was necessary for the children of Israel to wander for 40 years in the wilderness. They could have gone right from the Red Sea to Kadesh-Barnea to the Jordan River and into triumphant victory. But they trusted their senses rather than God's promises.

2. The question now is will this new generation believe God or the "evil report"?

### **C. An Impossible Barrier: The River Itself**

**ILLUS:** God deliberately led them to the Jordan River at flood stage. Otherwise they would have tried to dam up the river to go across. But he wanted them to trust Him in spite of the circumstances. (3:15b) If they didn't trust Him here, they would not trust Him when they crossed over and met the enemy. It wasn't the size of the Jordan River, nor the number of their enemies, it was only their lack of faith that could defeat them.

## **11 BELIEF CLAIMING THE PROMISES:**

**NOTE:** "SOMEBODY HAS TO BE WILLING TO GET THEIR FEET WET!" What would YOU have done? At the Red Sea (salvation) it was "stand still!" At the Jordan River (victory Spirit fullness) it is "step in!" To live in victory and claim God's promises and experience His blessings, "YOU'VE

**GOT TO BE WILLING TO GET YOUR FEET WET!”** You’ve got to trust the Lord and “step in!” the water. Both require belief, but “stand still” required no labor. Heb.4 speaks of God’s rests for His own. *Salvation rest* requires no labor. *Sabbath rest* requires no labor. The *eternal rest* requires no labor. But *Caanan rest* requires labor! After they crossed Jordan they had to fight daily to possess their possessions. “Step in!” means there is some activity, coupled with faith, on your part.

**A. Step One: Discontent**

1. You must be discontent with living in the wilderness. (God may take care of you there, but He has better things for you if you “cross over!”)
2. You must be discontent with manna. (We need to get out of the baby stage of unbelief where God spoon feeds us to prove His faithfulness, and start eating the “old corn” across Jordan.)
  - a. First they set up memorials to God’s deliverance. (4:20-22)
  - b. Then they were circumcised at Gilgal, symbolizing their ownership.
  - c. Then they celebrated the Passover speaking of their sanctification.
  - d. Then they began to possess their possessions: no more manna! (5:8-11)

**B. Step Two: Obedience 3:12-17**

1. Until the priests’ feet touched the brink of the water, there was no miracle.
2. The people had to look at the Ark (God’s presence), see the priests step in to the water, and begin walking down into the Jordan river bed and God would go before them and prepare the way for them - miraculously!

**ILLUS:** Earlier (1:11) Joshua ordered “Prepare ye victuals...” They might have expected him to order “Prepare ye boats...” or “Build ye bridges...” But they were to have no part in the crossing except in moving out by faith. The food was to sustain them for the first few days after the crossing when the circumcision of the men would take place and was another indication that the manna would cease.

**111 BLESSINGS IN CLAIMING THE PROMISES:**

**A. Miracles: 3:15-17**

1. The river didn’t just “dry up” it “stood up.” V.16
2. Their enemies hearts “melted” before them. 5:1

**ILLUS:** But “SOMEBODY HAD TO BE WILLING TO GET THEIR FEET WET!” Someone had to believe God and step into the waters! Someone had to put God’s promise to the test. That’s the only way miracles happen. The barriers to victory fell one by one; the river, the 7 nations and the evil report! What barriers stand in your way to victory, blessings and the fullness of the Spirit? “YOU HAVE TO BE WILLING TO GET YOUR FEET WET!” to step out on faith believing God and claiming His promises.

**B. Memorials: 4:20-21**

1. There were two memorials erected: the stones in the water symbolized the old man being buried, never to be seen again!
2. The stones out of the river pictured the new man and the resurrected life.

**ILLUS:** This generation experienced the miracles and erected the memorials for the next generation. Dr. Clarence Sexton said: "I'm inspired by the memorials I see, but I want to see some miracles." He was saying that he didn't want to rest on others' faith or victories, he wanted to experience the blessings of claiming God's promises himself. He wanted to be a part of the miracle generation, not just the memorial generation!

**CONCL:** Do you want to see some miracles? Answered prayer? Souls saved? "YOU'VE GOT TO BE WILLING TO GET YOUR FEET WET!" You need to read His Word, locate His promises, claim His promises to experience His miracles! Faith and obedience bring victory. Why not "go over this Jordan?"

## **"JESUS' BIBLE INSTITUTE"** or "*FAITH 101*"

**TEXT: Luke 5:1-11**

**INTRO: A.** Did you know Jesus had a Bible Institute? The classes weren't held in a traditional classroom. He didn't use normal pedagogical methods. (He didn't even use an overhead projector! But He did use plenty of visual aids) His students were not learned men, but simple fishermen, a tax collector and common workmen. The course He taught was "FAITH 101"!

**B.** It must have been exciting to go to school with Jesus as the Teacher! His classroom might be an open field one day, or the Temple court, a hillside and often a boat! That is where we will focus our attention. In fact we will go on board a boat with the Teacher and His students on 3 different occasions. We will attempt to examine the lessons He taught, the environment in which He taught and attempt to glean some lessons for ourselves from the Master Teacher

**TRANS:** Like all good teachers, Jesus started with the easiest material first and progressed to the more complex. As we read thru the Gospels we see Him taking His students into greater maturity by the lesson material He used...

### **I. CALM SEAS IN THE MORNING: Lk. 5:1-11 (*A LESSON IN LOVE*)**

#### **A. Jesus On Board – Little Faith Required**

**ILLUS:** Whether or not these men with Jesus were saved at this early stage in His ministry is unknown. (Peter had witnessed a miracle Jesus performed on his mother-in-law, but had not yet become a disciple). One thing is sure, they had not yet learned to walk by faith and would not for some time. But faith must start somewhere. And for some it began here in this floating classroom. v.3

1. He had been teaching the Scriptures on board the boat on the beach.
2. Now He has a greater lesson for His future disciples He would teach in private. v.4a (Some of the sweetest times are the private times with Jesus!)
3. This first lesson only required simple obedience to His command and required only a little faith, but it did require some faith. v.4-5

**ILLUS:** Perhaps less faith and more courtesy is shown by Peter in submitting to Jesus' request. After all, Peter was the fisherman, Jesus was a carpenter!

4. When they responded in obedience they received the blessing and learned the lesson of His omniscience and omnipotence. v.6-7

**ILLUS:** This miracle was not a miraculous multiplying of fish as in the feeding of the multitudes on other occasions, but rather a miracle of providence and power where Jesus the Creator controlled the time, place and circumstances to teach a powerful lesson on love to His followers, i.e., He loved them so much that He desired to meet their needs and did so to demonstrate that love.

5. This lesson also taught them of the abundance of His blessings to those who are willing to obey Him. v.6-7

a. This was a humbling experience. v.8

**ILLUS:** Peter's response showed that until now He had an insufficient appreciation for Who Jesus was! The first lesson in the school of faith is to realize His sufficiency for all our needs and our insufficiency and insignificance in His presence. Surely Peter realized his unworthiness that Jesus would condescend to be in His boat, let alone perform this amazing display of His power and love.

b. There was wonderful astonishment. v.9-10a

**ILLUS:** Do we sometimes respond to the Lord's daily provision for our needs with a "ho-hum" just because we don't witness some miraculous provision. No doubt the disciples should be in awe as to what they had just witnessed, but hadn't the Lord been lovingly providing for their needs all their lives?

c. There was deeper lesson being taught: soul-winning! v.10b

d. There was a lifelong ministry begun. v.11

**TRANS:** So much for their first lesson taught in the classroom on the sea. But there was more to come.

## **II. ROUGH SEAS AT NIGHT: Mt. 8:23-27 (A LESSON IN TRUST)**

### **A. Jesus Asleep On Board – More Faith Required**

**ILLUS:** Jesus had been formally teaching by word and example on the subject of faith and trusting Him, primarily for the benefit of His future Apostles. He had been teaching multitudes and now is honing in on His inner circle. He had to prepare them on what it meant to become His follower. In ch.8 he healed the Gentile centurion's servant without being there, by a simple command and commended the centurion for his faith in believing the power of His word. (v.5-13) Then He spoke of the cost of discipleship in v.18-22; i.e., deprivation and sacrifice. Now He had a lesson to teach His would-be followers in private, so He again boarded a boat with them. v.23

1. They had learned to follow Him, but needed to learn to trust Him, even when circumstances weren't favorable.
2. They needed to learn that His followers were not exempt from trials. v.24a
3. They needed to discover that His presence is enough to sustain them. v.24b,25

**QUOTE:** His disciples followed him; the twelve kept close to him, when others staid behind upon the terra firma, where there was sure footing. Note, They, and they only, will be found the true disciples of Christ, that are willing to go to sea with him, to follow him into dangers and difficulties. Many would be content to go the land-way to heaven, that will rather stand still, or go back, than venture upon a

dangerous sea; but those that would rest with Christ *hereafter* must follow him *now* wherever he leads them, into a ship or into a prison, as well as into a palace. (from Matthew Henry's Commentary)

4. They needed to learn to trust in Him regardless of the circumstances. and that He is not pleased with distrust. v.26a
5. They learn more of His power manifested in His word! v.26b.27

**TRANS:** So much for boat lesson #2 of the course FAITH 101! But there is more He wanted to teach them, so the scene again shifts to the sea with...

### **III. THREATENING SEAS AT NIGHT: Jn. 6:16-21 (A LESSON IN HOPE)**

**Rom. 8:24-25**

24 ***For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?***

25 ***But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.***

#### **A. Jesus Not On Board – Great Faith Required**

1. They needed to learn to walk by faith, not sight. v.17 *“it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them...”*

**ILLUS:** Soon He would be crucified and the really dark times would come. But their faith would revive after the resurrection. They after His ascension they would have to learn to walk with out seeing Him and realize that He is nonetheless with them, in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

2. They were learning that trials were a normal part of life. v.18

**Mt. 14:24**

***But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.***

3. They needed to learn that He is always aware of their circumstances and that He will come to them in the hour of greatest need. v.19
  - a. Notice that they were doing what they could do (rowing), but failed to do what they should do (trust).
  - b. They also failed to do something else – pray and ask the Lord for help!
4. They finally learned the comfort of His presence. v.20

**ILLUS:** Peter not only learned this, but also learned the art of walking by faith *on the water!*

**Mt. 14:28-29**

28 ***And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.***

29 ***And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.***

5. They learned their ultimate destination was guaranteed. v.21

**ILLUS:** Not only did Jesus rescue them from their imminent danger, but He safely and instantaneously transported them to their destination! “Above all that we ask or think...”

**CONCL:** Here then are a few classes in FAITH 101 in JESUS' BIBLE INSTITUTE! The 3 lessons taught there were on Love, Trust and Hope! Love thru His presence in the quiet times, Trust in the rough times and Hope when all is dark and we can't see Him and only see the turmoil around us. How do you score?

## **“THE PRIME DIRECTIVE”** or **“THE SALT PRINCIPLE”**

**TEXT:** Hebrews 11:6

**THESIS:** To show the only means of pleasing God is thru the faith principle.

**INTRO:**     **A.** “THE PRIME DIRECTIVE” in God’s universe for God’s creatures is to please God. How to please Him is no mystery; He tells us. The method to please Him is simple: faith. The act of pleasing Him is difficult.

**B.** Man is a sensual being, i.e., he acts based on his 5 senses. He naturally lives by sight. God wants him to walk by faith, the “6<sup>th</sup> Sense.” He cannot do so with out supernatural help. 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:8-9

**C.** If faith is “THE PRIME DIRECTIVE” then the greatest sin is living with out faith. You may strive earnestly, live excellently, and work unceasingly, but with out faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please God! Spurgeon said it is a “double impossibility” – for an “unbelieving man to please God, and for God to be pleased with an unbelieving man.” I call this “*THE SALT PRINCIPLE.*” According to Lev.2:13b all sacrifices in the OLD TESTAMENT had to be mingled with salt. Thus today, everything we do must be mingled with faith, or we cannot please God. (“...with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.”)

### **I. THE GREAT IMPOSSIBILITY: (PLEASING GOD APART FROM FAITH IN HIM)**

#### **A. A Faith That Reckons (to depend, rely on):**

1. It trusts God’s Word – it reckons on what God says. Rom.10:13

**ILLUS:** Cain and Abel both brought sacrifices that were of approximately the same value. But God only accepted Abel’s, because it was offered in faith, and rejected Cain’s because it was offered in presumption.

- a. Faith is based upon hearing (knowledge); man must know what is expected.
- b. Faith speaks of assent (agreement); man must believe God what God says.
- c. Faith demands grasping (laying hold upon); man must demonstrate or prove His faith by acting upon what he believes.

2. It trusts in God – it reckons on God’s Person:

- a. It sees “Him Who is invisible...” 11:27
- b. It reckons that the visible is temporary and the invisible is permanent.

**ILLUS:** cf.11:24-27 That is exactly what Moses did when he left Egypt. He left the visible riches, pleasures, palace, servants, luxury, etc., because He, with eyes of faith saw God Who was invisible. He traded the temporary for the permanent. He traded the pleasures of sin for the riches of Christ. v.25,26

The invisible world is real to the man of faith and motivates his life and lifestyle. God loves saints who walk in the dark (Is. 50:10), and trust Him to get them through the darkness (Micah 7:8).

**Is. 50:10**

***Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.***

**Micah 7:8**

***Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.***

**ILLUS:** It is possible to please me with many things: prime rib, pierogies, strawberries, Dove bars, Lemon meringue pie, cherry pie, raisin pie, apple pie, fishing, flowers, books, etc., but *only one thing pleases God – FAITH!* The Bible declares that “whatsoever is not of faith, is sin! Sin like adultery is sin, fornication is sin, lying is sin, getting others to lie is sin. (Clinton) Thus the preacher who doesn’t depend upon Him is sinning, the usher, the S.S. teacher, the choir, the special music, the deacon, the bus worker, the secretary, the housewife, the husband, the children who do not depend upon Him are sinning as well!

Someone says, so-and-so went into “deep sin.” (What is shallow sin?) You ask “what did he (she) do?” Instead of “adultery,” “robbery” you say, “He drove to work with out depending on God!” or “She did her dishes with out depending on God.” or “He led the choir with out depending on God.” or “He preached with out dep. on God!”

## **II. THE GREAT IMPERATIVE: (*BELIEVING IN HIM and TRUSTING HIM*)**

### **A. A Faith That Rests: (It quits working)**

1. Every person must “*come to God...* (Saving faith)

**ILLUS:** It doesn’t say “come to *it*” but to “*Him*”! It is not enough to postulate or believe in a God. Einstein said, “Certainly there is a God. Any man who doesn’t believe in a cosmic force is a fool, but we could never know Him.” Brilliant as he was, Einstein was wrong - and knows it now!

2. Every person must abandon “God substitutes” and come to Him! (Personal faith.

**ILLUS:** Paul came to HIM one day and the personal encounter altered his life forever. In Phil. 3:4-6, Paul says he abandoned Ritual (“circumcision”), Race (“stock of Israel”) Royalty (“tribe of Benjamin” – Saul), Refinement (“Hebrew of the Hebrews”), Religion (“Pharisee”), Reputation (“persecuting the church”), and self Righteousness (“blameless”), for HIM! (“the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord”)!

It’s not enough to know about God, you need to KNOW GOD!

3. Every person must believe that He is: (Living Faith)

- a. Logic appeals to the head.
- b. Faith appeals to the heart.

**ILLUS:** We can’t know God by sight (He is invisible). We can’t know Him by logic or reason. God devoted 2 chapters of His Word to prove to Job that he couldn’t even figure out the simple operations of nature: wind, rain, snow, animals, etc., with his finite brain, much less figure out the God who created

and controls these things. Scientific evidence is circumstantial, at best and unrepeatable. History and creation are past events and are unrepeatable. You can't put love, anger, hate, justice, etc. in a test tube but no one argues they are not real. Science merely provides evidence. The writer of Hebrews in his book of faith, nonetheless uses a scientific argument: "For every house is built by some man; but he that built all things is God." (Cause and effect)

1. Every person must believe in the God of the Bible: (Scripture Faith)

**QUOTE:** Spurgeon: "...you must believe that there is a God, and you must believe that God is what He says He is. Otherwise, if you make God to be other than He says He is, you make God to be an idol, your god is an imaginary being. You must accept God as He is revealed in Scripture."

### **B. A Faith That Risks: (believe that He is a rewarder)**

**QUOTE:** MacArthur: "Believing that God exists is the first step *toward* faith. Believing that He rewards those who trust in Him is the first step *of* faith!"

1. It risks eternity on trusting God. (Salvation is the reward God gives for faith)
2. It risks acting on what God says is best for us.
3. It risks believing that faith in Him will be rewarded.

**ILLUS:** When Abraham and Isaac walked up Mt. Moriah that dreary morning, faith' that trusted in God's reward motivated Abraham to place his only son on the altar and raise the knife above his head, in response to God's command.

There is a strange silence between 2 verses in Heb. 11 (29,30). 40 years span these 2 verses, from the crossing of the Red Sea to the victory at Jericho. 25 chapters of Exodus, 27 of Leviticus, 36 of Numbers, 34 of Deut. and 5 chapters of Josh. record the events of those 40 years; yet not one event is mentioned as being "by faith." What was wrong? They were walking by flesh instead of faith. Idolatry, lust, envy, presumption, complaining, murmuring, etc. The same things which will rob believers today of rewards and cause them to suffer loss at the J.S. of Christ. What an indictment.

**CONCL:** If the Bible said preaching a great message pleased Him, or singing beautifully, or being smart or handsome or beautiful or a genius pleased Him, most or all of us here could never please Him. But we can all exercise saving faith ("he that cometh to God") and living faith ("that He is a rewarder"), every day in simple tasks.

**ILLUS:** Jesus called the Centurions faith in Him "great faith." What did he do? He simply believed what Jesus said! He simply exercised faith in the Person of Christ, He believed Who He was! You too can do that. Someone said: "simple souls find their way to heaven while others are fumbling for the (door)." Quit trusting in yourself or anything or anyone else. You are full of sin, and will never find any remedy in the disease. Come to Christ. Believe in Him! Trust in Him! Walk by faith!

## **"HOW YOU CAN PLEASE GOD!"**

**TEXT: Romans 14:23**

**THESIS:** To teach the truth that only those things we do while trusting the Lord pleases Him.



**INTRO: A.** I need you to listen on purpose for the first 15 minutes this morning and then I will be responsible to hold your attention for the last 2 1/2 hours. (smile)

**B.** There are many lists of sins in the Bible. But if we were to list every specific sin listed we would find they all have one characteristic in common, i.e., they are acts or attitudes which are done apart from depending on God!

**ILLUS:** The first sin in the universe was Satan no longer depending upon God and wanting to usurp God's place on His throne. The first sin on earth was Adam and Eve no longer depending upon God to care for their needs and reaching out for something forbidden.

Satan didn't try to disprove God to Adam and Eve. He just wanted them to act independently. He said it was O.K. to be God-conscious, but not to be God-dependent. It was all right to be god like, but not to be God-dependent. It was all right to worship God, give to God, etc. but not to be God-dependent. Satan knows what please God and what displeases God. God is pleased when we trust Him, depend upon Him and have faith in Him and He is displeased when we are independent of Him.

**TRANS:** Perhaps the greatest sin we can commit is to declare our independence of God...

## **I. WHY WE WERE CREATED?**

**Rev. 4:11**

***Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.***

### **A. All Things Were Created For God's Pleasure.**

1. All of creation, as it came from God's hand did please Him.
2. After each stage of creation the Bible says "...and God saw that it was good."
3. After God created man and His creation was completed the Bible says "...and God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold it was very good."

**ILLUS:** At this stage everything was totally dependent upon God and God was pleased. How do we know that? Because the Bible tells us what pleases God.

**Heb. 11:6**

***But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.***

### **B. We Are All Created For His Pleasure:**

1. Why were you and I created (according to Rev. 4:11)? For God's Pleasure!
2. What does the Bible say pleases God (according to Heb. 11:6)? Faith!
3. What is another word for faith? Dependence!

**ILLUS:** Why were we created? TO PLEASE GOD. What pleases God? FAITH. What is another word for faith? DEPENDENCE.

According to our original text, (Rom.14:23) what displeases God? Doing anything without faith or without depending on God. What does God call it when we operate or do anything with out faith or when we act independently of God? SIN!

**Rom. 14:23**

*And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

**ILLUS:** Suppose I preach with out depending upon God; what is it? SIN! Suppose you listen with out depending upon God; what is it? SIN!

Why were we created? TO PLEASE GOD! What pleases God? FAITH! What is another word for faith? DEPENDENCE! What does God call it when we don't depend on Him for whatever we do? SIN!

## **II. HOW CAN WE PLEASE GOD?**

### **A. We Please God By Trusting Him and Depending Upon Him:**

1. God didn't say great eloquence pleases Him, or talent pleases Him, or good looks pleases Him, or intelligence pleases Him, He simply said FAITH pleases Him!
2. What is another word for faith? DEPENDENCE!

### **B. What Pleases Us May Not Please God:**

1. But we were created for His pleasure!
2. Many things please me, but only one thing pleases God - FAITH!

**ILLUS:** What pleases me? Dove bars, Dark Chocolate, Breyer's Ice Cream, Lemon Meringue Pie, Cherry Pie, Raisin Pie, Apple Pie, Steak, Pierogies, Strawberries, Fishing, Flowers, Books, Money, etc. Many things please me, but only one thing pleases God - FAITH! He is pleased when we DEPEND UPON HIM! If we don't depend upon God what does He call it? SIN!

The preacher who doesn't depend upon Him is sinning. The singer who doesn't depend upon God is sinning. The usher who doesn't depend upon God is sinning. The deacon, bus worker, the Sun. School Teacher, the Secretary, the Choir, the Bus Mechanic...WHO DOESN'T DEPEND UPON GOD IS SINNING!

3. I don't know what the greatest sin is in the Bible, but not depending upon God is sin!
4. It is sin like adultery is sin, like drugs are sin, like prostitution is sin, etc.

**ILLUS:** Someone says they heard that so and so went into "deep sin". What is "shallow sin"? Suppose someone came to you and said: "He went into deep sin." You ask "What did he do?" They say: "He drove to work with out depending upon God." OR "She did her dishes with out depending upon God."

5. Because depending upon God pleases Him, all of us can please Him.

**ILLUS:** If the Bible said preaching a great message pleases Him, most of us could never please Him. Or if it said that singing beautifully pleases Him, most of us could never please Him. But we can all depend upon Him! We can depend upon Him to help us drive to work or to do the dishes, or to sing or play an instrument or preach a message or to do whatever God wants us to do! We can depend upon Him at home, at work, at church...anywhere! And that what...? PLEASES HIM!

## **III. WHAT IS OUR GREATEST DANGER?**

### **A. The Failure To Please Him.**

1. How Do We Fail To Please Him? By not depending upon Him.

## 2. Where Is That Failure Most Likely?

- a. We usually please Him the least in the area where we are most gifted, have the most talent, are most gifted or have the greatest ability.
- b. It is easier in these areas to trust in ourselves than to trust in Him.

**ILLUS:** Remember your first solo? Sunday School Lesson? You probably stayed up all night praying and asking for God's help. But now you are experienced, gifted, your talent has been honed, you no longer need God to help you perform. **YOU NO LONGER DEPEND ON HIM, SO YOU NO LONGER PLEASE HIM and WHEN YOU DON'T DEPEND ON HIM GOD CALLS IT SIN!**

Probably the most sins committed across the country are committed on Sunday Mornings in churches like this one. Ushers greet and seat people with out depending on God. Bus Wrkrs. go out to pick up boys and girls and don't depend upon God. S.S. Teachers teach lessons with out depending upon God. Choirs sing with out depending upon God. Deacons deacon with out depending upon God. The preacher preaches with out depending upon God. People come and fail to depend upon God. We give and fail to depend upon God . May God forgive us! We are too self-dependent and independent when **WE NEED TO BE GOD DEPENDENT!**

**CONCL:** Many things are beyond our reach, but depending upon God and thus pleasing God is within the reach of everyone: rich and poor, hearing and deaf, sighted and blind, educated and non educated, adult and child. Why not confess your lack of dependence upon Him as sin and start to consciously depend upon Him for every thing, every day?

## **“WHAT TO DO WHEN GOD IS SILENT”**

**TEXT: Exodus 14:10-12**

**THESIS:** To show “WHAT TO DO WHEN GOD IS SILENT” and seemingly oblivious to your problems.

**INTRO: A.** Lazarus, Jesus friend is sick and his sisters send word to Jesus to come quickly. Instead the Bible declares Jesus didn't answer their request and stayed where He was 2 more days. By the time He arrived the funeral and burial were over. He received their pleas for help - why didn't He rush to their side? For 450 years the children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt and cried, prayed and pled with God to deliver them. Generations lived and died, but God was silent. He heard their prayers, why didn't He do something? While WWII raged on, Jews were herded together all over Europe into ghettos and then into concentration camps by the Nazis. They cried out to God while the gas chambers and ovens of Dachau, Auswitz, Bergen-Belzen, etc. consumed lives by the thousands each day. God, Who is omniscient and omnipresent both saw and heard them - why didn't He rescue them?

**B.** In our text the Israelites are surrounded by geographical obstacles and Pharoah's armies. Their situation seems hopeless and they cry out to God (just as they had done for 450 yrs in slavery). Moses told them God wanted to take them to a special place called the Promised Land and He had confirmed Moses leadership with mighty miracles, but now they were again in trouble and were pleading with God for help. But God seemed to ignore their pleas. What could they do? What should we do? “WHAT TO DO WHEN GOD IS SILENT?” is our subject. The answers we will give are simple, but not easy...

**I. STAND STILL: v.13 “Fear ye not, stand still..”**

### **A. The Frustration Of Circumstances:**

1. When there seems to be no way out, look up!

**ILLUS:** Above the clouds the sun is always shining! Go up in an airplane on a dreary, rainy, dark day and once you get above the clouds you suddenly see the sun. Your spirits are immed. lifted. Your circumstances too will pass and you will see the sunshine again. Remember that the sun has outlasted all the clouds of the centuries! God is still in heaven and He will outlast your trials.

2. When circumstances get you down, look up!

**ILLUS:** Moses instructions were simple, but profound. They were not to fear and simply stand still. Ever ask someone how they are doing and they reply "I'm doing the best I can under the circumstances." "Under the circumstances" is defeat. Through the circumstances is exhaustion. We need to be on top of the circumstances! We all have problems. How we respond makes the difference. Someone said: "Misery loves company and makes us all partners." Just remember someone is in the circumstances with you. When Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fiery furnace he didn't just see Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Somone was in the furnace with them!

### **B. The Victory Of Standing Still:**

1. The Red Sea will part. v.13-16 (Moses had to have more faith than the Israelites!)
2. The enemies will drown. v.12,13
3. The deliverance will come. v.29-31

**ILLUS:** God had already delivered them by mighty miracles before they every left Egypt and He had already given them a token of His providence in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. (13:21,22) He wasn't completely "silent." So with us. He has given us His Word. We need to remember what He has done for us in the past and "Stand still" and see what He will do for us again!

## **II. WAIT: Gen. 15:1-6; 16:1,2**

### **A. The Mistake Of Moving:**

1. Their sin was not just adultery - it was primarily the sin of doubt! 17:15-17 and 18:10-12

**ILLUS:** In 15:6 the text declares that "(Abraham) believed in the Lord..." In 16:2 it says "And Abram hearkened unto the voice of Sarai. How often do we trust the circumstances instead of the Lord, or get contrary counsel to God's Word and act accordingly? We take things into our own hands instead of waiting on the Lord and trusting in His perfect will.

2. Their sin started the longest war in history!

**ILLUS:** You have heard of the "Hundred Years War" ? Well Abraham and Sarah started the "3800 Year War" and it's still going on! The Holy Land is still a hot spot because of this one bad move on the part of two obscure people, thousands of years ago. The Arabs of Ishmael and the Israelites of Isaac are still the bitterest of enemies.

3. Their sin caused animosity between Sarah and Hagar and between Sarah and Abraham. 16:4-5

## **B. The Miracle Of Waiting: 21:1-2**

1. How much sweeter the miracle of Isaac would have been with out Hagar and Ishmael.
2. How much more peaceful the world would have been if Abraham and Sarah had simply waited upon the Lord.

## **III. TRUST: Mt. 8:23-25**

### **A. The Dangers Of Doubting:**

**ILLUS:** No one has perfect faith. There may be little faith with much doubt or great faith with little doubt and all shades and degrees of faith in between. The father of the demon possessed boy prayed, "Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief." He did not say: "Lord, I doubt, help Thou my faith." Take your stand with your faith and not your doubt, and God will help your doubts. -Havner

1. The devil wants us to doubt God and he will use circumstances, including the weather, to doubt the Lord.

**ILLUS:** With the Lord's permission, the devil may control the wind that destroyed Job's sons home, whip up the storm called Euroclydon on Paul's voyage to Rome and could have been in back of this storm with the disciples to get them to doubt the Savior.

2. The words "but He was asleep..." are the words that brought doubt to the disciples. v.24b
3. What woke Jesus up was not the fury of the storm but the frenzy of His doubting disciples.
4. They got their eyes on the storm instead of keeping them on the Savior! "We perish!"

**ILLUS:** Doubt caused the nation of Israel to wander in the wilderness for 40 long years. All they needed to do was to cling to His promise of a "land flowing with milk and honey." Instead of seeing the possibilities, they saw the problems: giants and walled cities.

Our churches are full of those who hear the Word with joy and crumble under the load of testing. Note the 2 rebukes in v.26: first He rebuked the disciples for their doubts, then He rebuked the winds and the sea.

### **B. The Blessings Of Trusting:**

1. Instead of looking at the problems, we need to get our eyes on the Problem Solver!

**ILLUS:** In 2 Kings 6 the king of Syria sent troops and horses and chariots to capture Elisha. The prophet's servant looked out and saw the troops to the right, left and front. In desperation he cried: "How shall we do?" But Elisha looked not down but up and saw angels to the right, left and front ("here and angel, there an angel, everywhere an angel..."). He had not underestimated his enemies, but he knew "...they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

**QUOTE:** Havner: "If the Valley is full of your foes, raise your sights to the hills and see the angels!"

2. Instead of evaluating things from the perspective of earth, we need to see things from heaven's viewpoint.
3. Instead of looking at the short view - we need to take the long view:

# **“HOLY and WHOLLY”**

## **or “GIANTS ARE NOT SO BIG!”**

**TEXT: Joshua 14:5-14**

**THESIS:** To show that God is faithful and will reward faith.

**INTRO: A.** “There were giants in the earth in those days, and after that...” Gen.6 Some of these alien creatures were still around in Joshua’s day (and a few, including Goliath) were around many decades later in David’s day. (Some say they may still be here: “Big Foot,” “the Abominable Snow Men,” etc.) These biblical giants were between 9 and 11 or 12 feet tall.

**B.** I believe that every believer encounters “giants” in his or her life, that, just like those in our text in Caleb’s day, need to be conquered. Perhaps your “giant” is as small as a cigarette, or as large as a drug habit, or as obnoxious as pornography. Perhaps they take the form of real enemies who oppose you and what you stand for as a Christian, e.g., an unsaved husband, wife, employee or employer, a family member or ? How do you handle these “giants”? Do you try to overcome them in your own human strength, or do you trust the Lord for victory? How do you walk? By faith? By sight? This message is about vision and victory over giants and the man who is our example is Caleb the son of Jephunneh...

### **I. CALEB’S ACUITY (VISION): v.12a “Give me this mountain...”**

**ILLUS:** 40 long years before Moses had promised Caleb “...to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon...because he hath wholly followed the Lord.” Deut.1:36 Caleb was both “HOLY and WHOLLY” dedicated to the Lord. At least 4 times God’s Word declares that Caleb “wholly followed the Lord...” All through the 40 years in the wilderness Caleb had his mind and heart set on God’s promises to him concerning the land. Now he was about to see with his eyes that which he had seen with his faith. It was...

#### **A. A Time For Action:**

1. Caleb claims the promise... “Now...” v.12

**ILLUS:** Men of vision always move out armed with God’s promises. The Lord had PROMISED Caleb the land...now he claims what belonged to him. God has promised to bless the proclamation of His Word, we need to claim His promise.

2. Caleb names the promise: “this mountain...whereof the Lord spake...” v.12

**ILLUS:** We need to be sure of what God has said (another reason we had better have the right Bible) and be certain that we don’t invent a promise to claim. Caleb was simply claiming what God had promised thru Moses 40 years earlier. Wholly following the Lord for these long years of wilderness wandering, attending the funerals of the 10 spies who brought the negative report about the land and it’s giants, as well as the funerals of that entire generation meant that Caleb had to truly trust that what God had said, He would do!

#### **B. A Plan For Action: (goals)**

1. An immediate goal: “THIS mountain...”

**ILLUS:** We must pray specifically if we expect God to answer specifically! Caleb waited a long time for God to place him where the prayer and promise could come to pass, but NOW the time had come.

2. An impossible goal: “this MOUNTAIN...”

**ILLUS:** The area he was claiming was Hebron, where Abraham had met with God and where Abraham and his family were entombed. The word “Hebron” means “fellowship” and was probably named after Abraham’s communion with the Lord in that place. It was heavily fortified and it is where the Anakim lived.

3. An inspiring goal: “if so be the Lord be with me...”
  - a. This was no prideful boast on Caleb’s part, though he has stated that he still retained the vigor of his youth, and though he had had vast military experience.
  - b. He was simply trusting in the Lord and His promise.
  - c. This was not either the language of self-doubting, but of self-renunciation and faith.

4. An invincible goal: “Anakims...”

**ILLUS:** Nelson’s Bible Dictionary says that this was a tribe of formidable and fierce giants so large in stature that the Israelite spies came back with the report that they were as “grasshoppers in their sight.” No doubt your giants look just as invincible! But God is greater than any giant! “GIANTS ARE NOT SO BIG” after all, when measured by God’s greatness!

## **II. CALEB’S ACTIVITY: (SERVICE) v.12b “...I shall drive them out...”**

### **A. He Distrusted Self: “IF so be the Lord be with me...”**

**ILLUS:** IS a man courageous if he goes to battle with armor and arms? YES. Is a man foolish to face his enemy with out arms and armor? YES. But any man is foolish if he goes to battle only trusting in his own strength, wisdom and weapons. Caleb was aware of his own impotence apart from the Lord. Our victory is in trusting in the Lord - not in self, talents, strength, or resolve.

The nuclear Polaris class submarine fleet overcame “immense technical problems (marrying) nuclear power ...to nuclear missiles...(but those problems have) been mastered (though) important human problems on the vessels remain.” Man is called “the weakest chink in the Polaris’ armor.” So it is with every believer. We are our own worst enemy.

### **B. He Distrusted Others:**

**ILLUS:** It was because of others he spent 45 years in the wilderness. Christ often rebuked His disciples for their lack of faith. Some of the most “spiritual” men refuse to walk by faith and simply trust the Lord for what He has promised. They run to their friends instead of the Lord. They seek others counsel instead of the Word. They believe someone knows more than God.

### **C. He Trusted The Lord:**

1. Caleb remembered that his old companions were occupied with their own impotence and their enemies strength.
2. Caleb was occupied with the Omnipotence of God and His sure Word.

## **III. CALEB’S ATTITUDE: (DEDICATION) v.14 b “He wholly followed the Lord...”**

**A. Complete Dedication: “wholly...”**

1. He was completely yielded to God’s will and God’s Word.
2. He didn’t reserve any part of his life for self.

**B. Constant Dedication: “followed...”**

1. Not running ahead of God, but following Him.
2. Here is the secret of consistency.

**C. Careful Dedication: “the Lord...”**

1. He didn’t follow others (though loyal to Joshua).
2. He had spiritual discernment to know the difference between the giants who were his enemies and the Giant Who was the Lord!

**ILLUS:** What a fantastic testimony! Caleb “wholly followed the Lord...” Caleb accepted the challenge of driving out the giants from the land. The next chapter tells us: “And Caleb drove thence the 3 sons of Anak.” Of course he did! God rewards such dedication and trust! He will do the same for you.

**CONCL:** What are YOUR giants? I am here to remind you that if you are “HOLY and WHOLLY” dedicated to the Lord, the “GIANTS ARE NOT SO BIG!” You too can have the victory!

**“REMEMBER WHO IS ON BOARD!”**

**TEXT:** Mark 4:35-41

**THESIS:** To encourage believers that regardless of the storm they are safe because He is “on board.”

**INTRO: A.** Up to now the disciples of Christ had not had their faith tested. They had heard Him teach and preach and had seen Him heal people, including Peter’s wife’s mother. Now He would take them into a raging storm. Fun, fellowship and food would be replaced by fear. Faith is never tested in the good times, the times when God is obviously doing something in our lives, but in the difficult times, the hard times, the times when we can’t see His hand moving.

**B.** Jesus’ rebuke in v.40 teaches a powerful truth. You can’t be fearful and faithful at the same time. One who is fear-ful is filled with fear and thus cannot be faithful or filled with faith. The reason believers become fearful is because they forget Who is “on board.” The disciples forgot Jesus was on board the boat! Whenever you are fearful “REMEMBER WHO IS ON BOARD!”

**1 FEAR IS PARALYZING: (KEEPS YOU DETOURED)**

**A. Fear Will Keep Us From God’s Will:**

1. Fear of man keeps folks from salvation (friends, relatives, etc.).
2. Fear of water keeps folks from baptism.



**ILLUS:** Ever wonder why people are so fearful of baptism? No one in recorded history has ever drowned in a baptismal pool! It is the devil attacking obedience in the young convert. Whenever I see someone who is fearful getting baptized I get excited because I know they are overcoming a fear which has paralyzed them. Now I know they can grow. Faith has replaced fear. Fear of financial disaster keeps folks from giving.

**ILLUS:** You say if I tithed or gave to everything that preacher says I should: missions, the bus ministry, the new building, Sunday School, special needs, etc. I'd be in trouble. You would, if there were no God! There is no faith involved in giving only what you can "afford."

4. Fear of rejection keeps folks from soul-winning.

**ILLUS:** Fear is what the devil uses to keep people from God's will. To experience fear is not a sin, but to be ruled by fear is! To see legitimate danger is not sin, but to allow that fear to paralyze you or the church is sin! Every time you go soul-winning you will experience some fear, but it will turn into excitement when you see

God begin to work thru you. God hasn't given us a spirit of fear, so if I have a spirit of fear, I wonder who gave it to me? We just need to "REMEMBER WHO IS ON BOARD!"

*2 Tim. 1:7*

*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

## **11 FEAR IS POWERFUL: (KEEPS YOU DOUBTING)**

### **A. Fear Will Keep Us From Claiming Victory:**

1. Fear produces doubt and doubt is disabling.
2. Someone said "Fear is the anticipation of disaster, or failure or embarrassment; the anticipation of everything going wrong.

**ILLUS:** In the midst of all Job's suffering and trouble He said: "that which I greatly feared is come upon me." Job 3:25 Job is saying "I just knew this was going to happen, I've been worrying about this for years...and now that it's happened, I have to suffer all over again." The doubter suffers twice. The faithful person suffers once - if things don't work out. Job suffered twice. Instead of enjoying the good years, he doubted and feared.

3. Fear robs people of enjoying the blessings of God.
4. Fear allows problems to paralyze us.
5. Fear rules God out: you can't be filled with faith and filled with fear at the same time.
6. Fear of failure always produces failure, not victory; faith is simply "remembering Who is on board."

## **III. FEAR IS COUNTER PRODUCTIVE: (KEEPS YOU DEFEATED)**

### **A. Fear Forgets God's Sovereignty:**

1. The disciples looked at the circumstances instead of looking to the Lord of the circumstances; that always produces fear.
2. They forgot that He was the One Who healed the sick, cast out demons and created the universe, or at least they "forgot Who was on board!"

**ILLUS:** It's one thing to know God, it's another thing to be aware of His presence in your life...especially when things are going wrong! Did they think that a mere storm could "sink the ship where lies, the Master of earth and sea and skies"? Did they think God was going to die? A Christian family stood by their house which had just burned to the ground. They were all naturally weeping, but the son seemed especially shaken. His father wisely put his arm around his young son and said: "Son, don't worry. God didn't die in the fire." He didn't die in your fire either! "REMEMBERE WHO IS ON BOARD!"

After 17 years + in prison, Joseph confronts the brothers who put him there. They were fearful of how he would treat them. He said: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good..." Gen. 50:20 He REMEMBERED WHO WAS ON BOARD."

### **B. Fear Forgets God's Promises:**

1. Fear paralyzes us because of the problems, faith propels us because of the promises!
2. The disciples had failed and became fearful because they forgot His promise: "Let us pass over unto the other side" - that was as good as a passport. V.35

**ILLUS:** It didn't matter how bad the wind howled, or the waves roared, or how much water was in the boat, all they had to remember was His promise. He didn't say "Let us sink in the storm" or "Let us go halfway across and then drown" He said "Let us pass over unto the other side."

Dr. Tom Malone said there are 32,000 promises in the Bible. I may not be able to remember them all, but I should be able one or two for my circumstances and claim them. The Bible is a promise book. If you can't remember His sovereignty, try to remember His promises! We sing "Standing On The Promises" and don't believe a word of it when trouble comes and forget Who is on board and what He has said!

### **C. We Forget Past Victories:**

1. He has worked in the past but we think that was His last burst of power and that His energizer batteries finally quit going!
2. Faith is not a problem free life...in fact if it were not for problems there would be no way to test or demonstrate faith.
3. What God did last week, He can do today; what He has done for others, He can do for you; what He has done in the past, He can do again.

**ILLUS:** David was going out to face Goliath. Saul said: "You can't go out against that giant." David said: "Oh, yes I can. I remember one time I was watching sheep and a lion came and I rose up to kill him. And another time a bear came and I killed him. I wasn't any match for either of them, but God did it thru me. If God could do that for sheep, what could He do for Israel?" David encouraged himself in past victories. He knew He was still serving the same God.

After the battle, David put Goliath's armor in his tent. He knew this would not be his last battle. He needed something to remind him of past victories.

Perhaps it would be a good thing for us to keep a record of God's past victories in our lives and ministry. Then maybe the next time we wouldn't be so fearful!

4. Fear is not abnormal, but to be ruled by it is unchristian; when soul-winning time comes it is O.K. to be fearful as long as I don't let it keep me home.

**CONCL:** If we are going to operate by faith, we need to overcome fear. We do that by "REMEMBERING WHO IS ON BOARD!" We need to remember His sovereignty, remember His

promises and remember His past victories! Then the paralyzing effect of fear, the power of fear and the counter-productivity of fear will be replaced by faith.

## **“DWELL DEEP!”**

**TEXT: Jeremiah 49:30**

**THESIS:** When danger and trouble come or when Satan attacks or even when the circumstances of life come, the believer is to trust the Lord.

**INTRO: A.** Last week we taught that the believer is to “DWELL DEEP” in the assurance of salvation, in separation from the world, in service to the Lord and in the Scriptures. We examined the concept of dwelling deep as God warned the Dedanites who were dwelling among the Edomites that He was about to bring judgment upon them.

**B.** In this verse the Lord warns the inhabitants of Hazor that Nebuchadrezzar is about to invade with his armies and that they had better “flee, get you far off, (and) dwell deep” (hide in any safe place), for this invasion is inevitable. There is likewise a certain inevitability about impending danger, trouble, Satanic attack or just changing circumstances in the life of every believer and that believer had better learn to “flee, get you far off, (and)“DWELL DEEP” in the safety of God’s protection.

**Ps. 91:1**

*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

### **I. ...WHEN DANGER THREATENS: (DWELL DEEP IN HIS POWER)**

#### **A. Flee To The Safety Of His Omnipotence:**

**Heb. 13:6**

*So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

1. Any man made or man originated threat to the believer who is dwelling deeply in the safety of His power is ineffective.
2. The power of the Almighty God is at the disposal of the believer who is dwelling deeply in Him.
3. Jesus said that “all power” (omnipotent power) had been given unto Him, so that the believer in the will of God has a guarantee of protection.

**ILLUS:** This is a promise given to any believer who abides in Him and the safety of His will. It means that the believer is safe or impervious to any danger which threatens him until God is through with Him...and then He will just promote him to heaven.

Did cancer kill Curtis Hutson? Yes! But only when God was through with him and then He took him home to Himself. Did Lester Roloff die in a plane crash? Yes! But only after 50 years of fruitful ministry, and then God said “you have suffered enough while serving Me, come on home!”

Are the Dawsons in any danger? Only if the Lord is through with them in their ministry down here. Then He will simply call them to be with Him forever. We need to “DWELL DEEP” in the protection of His omnipotence.

### **II. ...WHEN TROUBLE COMES: (DWELL DEEP IN HIS PROTECTION)**

## A. Flee To The Security Of His Omnipresence:

*Ps. 46:1-3*

*1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

*2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;*

*3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*

1. The concept of God being a “very present help in trouble...” has to do with the fact of His abiding omnipresence.
2. Jesus promised that He would “never leave nor forsake” the believer. (Heb.13:5b)

**ILLUS:** We need to claim this promise and also “practice His presence” so that we know we are never alone or abandoned. Then no matter how severe the trial or testing we will have the comfort of knowing that He is with us.

3. We need to learn to “dwell deep” in His eternal presence.

*1 Kings 1:51*

*And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword.*

**ILLUS:** King David was dying and Adonijah had declared himself to be King. Nathan the prophet came to Solomon’s mother, David’s wife, and told her the news. David had promised her that her son, Solomon would be the next King. David arranges for Solomon to be anointed and the news comes to Adonijah as he is celebrating. So Adonijah flees to the safest place he knows, into the tabernacle, where the presence of the Lord dwelt and grabs hold of the horns of the altar. Solomon spares his life. He had learned to “dwell deep” in the presence of God.

**TRANS:** Yes, we need to learn to “DWELL DEEP” in the power and protection of our God when danger threatens and when trouble comes. We also need to learn to “DWELL DEEP”...

### 1... WHEN SATAN ATTACKS: (DWELL DEEP IN HIS PROMISES)

#### A. Flee To The Solace Of His Faithfulness:

*Heb.10:23b*

*“...for He is faithful that promised...”*

**ILLUS:** Some here are facing the danger of a loss of income, a job loss, a loss of health; others here are facing trouble of some kind; a loved one has left you, a friend has betrayed you, a child has disappointed you, or some other “trouble.” You need to flee to the safety of His power or flee to the security of His presence. But some of you are under attack by Satan and you need to flee to the solace of His faithfulness...

1. I don’t know where you are been attacked: it may be some temptation in the area of your weakness, an attack on your home, security, health or family...
2. You need to plead the faithfulness of the Lord, for deliverance.

*1 Cor. 10:13*

*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

3. We don't have to fail or sin, we can claim His promise of faithfulness.
4. We need to recognize that we are not faithful, but He is faithful!

*Lam. 3:22-23*

*22 It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.  
23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

### **III. ...WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE: (DWELL DEEP IN HIS PEACE)**

#### **A. Flee To The Certainty Of His Immutability:**

1. Circumstances WILL change, but He never changes.

*Mal. 3:6a*

*For I am the LORD, I change not...*

2. Friends will leave you, your job will change, your health will change, (from good to bad, or from bad to good), your loved ones will die, your finances will change, but you can flee to the certainty of His immutability!
3. The only certainty concerning the future is that it is uncertain, but for the believer the change will ultimately be positive!
4. The only peace and certainty in this ever changing world is the changeless Savior Who is "the same, yesterday, today and forever." Heb.13:8

**CONCL:** Are you living in fear of danger, in dread of trouble, in apprehension of Satanic attack, in frustration over changes in the circumstances of your life? Then as a believer you need to "DWELL DEEP" in His power, His protection, His promises and His peace." You need to flee to His omnipotence, to His omnipresence, His faithfulness and His immutability.

If you are unsaved, you have none of these resources. Why not flee to Him for salvation right now?

## **"KEEP YOUR FOCUS IN THE STORM"**

**TEXT:** Matt. 14:22-33

**THESIS:** To encourage believers going through trials to keep focused on the Savior, not on the storm.

**INTRO: A.** Storms are inevitable. They are also necessary. We may enjoy the sunshine, but we also need the storms. No one wants storms all the time but often the dark, stormy times in life help us to build character and test our trust in the Lord. When the winds are howling, the waves are raging and the rain is pelting us, it is easy to lose our focus and forget that we are His disciples. So the message today is designed to help you "KEEP YOUR FOCUS IN THE STORM."

**B.** Jesus sends His disciples away (v.22), knowing the storm awaited them. He made them leave without Him. The sea was calm when they left Him. The storm didn't come till they were in the

midst of the sea. They are committed. They can't turn back. Things are beginning to look hopeless. (But they forgot Jesus was on the mountaintop, praying! And also that He would never forsake them! They had lost their focus!)

## **I. THE DISCIPLES LOST THEIR FOCUS:**

### **A. They Focused On The Storm: v.24-26**

1. All they could see was their trouble: the wind, waves, rain, clouds...
2. Even when Jesus showed up, they mistook him for more trouble. v.26b
3. They began to lose it; they cry and scream "for fear."
  - a. They couldn't go to Him, so He came to them!
  - b. His first words to them were "Be of good cheer" V.27
  - c. His next words should have comforted them: "It is I; be not afraid."

**ILLUS:** When Jesus appeared to Paul He had to identify Himself ("I am Jesus...") for Paul didn't yet know Him, but with the disciples He simply says "It is I." As His sheep they should have known His voice. (Of course it might have been a little difficult to hear Him in the storm...it always is!)

We too need to trust Him in our storm and know that He will "never leave us nor forsake us." We should hear His voice of comfort over the storm and let it calm our fears. (We won't know His voice then if we don't get used to it now – thru reading His Word!)

## **II. PETER GOT FOCUSED:**

### **A. He Focused On Jesus: v.28**

1. He didn't focus on the storm. (The source of his troubles)
2. He didn't focus on the ship. (The natural means of help)
3. He didn't focus on the sailors. (His weak brethren)
  - a. His focus brought separation from the above. ↑
  - b. His focus brought determination; now that his eyes were off the storm and on the Lord of the storm, he was determined to do the impossible.
    - 1) He didn't wait till Jesus calmed the storm.
    - 2) He didn't wait till Jesus got on board the boat.
    - 3) He didn't wait for encouragement from his friends.
    - 4) He did wait till he received instructions from the Lord. v.29a "Come"

**QUOTE:** "It is an instance of Peter's faith and resolution, that he ventured upon the water when Christ bid him. To quit the safety of the ship, and throw himself into the jaws of death, to despise the threatening waves he so lately dreaded, argued a very strong dependence upon the power and word of Christ. What difficulty or danger could stand before such a faith and such a zeal.

It was very kind and condescending in Christ, that he was pleased to own him in it, v. 29. He might have condemned the proposal as foolish and rash; nay, and as proud and assuming; "Shall Peter pretend to do as his Master does?" But Christ knew that it came from a sincere and zealous affection to him, and graciously accepted of it. Note, Christ is well pleased with the expressions of his people's love, though mixed with manifold infirmities, and makes the best of them." (from Matthew Henry's Commentary)

- c. His focus made him “go overboard!” but it enabled him to walk on water!
- d. His focus restored his faith! V.29b

**ILLUS:** Imagine Jesus’ pleasure at Peter’s faith and obedience! Imagine the disciples amazement at Peter’s boldness! Imagine Peter’s astonishment and excitement as he walked on the water! “Hey fellows, check it out! I’m water walking! Come on in, the waters fine!”

### **III. PETER LOST HIS FOCUS:**

#### **A. He Focuses On The Storm: v.30a**

1. He was more focused at a distance!
2. The further he got from the boat the more fearful he got.
3. He began to focus on the natural instead of the supernatural.

**ILLUS:** The others are saying, “I’m glad I didn’t go there!” Peter’s faith looked like foolishness now to them. They said “It must not have been the Lord – Peter went down.” Peter is saying “I think this whole water-walking business was a mistake. I am a fisherman, I should have known better than to get out of the boat in a storm.”

Never second guess a decision made in faith, based upon God’s Word. “Never undo in doubt what you did in faith.” Never undo in a moment of weakness what you did in a moment of strength.

When you are sure God tells you to do something, trust Him, not your reasoning. If God leads you to give a large amount of money to His work, don’t undo that when you get your bank statement. If God leads you to step out on faith to serve Him, don’t quit because of circumstances. Believers lose their separation from the natural and fail to trust the supernatural; they lose their determination because they begin to look at the situation.

### **IV. PETER REGAINED HIS FOCUS:**

#### **A. He Refocuses On Jesus: v.30b “...he cried, Lord, save me!”**

1. When faith is weak, prayer should be strong!
2. When in doubt, call for help!
3. When you are sinking, go back to the One you trusted in the 1<sup>st</sup> place!
4. When the circumstances overwhelm you, get your eyes back on Jesus!
  - a. Apparently Peter is back walking on the water back to the ship (or possibly Jesus carried Him back)! V.31
  - b. The doubting disciples saw Peter’s regained focus and then they knew (finally) that it was indeed Jesus on the water and now in the boat.

**ILLUS:** No doubt now they wished that they had tried “water-walking” like Peter! They no doubt wished that they had had a measure of Peter’s seemingly foolhardy faith. But their opportunity was gone.

You may only get one opportunity to act in faith, trusting the Lord in the storm. Don’t lose it. You will regret it again and again. I can envision the disciples talking among themselves: “Remember that time when Peter got out of the boat and walked on water? Wouldn’t it have been wonderful if we had joined him?”

### **V. THE DISCIPLES GOT REFOCUSED:**

### **A. They Focused On Jesus Again: v.32-33**

1. They begin to have a worship service!
2. Guess who led the service! Peter!

**ILLUS:** You are never wrong to walk by faith. When we do and God blesses us, others will notice! And God will get the glory!

**CONCL:** Focus is everything. We can either focus on our problems, our circumstances and storms or we can focus on the Lord and His omnipotence! Which will it be for YOU?

## **“PRINCIPLES FOR SPIRITUAL SUCCESS”**

**TEXT:** Matthew 20:20-28

**THESIS:** To reveal 3 principles for spiritual success.

**INTRO:** A. The word “success” is only found once in all of God’s Word and does not speak of success in the secular realm, but only for prosperity and success in the spiritual realm for God’s people. (Josh.1:8) Yet this word is found numerous times in many new Christian books, as if God wants Christians to be successful in worldly pursuits. Christians chase after it. Even James and John, with in the inner circle of our Savior’s disciples sought it. (text)

The “PRINCIPLES FOR SPIRITUAL SUCCESS” are radically different from achieving success in the world. For Him, “the chiefest (most successful), shall be servant of all.” While He was thinking of sacrifice, His disciples talked of position and success. While He saw suffering ahead, they dreamed of success and supremacy. They desired crowns, He saw the cross.

**ILLUS:** What an insight we gain into the sinfulness of man and the sovereign purpose of God in this text. We desire success with out suffering, pleasure with out pain, promotion with out hardship, position with out work or a diploma with out study. But in God’s “PRINCIPLES FOR SPIRITUAL SUCCESS” the way up is down, the first shall be last, death means life and the greatest must become the servant...

### **I. PRINCIPLE #1: YOU START OUT AS A SERVANT and (BEING FAITHFUL) GOD WILL MAKE YOU A LEADER:**

#### **A. Before Becoming A Leader You Must First Be A Good Follower:**

1. Today many want to “start at the top” and we see the sad results in politics in our society.

**ILLUS:** We see men and women rise to the top because of money instead of character They have never had to work for a living, so they promote all kinds of social programs, lack personal integrity, and even basic morality. They have never had to sweat out a mortgage, a light or heat bill. They try to provide leadership with out having ever had to work to serve others. We also see the sad results among athletes who get paid obscene amounts of money for their talent, but who have never had to develop character and they end up in a moral morass using drugs, sex and booze to excess and destroy their lives and the lives of others.

2. The biblical examples of principle # 1 abound:



- a. Joseph spent 17 years in prison after being a faithful and loyal servant before becoming second only to Pharaoh in Egypt.
- b. Moses spent 40 years on the backside of the desert becoming a servant before God could use Him as a great leader.
- c. David was a shepherd serving in his earthly father for years before he became a King leading the for his heavenly Father.

- 1) Perhaps your “prison house” is really a palace in preparation.
- 2) Don’t despise your “desert” training period, it is only “boot camp” preparing you for leadership in battle.
- 3) Feeding and protecting sheep may be preparing you for becoming a king.

**ILLUS:** God is looking for servants, not celebrities! But God will make celebrities in heaven of His servants on earth.

- d. In God’s unique formula for success there is no higher position than that of servant.
- e. The greatest honor God can bestow is a position of service.

**ILLUS:** Bus captain, glory in that God has permitted you the honor of serving boys and girls, wiping their noses, helping to dress them, visiting their homes, buying them a hamburger or a pair of shoes, loving them, encouraging them.

- f. The greatest and most wonderful words a child of God will ever hear is *“Well done, thou good and faithful SERVANT!”* Mt. 25:23

## **II. PRINCIPLE #2: YOU START OUT WITH A FEW THINGS and (BEING FAITHFUL) GOD WILL TRUST YOU WITH MANY THINGS:**

*Mt. 25:23*

*His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

*Lk. 19:17*

*And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.*

### **A. Before Being Trusted With Much, You Must Demonstrate Faithfulness with Little:**

- 1. David tended sheep, then killed a lion and a bear, THEN a giant!
  - a. God had to test his faithfulness as a shepherd of sheep before He could trust him to shepherd a nation.
  - b. David had to demonstrate character as a youth before he could ever become a brave and courageous leader and finally the King of a nation.

**ILLUS:** When you were born God gave you ability. When you were born-again God gave you gifts. You are to use your ability to use your gifts. God’s gifts are only rewarded when properly used. God’s rewards are given not on portion, but by proportion, depending on your faithfulness!

- 2. Spurgeon got saved at, started passing out tracts at 16, taught a S.S. class at 17, pastored his first small church at 18 and at 21 was preaching to thousands!

- a. If you can't be trusted to tithe at minimum wage, why should God give you a higher paying position? (Be faithful with pennies and dimes and God may give you dollars; that's why kids need to learn tithing early!)
- b. If you don't take care of your family properly, why should God reward you with children of character?
- c. If you will not go soul-winning two or three hours a week in response to His command, why should He save your loved ones?
- d. If you are not faithful in visiting your bus rte. why should He give you greater numbers and salvation decisions?
- e. If you are not faithful in visiting your S.S. students and preparing your lessons, why should He bless your class with decisions, numbers, spiritual growth, etc.?

**ILLUS:** Principle: Mt. 25:24-30 God has blessed me in the ministry not because of talent, personality, ability, looks, or gifts, but because of faithfulness. I was willing to take a tiny country church other students thought was below their dignity, then a church in financial trouble, then another one with a church split and finally this ministry with many professing faith in Christ, surrendering to preach, go to the mission field, etc.

### **III. PRINCIPLE #3: YOU START OUT SERVING and WORKING and (BEING FAITHFUL) GOD WILL GIVE YOU JOY and PEACE:**

#### **A. Before Experiencing Joy and Peace You Must Find His Will and Do It:**

1. Peter started out stumbling and falling (while trying to serve) and God kept picking him up and ultimately used him as the great Apostle to the Jews.

**ILLUS:** Radio commentator Paul Harvey said the secret of his success was summed up in these words: "I get up when I fall down."

2. Paul began preaching several days after he was saved and God made him the great apostle to the Gentiles.
3. Then God took him to the Arabian desert for 3 years for instruction where he received the joy of serving and the peace that passes understanding.

- a. Paul learned the contentment that faithful service brings. Paul's service and faithfulness made him the apostle of joy; in spite of severe hardship and suffering his favorite words were grace, peace, joy and rejoice!

**CONCL:** In Edinburgh, Scotland there is a statue of a mongrel dog named "Bobby" which is world famous. When his master died, he refused to leave the graveside. He froze solid in a blizzard. That's "faithfulness unto death," and that's also God's unique formula for success. If you ever want to hear the words of our Savior in Mt. 25:23 as a successful saint, you must become a faithful servant, be faithful with what you have and be faithful in service.

**Mt. 25:23**

***His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.***

# “FAITH CANCELS FEAR”

**TEXT:** Mark 4:40

**THESIS:** To show that faith cancels fear in the believer and to reveal the foundation of faith.

**INTRO:** A. God is never surprised by our “storms” or circumstances. God is in control of our “storms” or circumstances.

**ILLUS:** This time Jesus was on board the boat in the midst of the storm. After taking charge of the situation and calming the storm, He rebukes them: “Why are ye so fearful? How is it ye have NO FAITH?” On another occasion Jesus sent the disciples into a storm without Him, then came to them in the midst of the storm walking on the water. When Peter came to him and began to sink, he said: “O thou of LITTLE FAITH, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

B. You can’t be filled with fear and filled with faith at the same time. A person who is faithful is fearless and a person who is fearful is faithless! Fear is the anticipation of failure or embarrassment. It keeps us immobilized. The disciples were fearful because they had “no faith.”

**ILLUS:** My father lived in fear of losing his job at Sun Oil Co. He retired from there after 30 years! His fears never were realized. He lived like Job who said: “That which I greatly feared is come upon me.” 3:25

He was saying, “I knew this was going to happen. I’ve been worrying about this for years. I knew everything was going to good. I have been suffering from it before it happened, not I am suffering all over again. (Don’t suffer ahead of time. If the worst case scenario does happen, at least you will only have to suffer it once...not twice! “Be not faithless, but believing...” Jn.20:27)

C. Fear is the absence of faith. FEAR CANCELS FAITH. Fear paralyzes, faith mobilizes. Fear keeps people from believing and doing God’s will. Fear is based on the natural, faith is based on the supernatural. To experience fear is not wrong, but to be ruled by fear is sinful. (“Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.” Rom.14:23b) Fear rules God out. Faith puts God in. Fear is Satan’s tool to neutralize believers. Faith is God’s tool to activate believers.

D. Faith is when God’s Word is enough. Faith recognizes God’s power. Faith claims God’s promises. Faith is the anticipation of God’s intervention. Faith is trusting God and depending upon Him.

## I. FAITH IS BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF GOD’S POWER:

### A. Faith Believes In The Sovereignty Of God:

1. The disciples forgot who was on board with them. (“Master, carest Thou not that we perish?” They called Him “Master” but refused to trust Him!)

**ILLUS:** We need to remind ourselves of what Jesus told Pilate: “Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above.” In our next storm or problem, we need to recognize His power is still available to us.

2. The disciples were immobilized by fear.

**ILLUS:** Fear keeps people from getting saved. “I’d get saved, but I know I can’t live it now; I’ll wait till I can live it. I’d be a hypocrite if I did it now.” He is headed for hell. He anticipates failure at living the Christian life. He doesn’t rely on the power of a sovereign God to assist him.

Fear keeps people from getting baptized. “I know I ought to get baptized, but I’m afraid of water.” (You ought to see these people at the beach or at the pool!) But the devil attacks their obedience. I have never heard of one person who drowned in a baptistry.

Fear keeps people from tithing. “I know I ought to tithe, but I can’t afford it.” They fear financial reversal. They say, “If I gave the way the Bible teaches or the preacher preaches, I’d be in trouble.” They would be if there was no God! Don’t you know you don’t have the ability to take care of yourself anyway? If God doesn’t do it, you are in big trouble. Fear rules God out. Faith puts Him in.

Fear keeps people from soul-winning. “I couldn’t do that. I couldn’t talk to people about the Lord. It wouldn’t work for me.” But you never go soul-winning alone. The Lord always goes with you! You need to say. God told me to do this and I believe He is alive and will help me, so I will be obedient. I am trusting in His power.

The first time I preached I prepared for 10 hours and preached for 10 minutes. (Now I prepare 10 minutes and preach for 10 hours! 😊) I found out God was with me when I preach and I am no longer fearful! I preach believing God will use me. He will use you too!

## **II. FAITH IS BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF GOD’S PROMISES:**

### **A. Faith Believes The Word Of God:**

1. When Jesus rebuked His disciples, He was saying: “Why can’t you just trust Me? Why didn’t you believe what I told you?”
2. Again and again Jesus told His disciples, “Fear not...”
3. Faith begins and ends with “Thus saith the Lord...” - we either believe it and Him or not!

**ILLUS:** That is why you don’t want people messing with this Book! The NASV (updated 3 times!) says “In my Father’s house are many dwelling places...” The New Living Translation and RSV and NIV (with ongoing updates!) says “many rooms.” The Living Bible says “many homes.” How can you have faith if you don’t know what God said? (The Greek word is “mone” and is properly translated “mansions!” in the KJB!)

4. The promises of God are found in the Word of God...you had better trust them.

**ILLUS:** Dr. Tom Malone says there are 32,000 promises in the Word of God. That is enough to get all of us through at least one lifetime! That is a lot of stuff to depend on. The Bible is a promise book. We sing “I’m standing on the promises of Christ my Lord” and don’t mean a word of it. They don’t even think of His promises when the crisis or storm comes. They don’t claim the promises, they become fearful.

5. Faith believes the Word of God even when things don’t add up.

**ILLUS:** How many believe in the Virgin Birth? Would you have if you had been Joseph? He didn’t. The Bible says he was minded to put her away. After the announcement by the angel, the Bible says he thought on these things. He didn’t just accept the obvious. He wanted to believe Mary was innocent. He then remembered the promise of Isaiah 7:14 and trusted the promise.

## **III. FAITH IS BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF GOD’S PAST BLESSINGS:**

## A. Faith Believes Based On Past Evidence:

1. Folks who live in fear have forgotten past successes.

**ILLUS:** These disciples in this storm had just seen Jesus heal sick bodies, open blind eyes, open deaf ears, seen people miraculously fed, and lives changed. After all that, they feared the storm?

Isn't that the way we are? He has come thru for us again and again and then a new storm comes and we forget about what He did and act as though His last blessing was His final burst of power and now His batteries are dead. But His batteries are better than those of the Energizer bunny's batteries, and He "just keeps going and going and going..."! He is the same yesterday, today and forever. What He did before, He can do again. In the storm anticipate His intervention.

I like the attitude of those present at Lazarus' grave after 4 days, who said: "Could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man (Lazarus) should not have died?" They remembered past evidence of His great power and believed that He could have kept Lazarus from dying. But did they believe that He could raise him from the dead? What about a miracle for today?

2. We can either decide the problems are too great for Him or we can trust Him, remembering what He has done for us in the past.

**ILLUS:** When David went out to face Goliath he encouraged himself in past victories. He remembered his battles with a lion and a bear and how God gave him the strength to be victorious. He went in the power of past blessings to kill the giant. (2 Sam.21:19 says Elhanan killed Goliath (!) in the ASV, THE NASV, THE NIV and THE RSV! The KJB says Elhanan killed "the brother of Goliath..."! Which do you believe?)

After he killed Goliath, David took his armor and put it in his tent. He knew this wouldn't be the last battle, so he needed a reminder of God's past victories in his life. Every time he faced a new storm or a new battle, he looked at that armor and said "If God could give me the victory over that giant, He can help me again! I will keep on obeying Him and trusting Him. I won't be fearful, but faithful!"

3. Peter walked on water when he was full of faith (faithful), then began to sink when he became full of fear (fearful)! (It was good that he utilized his alternative option when he began to sink and cried "Lord, save me!")
4. As long as Peter kept his eyes on the Lord and trusted Him, he was O.K.; it was when he looked at the wind and the waves, that he became fearful.

**CONCL:** Peter's faith cancelled his fear. Then his fear cancelled his faith. That's the way it is for all of us. We have a choice. Which will it be? FEAR OR FAITH?